

Town of Chelmsford, MA
Joint Meeting of the Select Board and Planning Board
Dennis Ready Meeting Room 204
In-Person/Virtual Meeting
June 30, 2021

TOWN OF
CHELMSFORD
PATRICIA E. DZURIS
TOWN CLERK

Select Board Members Present

Virginia Crocker Timmins, Chair
Kenneth Lefebvre, Vice Chair

Planning Board Members Present

Tim Shanahan, Chair
Mike Raisbeck, Vice Chair
Nancy Araway, Clerk
Henry Parlee, Board Member
Paul McDougall, Board Member
Deirdre Connolly, Board Member (Via Zoom)

Select Board Members Absent

Mark Carota, Clerk
George Dixon, Board Member
Patricia Wojtas, Board Member

Planning Board Members Absent

Mike Walsh, Board Member
Erica Clifford, Assoc. Board Member

Also Present:

Paul Cohen, Town Manager
Evan Belansky, Community Development Director

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Timmins called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and read aloud the following announcement:

Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by a member of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Town's website, at www.chelmsfordma.gov. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch the meeting may do so by accessing the Chelmsford Telemedia website at www.chelmsfordtv.org.

Please note that all documents referenced in these minutes are on file at the Town Manager's Office, 50 Billerica Road, Chelmsford, MA. The meeting was recorded by Chelmsford Telemedia.

2. PRESENTATION FROM TRAMMELL CROW RESIDENTIAL REGARDING REDEVELOPMENT OF FORMER UMASS LOWELL WEST CAMPUS AT 255 PRINCETON STREET

Mr. Mark Baranski, Vice President of Development, Trammell Crow Residential, reviewed a presentation regarding information regarding the consultant's reports that were released to give the Select and Planning Boards the context of the impacts of their proposed project. He said the existing four buildings had been demolished.

Mr. Baranski reviewed the proposed development adding there was existing access to Route 3A as was an existing emergency access at the back of the site.

Mr. Baranski said originally the CHOICE building, a 3-story elevator building with 54 age-restricted units, would be located at the entrance to the site but he was now suggesting that it moved a bit more into the site and would follow the radius of the access road. He said they would flip-flop the CHOICE building with the townhouses.

Mr. Robert Michaud, President and Managing Principal, MDM Transportation Consultants, addressed the Board. He stated that his firm had conducted a preliminary traffic impact and access study for the development and reviewed their findings as summarized below, pointing out that the study covered the endpoints on either side of the site that was signalized.

- The site was well-served by a system of sidewalks that allowed for pedestrian connectivity.
- Access to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority.
- Anticipated traffic generation was approximately 100 vehicles leaving the site in the morning hours using regional highway systems and that same trend would be reversed in the evening.
- Multiple alternative transportation options for the property.
- Limited impact to roadways that surround the property.
- No change in the levels of service or operations along Princeton Street.
- Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations would be provided as a part of the project that connected the buildings to the public sidewalk system.
- Improvements to include a new pedestrian crossing that led to the sidewalk system equipped with a rapid rectangular flashing beacon to ensure safety.
- Bicycle racks and amenities that would accommodate visitors and residents alike.
- Driveway to be designed to meet applicable safety-based criteria including sightlines and a geometric layout that would allow for proper access and circulation by emergency and delivery vehicles.

Mr. Mark Fougere, of Fougere Planning Development, reviewed the fiscal impacts report and stated while he had not completed the report he noted the following:

- The property was assessed at approximately \$2.4 million.
- Generated \$38,000 in its present state.
- Approximately \$1 million in property taxes.
- 1.5% surcharge for CPA equal to \$16,000 per year.
- Excise tax at approximately \$779,000 per year.
- Total revenue generated estimated to be \$1.2 million per year.
- The 340 apartments would generate approximately 49 school-aged children.

Mr. Fougere noted he would be having discussions with the Superintendent of Schools, the Fire Chief, and the Police Chief in greater detail to get a better idea of cost impacts and revenues relative to their departments.

Mr. Parlee said he was aware they would be doing 55 units for the Chelmsford Housing Authority and asked if that would give them a basic level playing field. Mr. Baranski replied CHOICE (Choice Housing Opportunities for Intergenerational and Community Endeavors), as a function of the overall project, was comprised of approximately 13% of the affordable housing. He said the feedback from the Town was that they would like that number to be at 15% and they would do additional units on their side of the development to reach that number.

Attorney Melissa Robbins, Farrell & Robbins, P.C. added the Town would receive a 5% net benefit. She added the entire project could not be counted because there was not a level of affordable units throughout the project.

Attorney Robbins reviewed the proposed timeline of the project as follows:

- Draft proposed bylaw by TCR and Planning Staff by: July 15, 2021
- Department Heads Meeting: July 22, 2021 (Week of)
- Draft comments from Board member by: July 22, 2021
- Draft bylaw revised and back to Joint Board meeting: July 30, 2021
- Submit to Select Board for Town Meeting Warrant: August 2, 2021 (Deadline)
- Meetings with Planning/Select Boards leading to Town Meeting: October 18, 2021 (Up to)
- Town Meeting: October 18, 2021

Mr. Baranski noted it was his understanding that the goal was to get to 15% of affordable housing. He suggested that if the Board(s) are looking at a higher percentage, they provide clarity on the objective percentage so that Trammell Crow can evaluate it.

Mr. Raisbeck stated he felt an overlay was the obvious way to handle it but an overlay did not generally convey unobstructed rights but involved special permits, etc. He said, however, an overlay offered a model that then a lot of people might look at if they wanted to apply the same type of project to other areas in the town. He said he felt it was important to get the design of the overlay right from the get-go.

Mr. Evan Belansky, Community Development Director, stated he viewed it as a project-based zoning proposal done via a project-specific overlay district. He said he did not see it being applied anywhere but the property being discussed. He also stated legal counsel needed to verify if a property-specific overlay was legal.

Chair Timmins commented that she felt the proposed timeline was very aggressive and she wanted to ensure the Planning Board had plenty of time to review it prior to it being placed on the Warrant. She also suggested that public comment be included earlier in the proposed timeline.

Mr. Parlee commented that he felt they needed to have hard numbers prior to having public input.

Mr. Belansky stated he felt it was important to have a conceptual agreement regarding what the project is.

Mr. Shanahan asked if they had reached out to the abutters. Mr. Baranski replied they had sent out a mailing to all of the certified abutters and they also met with some of the groups directly. He added there were people they still needed to contact. Mr. Baranski said the abutters had expressed concern regarding what work would be done in the buffer.

Mr. Cohen pointed out that the proposed development would not be a moneymaker for the Town in that it would cost \$20,000 per child for education. He also said the schools were already quite crowded.

Mr. Shanahan asked if there had been any thought into doing a mixed-use. Mr. Baranski replied he did not feel a mixed-use would make sense for the proposed property.

Ms. Araway said she felt the public had to be heavily involved in the process because she did not feel most residents wanted more people living in Chelmsford and would express opposition.

Attorney Robbins pointed out that the Economic Development Legislation of 2020 stated that towns, like the Town of Chelmsford, would most likely be required to comply with the program in order to get MassWorks grants and other types of grants in the future. She said the project might be able to check that box.

Mr. Cohen pointed out that they would have the new affordable housing number under the census by the time of the next Town Meeting and noted that number would be in effect for the next ten years.

Chair Timmins asked what the Planning Board would like to see next in terms of the project. The Planning Board collectively replied that they would like to see numbers, pictures, drawings, and more public input.

Board Member Lefebvre asked the Planning Board if there were any issues of concern that the Select Board should be aware of. Mr. Belansky stated he felt the most important part of the process was the "process itself." He said there was a reason why the proponent wanted to start the process with the two chief elected Boards and any path that led to Town Meeting would likely require support from both Boards. He added he felt it would be difficult to have public input without a project. Additionally, Mr. Belansky said he felt it was important for the two Boards to work with the proponent within a defined process and attempt to achieve a preferred project.

Chair Timmins said she felt the Planning Board members had asked for a more detailed plan so they knew what they would be asking the public to comment on.

Mr. Baranski said they would continue with public engagement.

Ms. Araway asked how large the units would be. Mr. Baranski replied the proposed overall project, including CHOICE would be comprised of the following units:

20 - Studios (5%)	218 – 1-Bedrooms (54%)
131 – 2-Bedrooms (32%)	25 – 3-Bedrooms (9%)

Approved 10/4/2021

Ms. Araway asked which units were included in the CHOICE portion of the proposed project. Mr. Baranski replied there would be 54 1-bedroom units.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

DOCUMENTS:

ALEXAN CHELMSFORD – SELECT AND PLANNING BOARD PRESENTATION – 20210630

NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE: JULY 12, 2021