



TOWN OF COHASSET PLANNING

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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 15, 2020

To: Planning Board

From: Lauren Lind, Planning Director

RE: Additional Public Comments Received regarding HVBOD SP & SPR Application 124/87 Elm Street

The following public comment was received regarding the Harbor Village Business Overlay District Special Permit and Site Plan Review Application for 124/87 Elm Street between June 8, 2020 and July 15, 2020.:

July 7, 2020* (*received evening of 7/7 after public comment letter from 6/26-7/7 was distributed) – **Jean Patterson, 12 Ledgewood Farm Drive; Comment via email:**

“Dear Lauren,

I had joined the virtual Public Hearing for the Cohasset Harbor Inn Redevelopment Project a few weeks ago, which was continued to July 8th.

You had indicated that if anyone had comments for the planning board to submit them to you via email. As the Planning Board begins its oversight, I thought I would share some of my perspective for your consideration. These are just a few thoughts and they may be more appropriate to actually share with the developers but I thought I would start with you.

In general I support the project. I believe the town needs more affordable properties, condo style homes, primarily for the 55+ age group who have lived in Cohasset for 20-30 + years, raised a family here, paid taxes, and are now ready to sell their homes and downsize into a smaller more maintenance free living accommodation.

I am not sure the intent for the Harbor Inn redevelopment project. Is the target market the 55+ retirement community or is it going to be mixed family use? My preference would be to limit to 55+, which would also reduce the burden of additional children on the schools. Particularly if we have to continue under the pandemic guidelines of 10 students per class. Also, the units are intended for families and children are allowed, I would hope the board would ensure that the developers put precautions will be in place to prevent children from accidentally ending up in the water if they were to wander from a unit into the park area. I am not sure what liability the town would have if such an unfortunate event would to occur?

If the intent for the complex is as a 55+ retirement community, I hope that the Planning Board encourages the developers to keep the units high quality, yet affordable over high end luxury. I am finding that in the current Cohasset real estate market, an empty nester couple could sell their \$1M + home but struggle to find a smaller home and remain in Cohasset. Or if they find a smaller home, they may almost have to pay as much or more than they get for the home they are selling which defeats the purpose of selling and wanting to have some equity for retirement.

I read that the Complex plans call for 29 Residences. My first reaction was that it seems to be a lot of units for that physical space. I would like the Board to get comfortable with that number while also ensuring that the space can accommodate and allow for residential amenities such as: fitness center, community room, outdoor grills, pool, unit storage, visitor parking, etc.

The plans also indicated the allocation of 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom units. This division of units amongst 1 bedroom, 2 bedrooms, and 3 bedrooms as shown in the plans appears to be pre-pandemic. Only 8 units are 3 bedroom and most will be two bedroom. In light of this new era of more people working from home, I believe the Board should encourage the developers to re-configure the plans and potentially reduce the total number of residences and expand the footprint of the residences intended to be 2 Bedrooms to include a room for an office; or have more than 3 bedroom units within the complex. I believe this will make the project more successful overall, offering a value to those who now need more space at home.

As the Board reviews the plans, I do think attention should be paid to the traffic flow, and the capacity for cars for residents and visitors. Where will the entrances and exits be, how will it impact summer traffic flow, blind spots around the curves in the road, the on street parking of boaters and fisherman, etc? Also, how do the developers intend to prevent non residents from parking in the complex during the peak summer months.

I also read that the intent is to have commercial business in the complex as well. How will they accommodate parking for visitors to the stores in an area where it already seems to have limited street parking.

Another concern would be winter and potential storms throughout the year, how are they planning to protect the units and cars from rising water, floods, salt etc?. Are they going to have to build any walls/barriers that would take away from the aesthetics of the harbor and its views?

These are just a few thoughts I had. Looking forward to seeing how this all comes together.

-Jean Patterson

12 Ledgewood Farm Dr.”

July 8, 2020 – Douglas O’Brien, 16 Oak Street ; Comment via email:

“Good morning Lauren,

I hope this email finds you well and you had a celebratory July 4th weekend.

My name is Doug O'Brien and I live at 16 Oak Street in Cohasset. My family and I have been here since 2013 and prior to that I grew up in Cohasset.

I am writing to you today to fully endorse the redevelopment plan by CHI Elm Street Realty, LLC for the Cohasset Harbor Inn. I believe the town will greatly benefit from the redevelopment of this property. As we all know, the inn functionality is seasonal at best (weddings, summer tourists, etc.), and mostly a dark space for the rest of the year. Redevelopment of this area with condos, water views from Elm Street, a harbor walkway, and green, public space in the rear of the condos will vastly improve not only the aesthetic of the harbor, but also serve as a new public forum to be enjoyed by all. Seasonal kiosks in the public space/harbor walkway will allow all to enjoy the beauty of the harbor with refreshments. A one stop shop if you will. I fully believe that the redevelopment of this site is imperative in the plan to revitalize the harbor.

Please use this email as my full endorsement of the proposed plan by CHI Elm Street Realty, LLC.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Douglas A. O'Brien”

July 8, 2020 – Victoria O’Brien, 16 Oak Street; Comment via email:

“Lauren,

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> I am writing to express my support for the Harbor Redevelopment plans put forth by CHI Elm Street Realty. My Grandfather was born in Cohasset, my mother grew up here, and I am raising my children in Cohasset with my husband who has only ever lived in Cohasset. We got married at Atlantica in 2013 and truly love this town and desperately want to see the Harbor redeveloped. The Inn has been an eye sore for way too long and has taken up precious real estate.

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> I believe the architectural design elements are a perfect compliment to the seaside feel and I absolutely love that there will be ample space for all residents to enjoy views of the harbor. My husband and I definitely envision walking with our kids on the harbor walk and enjoying the seasonal kiosks. Being able to enjoy the harbor will be a benefit for all residents. I also believe the developers have been tasteful in the number of units they plan to build. We were fearful that the harbor would be crowded with more unsuccessful retail so we are happy to see all the green space.

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> I hope the committee will work collaboratively with the development team to get this project underway so our harbor can finally be revitalized!

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> Sincerely,

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> Victoria O’Brien

> 16 Oak Street, Cohasset MA”

July 8, 2020 – Jeff Roberts, 68 Summer Street; Comment via email:

“Hi Lauren,

My family and I reside at 68 Summer St. I have reviewed the plans submitted by CHI Elm Street Realty LLC that were posted to the town website. I originally had a lot of concerns about the proposal and those concerns have been alleviated. It is clear that the past 18 months of public meetings has resulted in a very thoughtful and considerate proposal that balances a variety of uses that will greatly benefit all residents of Cohasset. Most notably, I was impressed by the new view corridor that is being proposed down Elm Street. The view corridor looks to be much larger and more expansive than I thought it would be. I also am encouraged by the new views created down Summer Street.

Based on my review, it appears that the proposal meets the majority of the zoning requirements that the town voted on in April 2019 with the exception of the commercial parking requirement. After reviewing the materials submitted, it appears that the proposal includes adequate parking for the uses. We all have to remember that the harbor is most frequented between memorial day and labor day and that it is dark and quiet for the majority of the year. Quite honestly, I was expecting something much more dense, taller and more obstructive to access the harbor. This proposal is quite the opposite and it appears that the process is working well. I can’t wait for the day when I can enjoy my morning coffee as the sun rises over the harbor at a new waterfront park with young children.

Thanks,

Jeff Roberts

68 Summer Street”

July 8, 2020 – Julian Casey, 374 Beechwood Street; Comment via email:

“Hope you and yours are well!

My name is Julian Casey and I live over at 374 Beechwood street with my wife and daughter. I wanted to write you a quick note to express my endorsement for the harbor development located on the cohasset harbor.

We have been watching this development over the past 2 years and couldn't be more excited to see it become a reality. Cohasset has such a beautiful harbor but unfortunately with limited access to enjoy the area and its amazing views. Since we live in a part of town away from the coast/harbor this would provide easy access where we can bring our daughter for walks along the water.

I will be watching the planning board meeting tonight in hopes that everyone sees how much this development will improve the quality of life in this little slice of heaven we call home.

Thanks so much for your time!

Best,

Julian G. Casey

374 Beechwood Street

Cohasset, MA 02025”

July 8, 2020 – Katie Dunn, ___?___; Comment via email:

“Hi Lauren,

I sent an email off of your website and just realized it didn't go through regarding meeting tonight. Here is the email I thought had sent:

I am checking in because I wanted to email members of the planning board in advance of the meeting tonight re: the plans for the harbor property but cannot find the Planning Board members email addresses anywhere. Could you possibly forward my comments and concerns along and cc: me so I know that they received my email? I'd really appreciate it.

I have the following concerns:

1. It appears that the five or six spots where residents currently park to use the town dock on the Margin St./Elm Street side of the harbor would be filled in by a sidewalk. This would eliminate access for people who regularly use that parking to launch kayaks, paddleboards or to access dinghies.
2. Given that dozens of children ride their bikes on both sides of the proposed development to the Cohasset Sailing Club and Cohasset Yacht Club each day during the summer, adding 58-60 cars entering and exiting the condos could be very dangerous. And, It would add a lot of traffic overall to roads where residents frequently run, walk and bike for recreation.
3. What rules would be put in place to keep residents from using the parking spaces designated for town people versus parking underground if the underground parking is inconvenient for the residents?

Thank you for your help with this. I appreciate it.

Regards,

Katie Dunn”

July 8, 2020 – Chris McFarlane, 50 Reservoir Road; Comment received via email:

“Please tell me how I might procure an AutoCAD version of the site plan so that I might do area take-offs of proposed uses”

Chris Macfarlane

Elysium Design Landscape Architecture

50 Reservoir Road, Cohasset, MA 02025

July 9, 2020 – Katie Dunn, ___?___; Comment received via email:

“Hi Lauren,

I attended the public hearing for the CHP harbor project the other night. I left the meeting after one of the members said that there was no need to get into "minutiae" at the meeting and that public comments could be handled at a later date. Maybe this wasn't a public hearing? I've attended three public hearings on Zoom in Hull because I am on the Straits Pond Watershed Association. At all of those meetings, the attendees were shown as part of the meeting and put themselves on mute until the time for comment. And, each person asked to be recognized when they wanted to speak and were granted to do so by the chairman of the committee. And, there was a sidebar for questions like you had last night. It felt like last night was not a public hearing and that public discussion was not very welcome. Maybe that wasn't the intention of the meeting. These are challenging times in so many ways including public government and meetings. There are ways to make the public feel welcome and listened to on Zoom by just tweaking settings and letting people have the chance to speak when the time is allotted.

Thank. you for listening to my thoughts. I appreciate it.

Regards,

Katie Dunn
