

Planning Board

Gregory Rondeau, *Chair*
Beth A. Wierling, *Vice Chair*
Jennifer Williams, *Clerk*

**TOWN of
FRANKLIN**
MASSACHUSETTS

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Franklin, MA 02038
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March 27, 2025

Nancy Danello, Town Clerk
Town of Franklin
355 East Central Street
Franklin, MA 02038

RECEIVED
2025 MAR 26 P 2:37
TOWN OF FRANKLIN
TOWN CLERK

CERTIFICATE OF VOTE – SPECIAL PERMITS/SITE PLAN
SENIOR VILLAGE OVERLAY – AUTUMN HILL ESTATES – AUTUMN HILL ESTATES
488 & 496 Summer Street

Applicant: Suejo Corp.
PO Box 934
Wrentham, MA 02093

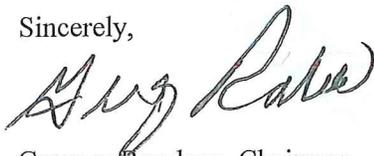
Owners: Bruce Hunchard Timothy Jones
496 Summer Street 488 Summer Street
Franklin, MA 02038 Franklin, MA 02038

Prepared By;
Surveyor/Engineer: Legacy Engineering LLC, 730 Main St, Millis, MA 02054
Plan Date: January 26, 2024
Property Location: 488 & 496 Summer Street
Map 302 Lots 006 & 008

Dear Mrs. Danello:

Please be advised that at its meeting on Monday, March 24, 2025 the Planning Board upon motion duly made and seconded, voted (1-4) to **approve** the Special Permit and Site Plan at 488 & 496 Summer Street for §185-48, Senior Village Overlay District. The Project Description, Public Hearing Presentation, Findings of Fact, Conditions and the Decision, are listed on pages 2 -8, attached hereto.

Sincerely,



Gregory Rondeau, Chairman
Franklin Planning Board

cc: Owners/Applicant/Applicant's Engineer/
Building Commissioner/DPW/Engineering/BETA Group, Inc.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
SENIOR VILLAGE OVERLAY – AUTUMN HILL ESTATES
488 & 496 Summer Street

The existing site at 488 & 496 Summer Street is developed with two single-family residential dwellings along Summer Street. Much of the site consists of wooded land that slopes downwards towards the east. Uncas Brook itself runs through the very back corner of the property and flows north away from the site. An existing walking trail cuts through the woods near the brook.

The proposed development consists of 28 senior dwelling units, which are anticipated to have between 28 and 56 total residents. The site also includes amenity areas and walking trails, along with all apparent driveways, parking areas, utilities, and stormwater management facilities.

PUBLIC HEARING
SENIOR VILLAGE OVERLAY – AUTUMN HILL ESTATES
488 & 496 Summer Street

A proper and complete notice of the February 26, 2024 public hearing was posted in the Franklin Municipal Building and in the appropriate local newspaper in accordance with the Franklin Zoning Code and Massachusetts General Laws. A proper and complete notice was also sent to all persons and parties required by law to receive such notice. The Planning Board continued to hold public hearings on February 26, April 8, May 20, July 8, August 19, September 23, October 21, 2024, January 27, February 24, and March 24, 2025.

Incorporated as part of the record are the following:

The Planning Board reviewed (1) the applicant's detailed written application including answers to Special Permit Findings (a) through (g), and (2) comments and review letters from various Town Departments, including but not limited to, Department of Planning & Community Development, Department of Public Works/ Engineering and Franklin Fire Department. The Planning Board also reviewed engineering reports from their peer review Consultant.

The Planning Board upon motion duly made and seconded, voted (5-0) to close the public hearing on March 24, 2025 for the Special Permit & Site Plan for §185-48, Senior Village Overlay District.

PRESENTATION
SENIOR VILLAGE OVERLAY – AUTUMN HILL ESTATES
488 & 496 Summer Street

The Planning Board opened the public hearing on February 26, 2024 for the Special Permit under Senior Village titled "Autumn Hill Senior Village" dated January 26, 2024, was submitted with two Special Permits and Site Plan. The site is located at 488 & 496 Summer Street in the Rural Residential I zoning district. The site is 12.2 acres with two existing single-family residential buildings. The applicant is proposing to construct 44 multi-unit residential buildings for over fifty-five (55) in age, under the Town of Franklin Zoning By-law Ch. 185-48 "Senior Village Overlay District." The applicant has not requested any waivers. As for Zoning By-Law §185-48 (D)(1)(G), the Town of Franklin has exceeded the 2.5 percent units for senior housing. Although the applicant provided a brief explanation for the need of the

Senior Housing, DPCD recommends that the Planning Board require the applicant to provide further information proving that there is a "critical Senior housing need" for the Town of Franklin. If this waiver is not granted, then the project is denied. She noted the applicant should also provide verification that DHCD will accept the 7 affordable units to be counted towards the Town of Franklin's total affordable units. The applicant has applied for Inclusionary Zoning. The Senior Overlay District already requires 15 percent affordable housing; therefore, the Inclusionary Zoning does not apply. As for Zoning By-Law §185-48 (D)(2)(c), the applicant is allowed 18 units; however, they have proposed 44 units, including 7 affordable units. The applicant should show on the plans 30 percent of permanent open space, per the zoning regulations. The Planning Board should determine if they will grant the applicant all 44 units. The applicant should identify on the plans the affordable units and each location of the unit.

Mr. Merrikin showed the plans and provided an overview of the proposal. He discussed the location of the two parcels. He reviewed the proposed layout for the total of 44 units. He said they are proposing an additional 7 affordable units for a total of 10 out of the 44 units which is about 23 percent. He said in the back of the property there is a river, Uncas Brook. He said the wetland resource areas are in the back of the property, and no work is proposed in any of those areas. He explained the entrance and driveway into the site with a circular access all the way around. He said there would be two parking spaces per unit. He said they provided comprehensive stormwater which BETA is reviewing. He discussed the private sewer system and said the applicant is proposing to extend the water main and a proposed booster pump station to increase water pressure. He said they are working with the DPW on this. He said they have open space proposed and are working on ideas for some walking paths. He said they are waiting for BETA's review.

The Planning Board questioned the base number of units and the additional units to calculate the affordable units. Mr. Merrikin explained the math related to the bonus provision in the bylaw for additional affordable units. The Planning Board reviewed the math for this from the notes on the plan. Mr. Merrikin said he can write the notes more clearly on the plan. The Planning Board asked about the two single-family homes that will remain on the property and if the residents will remain in those homes. Mr. Merrikin said those are going to become condominium units in the condominium complex, and at this time the current residents will remain there. In response to a question, he said there may be some work/renovations done on those homes. She said those two single-family homes are really not part of the senior village; they are just two homes in front of the complex. She said she would like to see cross-sections to see what the views would look like from the neighbors. She said the open space to her is like an afterthought. She said this is not a senior village. She asked where the gathering spaces and the sense of community are. She said this is just condos on the property. The Planning Board said the trails should be provided and asked what is the plan for the open space. She asked what amenities are being provided in the senior village. She said the open space is not contiguous, and she asked how they will make the open space more useable. Mr. Merrikin explained that the area is not contiguous as there is a utility connection proposed through there; however, a trail could meander through there. The Planning Board asked that the square footage to be provided on the plans for the open space areas. She asked for the plan on how the open space would be protected. She asked how many acres of trees are being removed. She asked why is this beneficial to approve 44 units when 19 are allowed; she said she does not see that it is feasible on this site. She asked that they really go through the bylaws. She asked the applicant to realistically provide the reasons why this development is happening.

The Planning Board asked about the density and the deforestation. She said there is over a 100 ft. grade range on the site from the street down to the town forest. She said it will change the experience of the town forest and walking trails as people will be looking up at the massive retaining walls and units. She said she would like to see trails on the plan. She said related to the significant grade change, they provided some driveway profiles. She said she is not sure how a driveway with an eight percent grade change is considered walkable for anybody, never mind an over-55 community.

Mr. Stickney said he echoed many of the concerns shared by his colleagues. He said often in this type of development there are many visitors; therefore, ancillary guest parking would be good. He suggested reducing the number of units and noted more than one entrance is needed. He said it is important to increase senior housing stock, but there needs to be modifications to some of these plans.

Many residents got up to speak during the public hearings. There were comments made about the number of units, the size of unit, traffic concern, the use of the two houses to gain more density and stormwater management concerns.

The Planning Board thanked all the abutters for coming to the meeting and articulating what she would have liked to have said. She said she agrees with the abutters 100 percent. She said that this property is not being developed with the intent of the senior village bylaw. She asked the applicant how they went from 19 to 44 units. She said it does not work here. She suggested the applicant find a way to make this work within the bylaw.

At the request of the Applicant, the Planning Board continued hearings dated April 8, May 20, July 8 & August 19, 2024.

The applicant submitted revised Site Plans for the September 23, 2024 public hearing. The applicant explained two units were removed, two parks were added for recreational areas, eight visitor parking spaces were added, sidewalk moved, location of the affordable units has been designated on the plan, gated emergency access added, and reduction in density from 44 to 40.

Ms. Love commented that the applicant provided a letter responding to some of the issues addressed at the February 26 meeting. The applicant reduced the number of units from 44 to 40, the Town of Franklin has exceeded the need for senior housing, and the Planning Board may waive this and allow for additional senior housing if they see the need. She said a waiver has not been requested.

The Planning Board again expressed concern for the density of integrity of the project. Most members said this project is not the intent of a Senior Village Overlay District. More amenities are needed, less units and more recreational access to the site. The Planning Board listened again to the resident's comments and concerns for the project. Chair Rondeau said the applicant needs to make some decisions and come back with a plan that suits the town and neighbors and make it work.

The Applicant returned on October 21, 2024 and provided numerous changes to the plans that included reduce unit count, to 30 units which includes the two existing homes. He explained that would be 28 new units with four affordable and the rest market rate. He explained the driveway, turnaround, cul de sac, emergency access, grading, some retaining walls, two stormwater basins, and reduced impervious coverage with this layout. He said they will be using only less than one-third of the site with this plan, and 50 percent of the site will be natural, undisturbed open space. He said they would like the Planning Board's feedback on this.

The Planning Board asked how large are the units. Mr. Merrikin said the units are two stories, about 2,000 sq. ft., with a first-floor master. Ms. Williams said if this is going to be considered a senior village, she would like it to feel more in the spirit of a senior village and not just using that as a way to get as densely populated as possible as what we see that looks like a subdivision. She asked about passive recreation, walkability, neighborhood amenities, and a scale home that is appropriate to those users. She said she would need to see a lot more in that regard. Mr. Merrikin noted the first-floor master and said each unit has a single-car garage and combination kitchen living room area on the first floor. The second

floor has additional rooms such as additional bedroom and office space. He said he has looked at the other senior villages in town, and they all look like this except the one that has not been built yet. He said what they are proposing is consistent with other senior villages. The Planning Board took in comments from the residents. The Applicant requested to be continued.

The Applicant submitted revised plans for the February 24, 2025 public hearing. The Planning Board said for this project, she is not convinced this is meeting the general feel of the senior village bylaw. She realizes the number of units is brought down from 44 to 28. She said considering they have met the 2.5 percent of existing single-family residences that shall be the number of senior units allowed in town unless we choose to waive that. So, the base number is potentially 19 units without any bonuses. She said she does not think 19 is in the nature of the senior village development, and listening to other Planning Board members, she would like to see it brought down to the base number of 19. The Planning Board members agreed.

The Planning Board continued the hearing to March 24, 2025, at which they discussed at length the project and voted to close the Public Hearing.

FINDINGS OF FACTS
SENIOR VILLAGE OVERLAY – AUTUMN HILL ESTATES
488 & 496 Summer Street

The applicant submitted their proposed findings with the original application on February 2, 2024 and are on record.

DECISION
SENIOR VILLAGE OVERLAY – AUTUMN HILL ESTATES
488 & 496 Summer Street

Special Permit: To allow §185-48, Senior Village Overlay District

(a) Proposed project addresses or is consistent with neighborhood or Town need.

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	NO
Jay Mello	YES	Beth Wierling	NO
Chris Stickney	NO		

Reason for denial: The design deficiencies of the site plan as proposed outweigh the overall need within the Town of Franklin for 28 age restricted senior housing units. In addition, the Senior Village as proposed at 488 & 496 Summer Street, superimposed on the Rural Residential I Zoning District, is not consistent with a neighborhood need in the Rural Residential zoning district along Summer Street.

The Town is already above our goals for the required amount of housing. With the density of this project we don't feel it is consistent with the Rural Residential I Zoning District.

(b) Vehicular traffic flow, access and parking and pedestrian safety are properly addressed.

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	YES
Jay Mello	YES	Beth Wierling	YES
Chris Stickney	YES		

(c) Public roadways, drainage, utilities and other infrastructure are adequate or will be upgraded to accommodate development.

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	YES
Jay Mello	YES	Beth Wierling	YES
Chris Stickney	YES		

(d) Neighborhood character and social structure will not be negatively impacted.

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	NO
Jay Mello	NO	Beth Wierling	YES
Chris Stickney	NO		

Reason for denial: Do not believe this type of density is aligned with the neighborhood characteristic.

(e) Project will not destroy or cause substantial damage to any environmentally-significant natural resource, habitat, or feature or, if it will, proposed mitigation, remediation, replication or compensatory measures are adequate.

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	NO
Jay Mello	YES	Beth Wierling	NO
Chris Stickney	YES		

Reason for denial: The Autumn Hill Senior Village does not adequately address Chapter 185, Section 48 Senior Village Overlay District, G. Review and Compliance, (1) Planning Board findings for senior village special permit, criteria a-c and the proposed development has not, through design and layout

succeeded in creating a true village setting with pedestrian orientation and character consistent with the historic development patterns of the Town of Franklin nor has it been designed as a well-integrated development in terms of land use, functional systems, and major design elements such as buildings, roads, and open space and as such site development will destroy and/or cause substantial damage to environmentally significant natural resources, habitats, and features.

(f) Number, height, bulk, location and siting of building(s) and structure(s) will not result in abutting properties being deprived of light or fresh air circulation or being exposed to flooding or subjected to excessive noise, odor, light, vibrations, or airborne particulates.

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	YES
Jay Mello	YES	Beth Wierling	YES
Chris Stickney	YES		

(g) Water consumption and sewer use, taking into consideration current and projected future local water supply and demand and wastewater treatment capacity, will not be excessive.

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	YES
Jay Mello	YES	Beth Wierling	YES
Chris Stickney	YES		

The proposed use will not have adverse effects which overbalance its beneficial effects on either the neighborhood or the Town, in view of the particular characteristics of the site and of the proposal in relation to that site.

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	NO
Jay Mello	YES	Beth Wierling	NO
Chris Stickney	NO		

Reason for denial: Autumn Hill Senior Village has not been designed with the true purpose and intent of Chapter 185-48 Senior Village Overlay District in mind. The proposed Senior Village, is only a viable project, if (2) pre-existing, single family residential homes are incorporated into the design creating an unusual horseshoe like lot, that requires nearly 50% of it to be clear cut in order to accommodate the proposed units, allow for required access and connection of utilities, leaving less than ideal land to meet the open space requirements for development as a Senior Village. It is intended that the benefits of senior village development will act to encourage property owners/developers to consolidate land parcels so that comprehensive and responsible site planning will occur; this is not responsible planning.

In addition, The Autumn Hill Senior Village has not been designed to adequately address Chapter 185, Section 48 Senior Village Overlay District, G. Review and Compliance, (1) Planning Board findings for senior village special permit, criteria a-c nor does the project sufficiently meet all the general special permit criteria (a)- (e). Because of this, the proposed use will have adverse effects which overbalance its beneficial effects on either the neighborhood or the Town, in view of the particular characteristics of the site and of the proposal in relation to that site.

Do not believe this is in the spirit of the intent of zoning bylaw 185-48(A) Senior Village overlay District as spelled out in our bylaws.

Based upon the information submitted during the public hearings, Planning Board's specific findings, the Planning Board specifically determines that allowing Site Plan and Special Permit to allow §185-48, Senior Village Overlay District will not have adverse effects which overbalance its beneficial effects on either the neighborhood or the Town, in view of the particular characteristics of the site and of the proposal in relation to that site.

Accordingly, at the Planning Board meeting on March 24, 2025 the Planning Board, upon motion duly made and seconded, voted (1-4) to *approve* the applicant's request to allow the Site Plan and Special Permit at 488 & 496 Summer Street.

The following members of the Planning Board were present at the hearing and voted as follows:

Gregory Rondeau	NO	Jennifer Williams	NO
Jay Mello	YES	Beth Wierling	NO
Chris Stickney	NO		

Any person aggrieved by the above decision of the Franklin Planning Board may file an appeal pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 17. Such appeal must be filed within twenty (20) days after the filing of the notice of the Board's decision with the Town Clerk.