

Town of Franklin

355 East Central Street
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038-1352



Phone: (508) 520-4907
www.franklinma.gov

PLANNING BOARD

February 27, 2024

Zoning Board of Appeal
355 East Central Street
Franklin, MA 02038
Attn: Bruce Hunchard, Chair

Town Council
355 East Central Street
Franklin, MA 02038
Attn: Tom Mercer, Chair

RE: 444 East Central Street – LIP Friendly CH40B Development

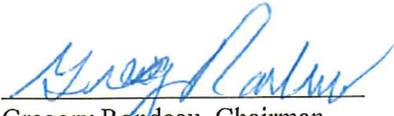
Please accept, on behalf of the Franklin Planning Board, the following letter, outlining the Board's recommendations pertaining to the proposed friendly 40B development at 444 East Central Street. This letter sets forth the Planning Board's recommendations related to the Board's review of the project, pursuant to the Town's recently adopted guidelines for reviewing Friendly 40B projects – Local Initiative Program.

The Planning Board voted 5-0 to recommend the project as currently presented with the ability to include changes listed in the attached letter, with a compromise between Central Street Residences and the Town of Franklin to create a project that would be better suited for the community.

The Planning Board's recommendations are based on (1) the Board's review of the Friendly 40B application submitted on December 22, 2023, (2) presentation made by the applicant, Central Street Residences, to the Planning Board on January 22, 2024 and February 26, 2024, (3) comments provided by DPCD at the February 26, 2024 Planning Board meeting (attached) and a letter from a resident, Gino Carlucci dated February 26, 2024 (attached). The Planning Board notes that most of items listed in the DPCD letter were addressed with the exception of moving the clubhouse.

The Planning Board looks forward to the applicant, as well as the Town Council and other Boards reviewing this project working together, to create a project that is reflective of a Friendly 40B project.

Thank you for providing the Planning Board an opportunity to provide feedback



Gregory Rondeau, Chairman
Franklin Planning Board

CC: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator
Conservation Commission
Bryan Taberner, Director of Planning and Community Development
Gus Brown, Building Commissioner
Catherine Racer, Director DHCD
Reiko Hayashi, LIP Director, DHCD

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: February 21, 2024
TO: Central Street Residences
FROM: Department of Planning and Community Development
RE: 444 East Central St
Preliminary Plan

DPCD has gathered the comments from the January 22, 2024 meeting and have provided them below:

- Turn the clubhouse main entrance towards the street and provide parking behind the building.
- Consider the 56-unit building located on the east side and closet to an abutter be three-stories.
- Apply with Design Review.
- Use elevation on the site to hide the buildings or ways to make the buildings look smaller, by providing an elevation study.
- Provide a shadow study for the four-story building to see the shadow cast onto the abutters.
- Suggested parking requirement of 1.35 seems low, and 1.5 would seem a little better.
- Look to add more 3 story buildings and less 4 story buildings, decreasing the unit count.
- Drop off and pick area for bus/GATRA
- Show the free standing garages on the concept plan.
- What is the total impervious coverage amount

Comments:

- Applicant has provided a response and revised Site Plans included in the submission.

Gino D. Carlucci, Jr.
1 Toni Lane
Franklin, MA 02038

February 26, 2024

Greg Rondeau, Chair
Franklin Planning Board
355 East Central Street
Franklin, MA 02038

Dear Mr. Rondeau and members of the Planning Board,

TAG Central, LLC is on your 2/26/24 agenda seeking support for its upcoming request to Town Council for support of a housing development at 444 East Central Street as a "Friendly 40B". While acknowledging that the town and the region is in dire need of additional housing, the Town should be careful to approve such housing in a manner that is beneficial and helps the Town achieve its long-term goals. This is especially true when such housing is discretionary and not as-of-right as is the case here.

The proposed 444 East Central Street project is in a location that is appropriate for housing in that it is close to services and amenities. The site offers an opportunity to help fill a housing need while also advancing other Town goals such as creating pedestrian and bicycle friendly opportunities, as well as helping to establish the East Central Street corridor as an inviting entrance to the downtown area.

Unfortunately, rather than advancing these goals, the current proposal significantly detracts from them. The totally traffic-inducing design will have a negative impact on this section of East Central Street for generations, and detract from Town efforts to become more walkable.

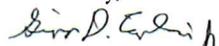
At this point, cars are a necessity in Franklin, and they need to be accommodated in this project. However, there is one relatively minor site change that could help mitigate the negative impact of the cars and the project. That change would be to relocate the proposed clubhouse to be close to and parallel to East Central Street with parking behind it. While there is no scale on the plan, the proposed clubhouse appears to be well over 100 feet from the street. Pedestrians would be passing a large open area consisting primarily of a driveway loop and parking spaces. This is the opposite of pedestrian-friendly. The building should be set back no further than the existing buildings on the site. Moving the building close to the street would have multiple benefits. It would:

- help frame the corridor (along with the other nearby buildings),
- advance the Town's pedestrian-oriented goals,
- identify the project as a part of the community rather than as an isolated complex separate from the rest of the town, and
- screen the parking as well as most of the large buildings behind it.

It is disappointing that the developer chose to decline the request of DPCD to make that change. As documented in the attached photos from Google Maps, most of the other buildings in the vicinity are close to the street and most have parking to the rear or side. This proposal would break from this pattern to the detriment of the neighborhood and the town. A Friendly 40B is supposed to attain that status because it helps the Town to achieve some of its goals besides the housing. This plan falls short of that.

For these reasons, I urge the Planning Board to withhold support of this project as a Friendly 40B unless the design is changed as outlined above.

Sincerely,



Gino D. Carlucci, Jr.

