

**TOWN OF RYE – PLANNING BOARD
WORK SESSION
Tuesday, September 3, 2019
6:00 p.m. – Rye Town Hall**

Selectmen Present: Chair Patricia Losik, Vice-Chair J.M. Lord, Steve Carter, Jerry Gittlein, Jeffrey Quinn, Tim Durkin, Selectmen's Rep Bill Epperson, and Alternates Jim Finn, Katy Sherman and Nicole Paul

Present for the Applicant: Developer Joseph Falzone, Engineer Christian Smith (Beals & Assoc.), Landscape Architect Jennifer Martel (Ironwood Design), Architect Michael Keane, and Realtor Colton Gove (Gove Group)

Others Present: Planning & Zoning Administrator Kim Reed

I. Call to Order

Chair Losik called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. Presentation of architectural and landscape plans by Applicant and representatives
(pertaining to concerns raised heretofore by PB, experts, abutters, public and as
documented in the PB Minutes of 6/11/19, 7/19/19 and PB site walk of 6/25/19)**

Chair Losik opened the presentation to the applicant and his team.

Joseph Falzone, Applicant, noted that since the last meeting, the architect has worked on the design for the sides of the buildings. The landscape architect has also been brought in to work on a plan to present to the Board.

Referring to the architecture plan before the Board, **Michael Keane, Architect**, explained that the plan is showing three of the four clusters (buildings); 1, 2 and 5. The buildings are basically the same. Two of the clusters have smaller units to address workforce housing (smaller buildings are 96' in length and others are 104'); however a consistent theme was carried throughout the buildings. He continued that the units will be three-story townhouses with garages under. The buildings were designed to appear to be two-story buildings, rather than full three-stories. The roofline design and dormers were used to break up the mass of the building. He stated the gable ends of the building, as they face Washington Road, have a bay window in the dining area of the floor plan. (He pointed out the bay window has been designed slightly off center to accommodate the interior floor plan.)

There was discussion regarding the workforce housing units. One of the requirements for workforce housing, it that the units cannot be differentiated from the market units; such as, different floor plans and fewer bedrooms. Another requirement is that the units need to be scattered amidst the other units and cannot be segregated.

Referring to the plan, Selectman Epperson commented this is significantly different from the first round of plans. The project is cleaner and is a vast improvement. From his perspective, the first thing that people are going to see, when they drive into Rye, is that development and it has to look really good.

Member Quinn asked for clarification on the square footage for each unit.

Mr. Keane noted the larger three bedroom units vary slightly from 2,025 finished square feet to 2,050 finished square feet. There is a slight difference because of the projected bays and accommodations that have been made for the gabled ends on the second floor. The end units are slightly smaller at 2,025sf. The two bedroom units are 1,654 finished square feet. He also noted the height of the buildings are right at 35' from the garage floor to the peak of the roof.

There was some discussion about the addition of patios in the area where the sliders are located off the back of the units. There was also a suggestion of making the slider door a French door, which the Board felt would be more attractive and in keeping with the character of Rye.

Member Quinn asked for clarification on the bump-out underneath the bay window.

Mr. Keane explained it is a 5x5 fire suppression room, which is only on one end of each building. (He noted the anticipated locations on the plan.)

Referring to the sliding doors, Alternate Sherman stated that even if those are French doors, they should open up to something.

Vice-Chair Lord asked if that area is screened with landscaping.

The Board agreed to address this again after review of the landscape plan.

It was noted that the material of the roof is going to be asphalt, except for the overhang above the garage and the "sunroom" (which will be metal). The buildings will be sided with clapboard and shingle shakes, with the same color theme being carried throughout the development. The garage doors will be fiberglass, but will have a wood look to them.

Referring to the columns in the back of the buildings, Alternate Paul suggested that they be "beefed up" and made to look more substantial. She thinks this would give a better presence.

The Board agreed.

Mrs. Reed asked if the Board would be willing to consider a non-conversion agreement for the garage, (which is the first floor), so it cannot be turned into living space.

Chair Losik noted that the plan shows an entry area, stairway, garage, unfinished basement and mechanical area.

Mr. Falzone commented that some people are going to finish the basement.

After some discussion, it was agreed that there should be a non-conversion clause for the garage and the mechanical space, which is for the water heater, a/c and heating system.

Chair Losik asked about generators.

Mr. Falzone replied that he has not thought about generators.

Mrs. Reed pointed out that generators are considered structures and should be thought about when doing the plans so they meet setback requirements.

Chair Losik stated that when the Board looked at this in June and July, there were members who were concerned about the façade. Vice-Chair Lord made the point that landscaping can change, but the façade is lived with long-term.

Vice-Chair Lord stated this is a great improvement from what was presented before. The break-up of the roof on the end gives it a lot of definition.

Member Quinn stated he is pleased with the general design. However, in looking at the buildings, it seems to be uninspiring to him. Driving down Washington Road, people are going to see nothing but cars in front of buildings. He thinks there are other ways to get the same number of buildings with a different configuration. It seems that the lot would allow for the buildings to be brought back away from each other.

Chair Losik suggested that they continue to look at the façade and then review the landscaping. She asked Member Carter how he feels about the façade.

Member Carter stated he is generally happy with what has been done. He thinks the back of the buildings, where the sliders are located, might need some work and could be made to look more inviting.

Member Gittlein commented this is positive, in terms of the overall appearance.

Vice-Chair Lord asked the width of the sunroom that comes off the back.

Mr. Keane replied 14'. (He reviewed the design of buildings 2 and 3.)

Chair Losik asked if there is a way to offset the buildings, as the area in between the buildings is feeling very non-residential. Everything is a straight line across the buildings. She asked how it could be visually softened.

Christian Smith, Beals & Associates, explained that in terms of sliding a building forward, the plan is fairly tight on that because the driveways need 23' in order to back the vehicles out. He further explained that the proposed layout pattern maximizes green space. In pushing a building back, it will increase pavement cover.

Chair Losik stated that they will gain something that looks and feels more residential, as it would create different site lines.

There was some discussion on ways the buildings could be positioned differently. Mr. Keane agreed to consider the request. It was noted that the middle units of building 2 and 3 have one-car garages. After review of the architectural designs, Chair Losik opened the presentation to the landscape architect.

Jennifer Martell, Landscape Architect with Ironwood Design, presented the landscape plan and renderings from Washington Road and Route 1. She explained there is quite a bit of grade change to the topography on the site. The buildings are not going to be climbing the hill, so the whole first floor (garage area) will not be visible from the street. She continued that the site currently has six, very robust, Juniper Trees. The concept is to replant those trees to the edges of the site, behind the natural buffer edge of low vegetation. It will look like a typical hedge row and will help with the screening. She stated she was concerned when she saw the big open field of the site, with the intersection, and the views to the backs of the buildings. The proposal is to have a berm that will curve and run along the property line that will be planted with tall evergreens, as well as some flowering shrubs in front. The berm will continue along to three, large, street trees, which will anchor the corner and create a sense of separation and privacy between the intersection and the residences.

Referring to the Washington Road rendering, Ms. Martell stated this is the space that is closest to the public road. There is an existing stone wall along Washington Road. The idea is to reveal the stone wall and plant some wildflower, low maintenance, type plantings behind the wall to bring back the feeling of a “field”. There would also be more evergreens planted to help soften the view and create privacy for the residents.

Chair Losik questioned the height of the berm.

Ms. Martell noted that it is designed at 3’, which should be enough with the vegetation. It could be a little taller, but the idea is to not have it look artificial and to keep the look natural.

Selectman Epperson asked about the drainage on the east side.

Ms. Martell pointed out the flow of the drainage on the plan. She noted that the drainage should not be effected in any way.

Selectman Epperson asked Ms. Martell to review the east side for the folks who are abutting the property.

Ms. Martell stated there are some tall red pines in this area currently. The trees could use some cleaning up of the dead limbs. The idea would be to keep those, clean them up, remove the invasive vegetation and plant a lower evergreen understory in front to create screening.

Selectman Epperson asked about the success rate with replanting the Junipers.

Ms. Martell explained this is a specialized transplanting because the trees are so large. There are landscapers who are skilled at large tree transplanting. The landscape plan will have details in the notes about best practices for doing the transplanting. She pointed out it is always a risk, when transplanting a tree, that it might not like its new location; however, in this case, these are very, healthy Junipers.

Chair Losik commented that on the site walk there was some discussion regarding a guarantee on some amount of time and then 12’ trees would be replaced. That will be incorporated into the agreement.

Continuing with the landscape review, Ms. Martell pointed out the area on the plan, (along Washington Road), where street trees will be planted. She commented that she heard some discussion about the screening of sheds, generator, etc. and she will work on that. In regards to the area outside the sliding doors, she thought that it would be some kind of patio or outdoor space. She is proposing flowering trees

to demarcate the corner of each person's property and create some separation. Along the driveway, it will be broken up with one shade tree and one understory tree.

Member Carter asked if the site will be irrigated.

Mr. Falzone replied confirmed.

Referring to View 3, Member Durkin stated this addresses the biggest concern that he has with the project. The building that is the closest to the road is a 35' structure. As someone makes that turn (onto Washington Road), that structure is going to be right in their face.

Chair Losik pointed out that View 3 does not show the first two street trees in the corner. She asked Ms. Martell the height of those trees.

Ms. Martell explained these would be a more traditional 50' tree.

Member Carter suggested pulling the building back and angling it so it is not so close to the road (angling it towards Washington Road more.)

Member Durkin pointed out the building on the plan that he is concerned about. He noted that he is more concerned about building 5 than building 1, which are both close to the road.

There was discussion with Mr. Keane about the possibility of moving building 5 back and angling it.

Referring to View 3, Alternate Paul suggested "beefing up" the landscaping that is closer to the property to help screen the side yards.

Chair Losik pointed out that there was some discussion at past meetings about having a safe area for children to wait for the school bus. Plantings may need to be considered for this area.

Mrs. Reed commented that the plan needs to show the location of the clustered mailboxes.

Chair Losik stated the concern is that it is a mature landscaping on over 3.5 acres. This is a lot of new construction and buildings. All the steps that can be taken to make it as aesthetically appealing as possible is going to be really important.

Ms. Martell noted the suggestions and points made.

Mr. Keane spoke further with the Board on ideas for siting buildings 5 and 4.

Speaking to Member Quinn, Chair Losik asked him to talk about his concerns.

Member Quinn stated that in his opinion, it looks like a parking lot. In driving down the road and looking into the property, people will see a lot of vehicles lined up. He thought he had seen a rendering that showed a road coming in with green space in the middle. There was a courtyard area that could be planted with roads on either side going off to the buildings. Looking at View 3, he commented that the entrance drive seems very narrow. If there was some planting in the front, it might soften the whole

parking lot feel. There is space that could be taken advantage of to pull the buildings apart, while fitting in to the dimensions of the lot.

Speaking to Ms. Martell, Chair Losik asked if there would be an opportunity to look at the landscaping differently, between building 5 and 4, if they were pulled apart. She asked if it would create more space to “beef up” the landscaping to create a focal point.

Ms. Martell agreed that the area could be “beefed up” and turned more into a focal point.

Member Quinn noted that he was thinking about creating a wider entrance.

Vice-Chair Lord stated that the wider the entrance is opened up, the more of a viewpoint into the lot there will be. Having a narrower entrance with some landscaping, gives a very limited view from Washington Road. He would rather have a narrow entrance with a closed road and not be able to see into the property, than to have it much wider and opened up.

Mr. Smith agreed with Vice-Chair Lord. He stated that what Member Quinn is recalling is the original two road situation. That is the only plan that had a central courtyard area, which pushed the buildings towards the boundaries of the property, as opposed to clustering. This proposal was less than desirable in the minds of the Board and the abutters. He noted that when they went to this layout, the charter was to reduce as much impervious as possible. He does not think there will be a big issue in rotating, in opposite directions, buildings 4 and 5 to give more room for plantings in between the buildings. He noted this is where they have been led based on the input from the Board and abutters.

III. Action Items

- 1) Pivot buildings #4 and #5
- 2) Add more plantings between buildings #4 and #5
- 3) Beef up the entrance in front of building #5
- 4) Show clustered mailbox location at the entrance
- 5) Bus stop by mailboxes
- 6) Add more trees by building #2
- 7) The structure of the workforce housing units are to be the same as the market units
- 8) Location of the a/c and generator
- 9) Sliding doors and columns
- 10) Stagger/offset the faces of the buildings
- 11) No convergence agreement for the garage

IV. Summary of open items (Chair/Co-Chair)

- **For meeting on September 10th**
 - Revised drainage plan – Mr. Smith will have the plan but it will not be ready for Sebago Review until shortly after the September meeting.

Adjournment

Motion by J.M. Lord to adjourn at 7:34 p.m. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted, Dyana F. Ledger