

May 9, 2019

VIA EMAIL AND BY HAND

Mr. Bob Gambale, Chair
Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of Ipswich
c/o Building Department
Town Hall
25 Green Street
Ipswich, Massachusetts 01938

RE: Project: Essex Pastures Comprehensive Permit Application
Property: 26, 36, 38, 42 and 44 Essex Road
Petitioner: Essex Pastures LLC (John J. Bruni, Manager)
Owner: Southern Cross Realty Trust (John J. Bruni, Trustee)
Follow-Up Design Adjustments

Dear Chair Gambale and Other Members of the Board:

On behalf of Essex Pastures LLC, the Petitioner/Applicant, the following is the Applicant's compiled response to certain matters raised by the Board and the public at the Board's March 21, 2019 hearing, as well as comments arising from the workshop meeting held among the Board's peer review architect, Cliff Boehmer, Board Member Clocker, the Applicant's architect, Andrew Zalewski, and the Applicant's civil engineer, Bree Sullivan.

For purposes of organizing this response letter, we have grouped sets of issues raised, followed by a response by the Applicant's Project Team concerning the same.

Architectural Matters

1. **Multifamily Buildings** – concern about length of combined buildings; need to break up the buildings.
 - Based upon further discussion with Cliff Boehmer and Member Clocker, each 66 Unit building has been modified to be separated into two separate 33-unit buildings each which, in turn, reduces the massing of the previous building layout. The resulting buildings remain as 3-story buildings.
 - As a result of the building separation, we have introduced an approximate 15-foot green landscaped area located between each of the separated buildings, along with new paths integrated into the pedestrian walkway network.
 - The exterior HVAC equipment will consist of "mini split" high efficiency heat pump/air conditioning systems that will be shrouded below the peak of the roof line for both visual and acoustic reasons. The specified units have a very low

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ambient decibel rating. The specifications for these units, which are considered high energy efficiency units, include a rated decibel level of 48 dB, which is less than the decibel level of a person having a normal conversation (i.e., 60 dB). A cut sheet for these units and decibel chart are attached to the materials accompanying this letter.

- Lastly, a concern was raised about energy efficiency of the buildings. All buildings will be constructed to the latest building and energy codes utilizing high efficiency heating, cooling, plumbing (water conservation), lighting/electrical and insulation values/techniques. In addition, all residential units will be “sub metered” to monitor water usages on a real time basis that will allow for intervention of potential leaks and mis-use of water in the units. In the spirit of increasing energy efficiency, we have also incorporated six electric vehicle charging stations interspersed throughout the site. As a result, these buildings and units will likely be designed to be more energy efficient than most multifamily residential units within the Town of Ipswich.

2. Clubhouse/Leasing Office – matters raised include the programming of the clubhouse, adequacy of shelter are and related modifications to accommodate schoolchildren for a bus stop.

- Clubhouse porch area has been modified from a 5' x 22' area to a revised farmer's porch design having dimensions of 10' x 44' to safely accommodate children for a bus stop area, and can serve as a safe area that can protect children during inclement weather as they wait for a bus.
- This porch area design change represents over a threefold increase in waiting area space under such porch.
- The clubhouse building plans have been adjusted to incorporate the design above, and to further elaborate on the clubhouse uses discussed at the last hearing, the clubhouse facility will be programmed to include: (a) a small management/leasing office for a full-time property manager; (b) a small conference room that will be utilized by management for lease transactions as well as available for residents to use booked by appointment; (c) a package room providing for centralized mail delivery including an automated app-based “mail room” to provide for access to deliveries dropped off in secure lock boxes accessed directly by residents during convenient hours (separate entrance provided), which facility will be monitored by video surveillance; (d) two ADA compliant restrooms available during office hours and functions; (e) a main entrance/foyer area; (f) a multipurpose function room area with limited preparation/food storage area (no cooking facilities provided but having refrigerator and sink facilities) for use by residents and their guests for family social functions, educational and informative gatherings which are booked by appointment with management; and, (f) adjacent to the clubhouse, a small outside patio area to the rear of the clubhouse for use by residents and their guests where

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BBQ cooking grills will be provided for use by residents. Clubhouse use will be limited to tenants and their invitees, and well as leasing/management staff.

- The tot lot area previously located adjacent to the clubhouse has been relocated to the central open space common area which will be more centralized along with other recreational options within this village green common area.
- We have reached out to the Town of Ipswich Public Schools as well as the bus company responsible for the transportation of schoolchildren within Ipswich but have not yet received a definitive answer on whether a school bus will enter the site to pick up students. Whether a stop is at Ipswich Road or internal to the site, the clubhouse area will remain as the central location for student pickup, and hope to have further information by the date of this month's hearing.

3. Mixed Use Building – identification of permitted uses within the commercial space.

- The mixed-use building has been integrated into the residential community as a “focal point” of the community. The plan is to have a mix of commercial uses that will provide residents and the neighborhood with access to essential and convenient services that will enhance the experience of being a resident at Essex Pastures.
- Some of these commercial services within the 11,000 s.f. of ground floor space of the mixed use building may include:
 - Medical Office,
 - Dry Cleaning,
 - Café / Food service with limited on-premise seating / outdoor seating (seasonal),
 - Animal grooming / care,
 - Convenience / sundries,
 - Banking,
 - Hair salon,
 - Spa / health training facility, or
 - Professional services offices.
- The same building standards will be utilized on this building as the other residential buildings with the addition of more intensive fire sprinkler coverage (for mixed use area), increase ventilation and HVAC requirements (vertical ventilation chases will be planned to deal with the possibility of siting a limited commercial kitchen on the premises). The rooftop insets in this building are large enough to handle the residential HVAC equipment as well as the limited commercial HVAC and cooking ventilation requirements.
- The site plans provide the parking requirements for each of the above potential uses based upon occupied square footages. It is recognized that there may be times throughout the business day where parking will be “shared” between Lot R (40B lot) and Lot H (40A lot). It is also understood that an agreement between the record owner of Lot R and Lot H (respectively) would be executed to enable

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limited shared parking of vehicles across lot lines as permitted under the Ipswich Zoning Bylaw, Section VII ,Parking and Loading Regulations, subsection E. (Joint use of Parking), and subsection G. (Mixed use Buildings).

- As to traffic generation, we note that since approximately 9,860 S.F. of commercial space currently exists (between the two buildings that will be re-developed into the proposed mixed-use building), the increased commercial square footage may be all or partially offset by the drop in overall residential units originally proposed on the site, subject to confirmation in an updated traffic generation memorandum which can be provided by the Traffic engineer, if needed.
- The mixed use building will be programmed to provide primarily supporting uses for the residential community, but would also be open to the public much like the existing commercial uses on the Property provide, and are not designed to be high traffic generation uses.

4. Garage Structures – proposed treatments for the rear of garages facing neighbors.

- Detached garage units will be available on a first come first serve basis to residents for car storage for a monthly additional fee.
- The units will have an upper shelf over the engine hood area to store items. The units will be fitted with motion sensing lighting, conduits to facilitate adding electric charging stations and motorized door openers.
- Two of the garage units will be fitted as resident bicycle storage.
- Updated elevation plans now depict the rear of the garages as including a clapboard treatment.
- We envision that these garage structures will also serve as limited screening, along with other screening techniques including a combination of berming, landscaping and fencing along these perimeter areas, such that they will be screened in a manner similar to other garages within the general neighborhood.

5. Maintenance Building

- The maintenance building will serve as a base for snow removal equipment storage, grounds equipment storage as well as storage of spare items (such as replacement plumbing fixtures and parts) to facilitate prompt preventive and emergency service.
- This building is located close to the clubhouse/management building at the front of the facility so that snow removal personal can readily access the building to begin snow removal operations during a storm event.
- Equipment will be stored inside the building, reducing safety concerns and visual impact.

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Other Matters.

6. **Residential Unit Count** – allocation of residential unit bedroom count under revised project.
 - Of the total number of 172 residential units proposed, a total of 38 units will be 1-BR units, a total of 114 units are 2BR units, and a total of 20 units will be 3BR units.
 - We also note that 75% of these units (or 129 units) will be market-rate units, and the 25% remainder of the units (or 43 units) will be affordable to persons earning no more than 80% area median income, as adjusted for household size, as required under Chapter 40B and related subsidy program requirements.

7. **Site Civil, Design, Landscaping and Other Matters.** Matters related to site design and layout, landscape design, site lighting and open space, and the programming of the central village green open space/common area are discussed in a separate memorandum prepared by Bayside Engineering, Inc. which is attached to these materials.

SMOLAK & VAUGHAN LLP

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We look forward to working with the Board on the review of these matters. In the interim, please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



John T. Smolak

JTS:

cc: Mr. John J. Bruni, Manager, Essex Pastures LLC
Distribution List

Attachments:

1. Technical Memorandum, dated May 9, 2019, to Chair, Zoning Board of Appeals, and prepared by Bree Sullivan, P.E., Bayside Engineering, Inc.
2. Revised Architectural Plans, consisting of 11 sheets, entitled "Essex Pastures," dated May 9, 2019, prepared by MZP Group, Inc.
3. Cut Sheet/Specification for Mitsubishi Units & Decibel Chart;
4. Revised Civil Plans (Rev. 5.9.19), prepared by Bayside Engineering, Inc., including: Proposed Site Plan; Site Plan Cut Lines; Building Sight Lines; and, Autoturn Fire Truck Turning Movements.