

TOWN OF WESTPORT ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

MEETING MINUTES June 18, 2019

Members Present: Chairman Ward French, Vesna Herman, and Jon Halper. The meeting was brought to order at 7:30 PM by Ward French. Minutes from the May 14, 2019 meeting were approved as presented.

1. **Text Amendment #772:** to allow a density and bedroom increase, to exempt any dwelling units created from the restrictions listed from the Maximum Allowable Multi-Family Dwellings, to eliminate the requirement for a non-residential use on site and to allow for grading or slope changes within five feet of a lot line.

Appeared: Patrick Rose, Architect; Phil Kraft, developer

Mr. Rose said the text amendment allows them to create the development they want, increasing units allowed from 29 to 32 which adds 5 additional bedrooms. The berm requested in the text amendment screens the property from Cottage Lane behind.

Mr. Kraft said the neighbors wanted the berm so it was included in the text amendment. The text amendment applies only to a property that was a pre-existing construction yard.

Vesna Herman asked if that means the text amendment cannot apply to any other property in Westport and was told yes.

Mr. Kraft said he was the developer of 11/77, the multi-story 8.30.g on Post Road East. He said there is high demand for 2 bedroom units, so these have more 2 bedroom units. Engineering has already approved the density. He thought it was a pretty good clean up of an unattractive property.

Mr. Rose said the text amendment is site specific, and the P & Z office agrees.

Ward French asked why they need relief for 3 units? Mr. Kraft said to make it work financially. Mr. French suggested they move on to the building design.

2. **1480 Post Road East:** Special Permit/Site Plan Application #19-028 for a 32 unit residential development. (Rose . Tiso & Co building floor plans/elevations dated 6-12-19; Landtech site plans dated 5/2/19)

Mr. Rose said there have been minor changes since they were last here. The wellness center building to the right at the entrance has been eliminated and moved to a unit in Building 2 to the left of the entrance. He said the buildings are long so the entries have been popped out. There is a stone base, Certaineed tan shingles in the gables, tan Hardie Plank siding and 50 year gray architectural roof shingles. Windows are white vinyl with snap in grills. There are 17 one bedroom and 15 two bedroom units. The affordable units are interspersed throughout the project. Building 3 at the back of the project has a business center.

Mr. Kraft said, at the request of the Fire Department, they are metal frame buildings and there is only a right turn out of the property.

Jon Halper asked who the target renters are for the market rate properties. Mr. Kraft said a mix. At 11/77 there are some students, divorcees, Bridgewater employees, a mix. Mr. Halper confirmed that the project is not an 8-30.g but a 32:12 for Workforce Housing. Possible pricing could be from \$2500 to \$3500/mo.

Vesna Herman asked if the rear elevation of Building 3 faces Maple Avenue South. Mr. Ross said no, it faces the gas station. Ms. Herman said the gas station is a porous property and the rear elevation is long and unarticulated. How much would it be to break up the façade with some of the elements from the front?

Mr. Kraft said you can't see it, there's a 6 ft vinyl fence in front of it. The buffer at Cottage Lane is large and there is lots of landscaping.

Ward French said you have 29 units by way of right and you are asking relief for 32 when 29 is already dense. If we look at the site and density, it is a continuation of what is going on up and down the Post Road. I don't think we should continue to debase these Post Road sites. You can do better, when you look at the kit of parts for the design, they are weak and boring and there is no room for green space. They are as mechanical and robust as they can be to squeeze every last dollar out of it. And after looking for relief with a text amendment, you should be able to do better than this.

Mr. Kraft said it is a financial fine line to make it work. Neighbors demanded the berm so that left no room for green space. He disagreed that the project is dense.

Jon Halper said he was less concerned about the 3 extra units than the quality of the design. It's not really what we want to see, it looks 50-60 years old in need of a face lift. If you can find more greenspace, that would be good. This is not what we really try to promote.

Vesna Herman didn't mind the site plan but there is no question that you are compromising space for the units. You could consider doing green parking, not asphalt. Architectural elements are not classical, it looks like modular elements. There are no quality materials, no individuality in the design, which makes it not even ok. You are making the site better than what it is but this is barely minimum design. With a little more effort, it could be better.

Mr. French asked if the board would vote on the text amendment and architectural design.

THE TEXT AMENDMENT AND THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ARE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. (Unanimous)