



TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5338

April 15, 2015

Mr. Gregory Watson
Manager of Comprehensive Permit Programs
MassHousing
One Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108-3110

Re: The Pointe at Hills Farm Project Eligibility Application
Supplemental Planning Department Comments

Dear Mr. Watson,

The Town of Shrewsbury received a copy of the Project Eligibility Application submitted to MassHousing by Smart Growth Design, LLC on December 9, 2014. The Board of Selectmen issued preliminary comments on December 17, 2014. The following are additional comments on said application after further review by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Department.

We believe that our comments of December 17, 2014 regarding Zoning and Planning Concerns, Application Inconsistencies, Design Concerns, Environmental Impacts and Traffic Impacts alone are enough to warrant rejecting the proposed project. If MassHousing does choose to move forward and issue a letter of Site Eligibility, we ask that they do so in a way that is consistent with our current Housing Production Plan and only allow for the creation of 140 units. The creation of 140 units would provide the Town of Shrewsbury with the adequate amount of units created in one calendar year to satisfy the Certification of Municipal Compliance for a period of two years according to the DHCD Regulations.

Also, in accordance with our approved Housing Production Plan and the Shrewsbury Zoning Bylaw, the Town permitted a mixed use project, known as Lakeway Commons, in February 2015 for 100,000 square feet of retail, 250 apartment units and 13 townhouse units. 10% of all of the housing units will be affordable in accordance with the Lakeway Overlay District and the Inclusionary Housing provisions within the Shrewsbury Zoning Bylaw. Therefore, we anticipate 27 affordable units coming online in 2016 and counting towards the SHI.

This project is proposed on Limited Industrial property and is not a use allowed under the Shrewsbury Zoning Bylaw in this district. The Town has very little Limited Industrial land available for development that also has access to the sewer. The Town is currently undergoing a

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Master Plan Update and has already gone through an Economic Development Self-Assessment Took Kit Study and a Housing Production Plan that was approved by DHCD. This property is not appropriate for housing based upon the zoning, the location and the studies that have been prepared. Many waivers have been requested from the Zoning Bylaw for the proposed project. There appears to be a large massing of 120 units in one proposed building of 5 stories, 68 feet high (Phase II, Site Plan Exhibit). The Town currently does not have any 5 story housing developments and such building heights are not even allowed in the Limited Industrial Zoning District. The Limited Industrial Zoning District allows for 4 stories and 50 feet of height.

In addition to the project being located in the Limited Industrial Zoning District, the development would be against Environmental Justice policy as the property would not allow for all residents of the project to have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. As you may have noticed at the site visit, both properties abut and are located across the street from high industrial uses.

We are concerned about the number of school children that may be entering the Shrewsbury Public School system at one time if 300 units are approved and built. We need time for the school department to adjust and plan for such an influx.

After the site visit in January 2015 with MassHousing, we also have additional concerns about the vehicular access onto both parcels. We believe that on the east parcel, all access to the property shall be off Route 20, with an emergency access off Stoney Hill Road. Due to the slopes associated with the west parcel, we would like to see several alternatives for access studied in that location. The project is not proximate to public transportation as the only bus line through Shrewsbury is WRTA Route 15 that runs along Route 9 and through the center of town. Therefore, vehicle trips generated from such a project at all hours of the day is also a concern.

We understand that the developer of the proposed project has yet to well define the impacts on the Town's sewer system and if the system will even be able to accommodate the proposed connection.

Again, we would like to restate our concerns of December 2014 for your use.

Zoning & Planning Concerns

- The project has been proposed on two Limited Industrial zoned pieces of property. The Town has very little Limited Industrial land available for development that also has access to the sewer. The Town is currently undergoing a Master Plan Update and has already gone through an Economic Development Self-Assessment Took Kit Study and a Housing Production Plan that was approved by DHCD. This property is not appropriate for housing based upon the zoning, the location and the studies that have been prepared.
- Many waivers have been requested from the Zoning Bylaw for the proposed project.

- There appears to be a large massing of 120 units in one proposed building of 5 stories, 58 feet high (Phase II). The Town currently does not have any 5 story housing developments and such building heights are not even allowed in the Limited Industrial Zoning District. The Limited Industrial Zoning District allows for 4 stories and 50 feet of height.
- Upgrades will likely need to occur to the existing sewer utilities along Hartford Tpke and Stoney Hill Rd and various pump stations, which could potentially drive up development costs.
- The project will likely be subject to MEPA review due to the number of Parking Spaces created and an Access Permit being required by MassDOT.
- The Grafton MBTA commuter rail station is greater than 1.6 miles from the project site and additionally is accessible only by car as there is no sidewalk on Rt. 20.
- Under Tab 14, the claims that the project offers transportation choice, that the WRTA bus could be extended to the site, and that the project is proximate to basic needs are not supported by documentation in the application. We do not feel that this is an accurate statement based upon the existing condition or the projected conditions over the next five or more years. Additionally, on page 6 of the MassHousing application, the applicant has selected "NO" to all public transportation options.

Application Inconsistencies & Comments

- The number of 3 bedroom apartments in the unit mix on page 9 does not meet the 10% requirement. 19 units are supplied while 10% of 300 is 30 units.
- Page 15 of the Mass Housing application does not seem complete as the applicant did not provide a cost for the majority of the Construction Site Work Hard Costs.
- Page 16 of the application does not reflect accurately the Comprehensive Permit Filing Fees for the Town of Shrewsbury, per the ZBA's Comprehensive Permit Regulations, dated November 24, 2014.
- MassHousing, in reviewing the project, has to take into consideration municipal actions previously taken to meet affordable housing needs. The Town of Shrewsbury has taken the following steps to address these needs:
 - RFP for Mixed Use 40B, due September 30, 2014. The Town received three submittals, including the one from Smart Growth, LLC, and chose to partner with another mixed use 40B project proposed off Walnut Street and Route 9. Currently, the Town is still working with the chosen applicant in order to finalize the project prior to a LIP submittal
 - Multi-Family Zoning districts
 - Inclusionary Housing Bylaw
 - Approved Housing Production Plan
- The applicant does not describe the Existing Utilities and Infrastructure on page 6 of the MassHousing application or in Tab 8 under Existing Conditions.

- Outcropping shown on the “Phase II Grading, Drainage and Utilities Plan” while elsewhere in the document the applicant claims there is no ledge on the site.
- The current value of the land as taken from the assessor’s data is \$1.4 million, not \$1.5 million as the applicant claims for the site acquisition. The applicant also states that the land was a family transfer and on page 12 does not give a purchase price for the parcels.
- Different numbers of units are given for both the affordable and market rate unit breakdown of number of units with 1, 2, or 3 bedrooms throughout the application.
- There was no public hearing on August 26, 2014 as the applicant stated in their application. A public meeting was held with the Board of Selectmen on that date. No public comment was taken.
- The September 10, 2014 meeting was not just for the applicants but was a pre-submittal informational meeting for the mixed use 40B RFP issued by the Board of Selectmen. The project before you was not discussed in detail at this meeting. The meeting was held for informational purposes only associated with the mixed use 40B RFP.
- The October 28, 2014 public hearing was attended by many abutters that raised numerous issues with the development. The applicant was not able to address a majority of the questions at that time and the project seemed to evolve throughout the public hearing. A DVD of this hearing is enclosed for your use.
- The Plans submitted as part of the Project Eligibility Application are different than what was in front of the Board of Selectmen and the review committee during the Mixed Use 40B RFP review process. Additionally, the plan submitted as part of the Project Eligibility Application does not reflect the Board of Selectmen’s comments.
- There is limited mention of potential impacts to the town’s services due to the development. For example, there is no mention of the potential financial impact resulting from the number of school children expected from the development. Also, it is not clear what school the children would attend.

Design Concerns

- The By Right exhibits under Tab 9 show that the parking spaces will be 9 feet by 20 feet. The Zoning Bylaw only requires 9 feet by 19 feet, therefore, the amount of impervious area will likely decrease in the by-right options.
- The proposed Phase I and Phase II show 9 feet by 20 feet parking spaces. Some impervious area can be reduced by creating parking spaces in accordance with the Zoning Bylaw of 9 feet by 19 feet.
- Neither Phase I nor Phase II provide parking spaces for visitors. It is anticipated that the two and three bedroom units may have 2 or more cars per unit plus visitors for all units.
- The Project almost qualifies as a Large Project, as defined in 760 CMR 56.03 as it is exactly 300 units.

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Environmental Impacts

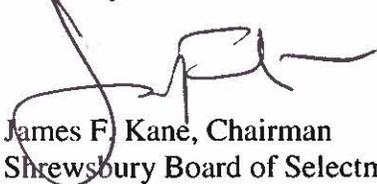
- The Shrewsbury Conservation Commission and MA DEP will likely have comments on the project due to the wetlands present on the project site.
- Phase I buildings are only 2 feet from wetlands while the Conservation Commission requires 30 feet. It does not seem that it is feasible to not disturb any wetlands with the building being so close.

Traffic Concerns

- The application to DHCD does not state the correspondence with MassDOT regarding the project of November 21, 2014, forwarded to the Town on November 24, 2014
- MassDOT has raised traffic concerns in past correspondence and meetings along Route 20 at the project site.

Please let us know if you need any additional information and explanations.

Sincerely,



James F. Kane, Chairman
Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen

cc: Kristen D. Las, AICP, Principal Planner/Development Coordinator
Ms. Catherine Racer, Associate Director, DHCD, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300,
Boston, MA 02114
Secretary Jay Ash, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
Senator Michael Moore
State Representative Hannah Kane
Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen