

HANCOCK
ASSOCIATES

December 1, 2022

Franklin Zoning Board of Appeals
Bruce Hunchard, Chair
355 East Central Street
Franklin, MA 02038

Subject: 237 Pleasant Street – Comprehensive Permit

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Hancock Associates has been retained by your Board to perform a civil engineering technical review of the 237 Pleasant Street Comprehensive Permit. Hancock Associates has reviewed the Comprehensive Permit submission and offer the following as initial guidance to the Board.

Documents Reviewed

1. Application dated 9-22-22 signed by Kathleen A. McAdams
2. Site Plan prepared by Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. dated 9-10-22, containing 20 sheets, signed and stamped by Frank Homes PE
3. Narrative Description prepared by Attorney Peter L. Freeman 10-4-22.
4. Survey Narrative prepared by Frank Homes, PE Langan dated 10-10-22.
5. Rendering of Proposed Project prepared for The Community Builders, undated.
6. Architectural Plans prepared by DBVW Architects, Inc. dated 9-9-22, containing 68 sheets.
7. Building Tabulation, undated.
8. Subdivision Plan prepared by Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. dated 10-3-22
9. Project Eligibility Letter from Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development dated 9-15-22.
10. Deed recorded 12-1-1964 at Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 4216, Page 584 from William H. Golding to St. John's Episcopal Church of Franklin, describing a 15-acre parcel.
11. Requested Waiver List
12. Impact Statement
13. Traffic Assessment dated 7-29-22, prepared by Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.
14. Statement of Local Need
15. Certified Abutters List

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16. Franklin Zoning By-Law Chapter 185
17. Franklin Housing Production Plan April 2022.
18. Franklin Zoning Board of Appeals Comprehensive Permit Rules March 31, 2005.
19. Franklin Subdivision Regulations Chapter 300
20. Franklin Public Way Access Permit Regulation Chapter 131
21. Franklin Stormwater Regulations Chapter 153
22. Franklin Sidewalk and Street Regulations Chapter 155
23. Franklin Water Regulations (Town Council) Chapter 179
24. Franklin Water Regulations (Board of Health) Chapter 263

Initial Review of Submission

760 CMR 56.05 contains the required elements of a submission of a Comprehensive Permit to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The following is a review of the submission with regard to our civil review of these requirements:

- Preliminary site development plans with the locations and outlines of proposed buildings; the proposed locations, general dimensions, and materials for streets, drives, parking areas, walks and other paved areas; and proposed landscaping improvements. Any project of five or more units must have a site plan stamped by a registered professional architect or engineer.

The applicant has satisfied this requirement. A Plan set has been submitted prepared by Langan dated 9-10-22.

- An existing condition report on the proposed site and the surrounding areas.
The applicant has complied with this requirement. An existing condition plan is part of the site plan prepared by Langan, signed and sealed by Ian A. Wisuri, PLS, dated 5-26-21 was part of the site plan set.

- Tabulation of proposed buildings by type, size, and footprint, impervious coverage, and open space, including percentage of tract to be occupied by buildings, parking and paved vehicular areas.

The applicant has submitted tabulations for the buildings in separate documents from the architect and on the civil plans.

- A preliminary subdivision plan if the project involves a subdivision.
A Subdivision Plan has been submitted prepared by Langan, dated 10-3-22. The plan should be revised noting Approval Under the Subdivision Control Law Not Required. Additionally, zoning information should be added to the plan indicating Lot 1 to be fully compliant with zoning and Lot 2 zoning waivers required.

- A preliminary utilities plan (water, wastewater, drainage, and storm water management facilities).

The applicant has satisfied this requirement within the Lagan plan set referenced above.

Technical Review

Hancock has reviewed the plans and supporting documentation for soundness of methodology and calculations and conformity to standard engineering practice. We have also reviewed conformity to or deviation from by-laws, regulations and bylaws as they apply to issues of on-site engineering including grading, stormwater management, sewage and site traffic circulation. Lastly, we looked at off-site impacts. The review is all done within the context of the regulation's call for only the submission of preliminary plans. Our goal is to give the Board comfort that ultimately the project can be built in a manner that will protect the general public and future residents and visitors to the site through review, requests for additional information and suggestion of certain conditions of approval that will aid in meeting that goal.

Zoning Compliance

The project is proposed on a proposed 15.13-acre lot subdivided from an overall 19.46-acre parcel owned by St. John's Episcopal Church of Franklin.

Comment Z1: The Project Narrative describes the project as being on the full 19.5-acre parcel. The Applicant should clarify that the project and the Comprehensive Permit is only being proposed on the proposed 15.13-acre Lot 2.

Comment Z2: The deed for the property describes a 15-acre parcel. The Applicant should clarify the discrepancy between the deed and subdivision plan.

Comment Z3: The existing parking for St. John's church appears to contain 53 spaces. The proposal reconfigures the parking lot to have 53 spaces. The Zoning Bylaw requires one space per 2.5 fixed seats. The Applicant should provide information regarding the seating capacity of the church as the subdivision impacts the availability of area for future parking for the church if needed.

Comment Z4: The Zoning Bylaw requires that entrance or exit center lines shall not fall within 50 feet of an intersection of street side lines. The Applicant should specify the offset distance between the proposed entrance and Padden Road.

Comment Z5: The list of waivers appears to be a complete and thorough list of waivers from Zoning and applicable General Bylaws. The Applicant has included waivers from Franklin Subdivision Rules and Regulations. The project does not appear to propose a roadway and therefore requesting waivers from subdivision regulations seems unnecessary. Access to the project site is via a proposed driveway, not a roadway. The access driveway would not ever be considered for acceptance as a public way. The waivers include from the zoning requirement that parking areas for five or more cars shall not require backing onto a public way. This waiver is also not necessary.

Site Layout

The project proposes to reconfigure the church parking lot eliminating looped access to Pleasant Street from the church parking lot and providing a new access drive to the main development to the rear of the church on the new lot. Emergency access is proposed between the church lot and the new development parking lot.

Comment SL1:

The emergency access between the church and the new development parking lot is proposed as stabilized grass. No gate is proposed. It is important to note the Nation Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines recommend secondary access to residential projects having 100 units or more. Similarly, a stabilized grassed drive provides emergency access to the rear of Buildings 6 and 7 and at the end of the parking between Buildings 3 and 5. The plans call for the use of the Truegrid Permeable Paving System for these areas. The Applicant should provide additional data for this product and its suitability to support emergency vehicle loading include the use of fire aerial ladder truck stabilizers. The Board should then seek input from the Fire Department as to the adequacy of these access areas.

Comment SL2: The proposal calls for the elimination of the second access to the church parking lot and reconfiguration of the parking. The existing and proposed parking lots contain 53 spaces. The Applicant should comment on the number of spaces required based on the seating capacity of the church. Franklin Zoning requires 1 space per 2.5 fixed seats for places of assembly. The project eliminates possibility of significant parking expansion and should therefore be considered by the Board.

Comment SL3: The project proposes an accessible sidewalk from Pleasant Street to the clubhouse building (Building 1) with a series of ramps with handrails. The sidewalk system continues through the center of the site between Buildings 2, 3, 4 and 5 back to Buildings 6 and 7 utilizing stairs. An alternative accessible route is provided around Buildings 2 and 4 utilizing ramps with rails. The Applicant should verify compliance with accessibility regulations in not providing accessibility on the central pedestrian route.

Comment SL4: A 9' x 15' dumpster enclosure area is proposed at the far southwest corner of the project site adjacent to Building 6. The Applicant should clarify general approach to trash removal, if the area is adequately sized, will contain a compactor, include provisions for recycling and accommodate ADA accessibility.

Comment SL5: The project proposes 1.5 parking spaces per unit. The project proposes seven three bedroom and thirty-seven (37) two-bedroom units of the sixty-four (64) total units proposed. Franklin Zoning Bylaw requires two spaces per dwelling unit. The Applicant should provide additional support for the reduced parking. The project's deeper affordability may justify the reduced parking. The Applicant should provide examples of existing projects with similar unit mix and affordability with similar parking ratios.

Alternatively, the Applicant should propose a land banked area for parking that could be built in the event parking is found to be insufficient.

Comment SL6: Given the steep grades adjacent to many of the driveways, the Applicant should consider adding guard rails and fencing to protect vehicle and pedestrians.

Site Grading

Comment G1: The access drive intersection of Pleasant Street does not provide a leveling area. As outlined in the requested waiver from subdivision regulations, on any street where the grade exceeds 6.0% on the approach to an intersection, a leveling area with a slope of not more than 3.0% shall be provided for a distance of not less than 100 feet, measured from the nearest exterior line of the intersecting street. As discussed above, the subdivision regulations are not applicable to the project but do provide guidance on how Franklin defines a safe intersection. The Applicant should comment on the safety of the proposed 8% access driveway intersecting Pleasant Street with no leveling area.

Comment G2: The project includes a great deal of earthwork. The Applicant should provide the Board with an estimated quantity of total earthwork as well as import and/or export anticipated and need for waivers from Franklin Earth Removal requirements (185-23).

Comment G3: No soil testing information was provided. The project impact on, and measures to deal with groundwater should be addressed.

Comment G3: The Wetland Buffer Zone should be added to the Grading and Drainage Plan. No waiver has been requested from the Franklin Wetlands Bylaw or Wetland Regulations. The 100-foot buffer zone has a presumption of significance and is considered a resource area under the bylaw. The Board must consider the provisions of the bylaw and regulations in considering issuance of the Comprehensive Permit. The Applicant should provide information regarding the quantity and proximity of buffer zone impact as defined in the regulations.

Utilities

The project proposes connection to the municipal sewer and water systems in Pleasant Street. A small extension of the gravity sewer will be required for the connection of a proposed on site pump station and force main. A proposed water main is shown on the Utility Plan from Pleasant Street into the site along the access drive and between the buildings to the rear of the site. The water main dead ends between Buildings 6 and 7.

Comment U1: The Applicant should provide sewer design flow and water demand and comment on the capacities of the municipal systems to service the project included available information from flow tests performed proximate to the site.

Comment U2: No municipal water main is shown in Pleasant Street. The Applicant should rectify this omission on the plans.

Comment U3: The Board should seek input from the Franklin Fire Department with regard to the proposed locations of site fire hydrants.

Stormwater

The proposed stormwater system includes multiple proposed catch basins throughout the site to collect runoff and a pipe network connected to two detention/infiltration basins located to the rear of the site. In some respects, the design appears highly developed with elevation data provided for the piped system. No stormwater report was included in the submission. The site is within a Zone II Wellhead Protection Area related to public wells in Norfolk.

Comment S1: The Applicant should provide a preliminary stormwater report outlining how the project complies with MassDEP Stormwater requirements. Additionally, the Applicant has only requested a waiver from the provision of the Franklin Stormwater Regulations requiring DPW Director approval. A waiver from the performance standards has not been requested. The local standards required removal of 90% of the average annual load of total suspended solids (TSS) generated from the total post-construction impervious area on the site and 60% of the average annual load of total phosphorus (TP) generated from the total post-construction impervious surface area on the site. The Applicant should provide information as to how the project will meet these standards. Hancock will provide additional review and commentary once received.

Comment S2: The project involves modification to the church parking lot including installation of a new drainage system. The new system for the church does not appear to have provisions for treatment, attenuation or recharge. As this would be considered redevelopment, the Applicant should comply with MassDEP redevelopment standards to the extent practicable.

Landscaping

The Applicant has included a detailed landscape plan.

Comment LS 1: The Applicant has not requested a waiver from Zoning Bylaw Section 185-21 C(5). The Landscape Plan should be revised verifying compliance with this section with regard to the number of trees proposed.

Lighting

The Applicant has included a detailed lighting plan with details of the proposed light fixtures and anticipated light levels in the proposed parking lot.

Comment L1: No lighting is shown for the reconfigured church parking lot. The Applicant should address the proposal for lighting in this parking lot and to the degree possible adhere to lighting Franklin Zoning Bylaw Section 185-31.1C(4)(e)

Traffic Circulation and Fire Access

The Applicant has provided a Traffic Assessment. This is not a full standard Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) in accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Guidelines for traffic impact assessments and the standards of the Traffic Engineering and Transportation Planning professions for the preparation of such reports. The report presents information regarding anticipated trip generation, historic crash data and some evaluation of intersection safety with regard to safe sight distances. It could be argued that the trip generated by the project are low enough as to not warrant a full TIA by quantifying the impact the existing roadway and intersections on the area, however, no data is provided as to the existing daily and peak traffic in the area.

Comment T1: The assessment does not evaluate on site circulation, proximity of the proposed entrance to Padden Street and sufficiency of parking

Comment T2: The sight distance requirements are based on 5 miles per hour below the posted speed limit. Standard practice is to base the requirements on the 85th percentile speed based on a speed study performed.

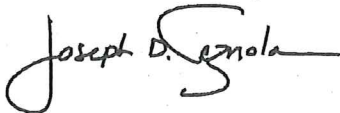
Comment T3: The sight distances available are only reported as greater than the required. Actual sight distances should be provided and the criteria for those measurements. Sight distance triangles should be added to the plans to ensure signage and landscaping do not obscure available sight lines and the area within the triangles is either within the subject property, property controlled by the Applicant via easement or within the right of way of Pleasant Street.

Comment T4: A swept path analysis has been provided showing the movements of an emergency vehicle through the site. The Board should seek input from the Franklin Fire Department regarding this analysis.

Hancock suggests the Applicant's team compile a point-by-point response letter to this report to assist the Board with their review.

We look forward to assisting the Board in this complex and dynamic process. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,
Hancock Associates,



Joseph D. Peznola, PE
Director of Engineering

cc: Attorney Peter L. Freeman