

## Commerce Way Corridor Overlay District Concept Plan Review Committee

Wednesday, July 29, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

### City Council Chambers

Voting members present: Chairman Michael Concannon, Alderman at-large; Planning Board member James Callahan; Planning Board member Robert Doherty; Ward 5 Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen; and Ward 6 Alderman Edward Tedesco.

Also present: Ward 3 Alderman Jeffrey Dillon

**Fairfield Residential, 316 New Boston Street, construction of three multi-family residential buildings with approximately 445 residential units, structured parking, residential amenities and associated site improvements:** Representing Fairfield Residential were Attorney Joseph Tarby, Murtha Cullina, 600 Unicorn Park Drive, Suite 7, Woburn, MA; Robb Hewitt, Vice-President of Development, Fairfield Residential, 1 Edgewater Drive, Suite 107, Norwood, MA; Brian McCarthy, Vice-President, R.J. O'Connell & Associates, 80 Montvale Avenue, Suite 201, Stoneham, MA; Scott Thornton, Vanasse & Associates, 35 New England Business Center Drive, Suite 140, Andover, MA; and John Shipe, Shipe Consulting Group, 336 Baker Avenue, Suite 1-11, Concord, MA. Chairman Concannon said this committee has a very limited role. He said the committee will not be undertaking a full-blown review. He said the committee's role is to determine if the two petitions before are worthy of going before the City Council, as stipulated in Section 23 of the Woburn Zoning Ordinance. He said he wants to make sure the committee is not stepping out too far. He said the committee's role involves providing a report to the City Council, the Planning Board, and the petitioner. He said the report will indicate whether the criteria for an application for a special permit has been met. He said the first petition before the committee is from Fairfield Residential for a development with 445 residential units, structured parking and other elements. He said the application was filed on February 24. Because of restrictions related to Covid-19 and a related executive order from the governor, the committee and the petitioner agreed to waive the requirement of 90 days to submit a report, Chairman Concannon said. He said he believes the deadline is August 5. Attorney Tarby acknowledged there was an extension filed and the deadline does occur next week. Chairman Concannon said that deadline may be extended by consent, if necessary. Attorney Tarby introduced the team from Fairfield Residential, including Mr. Hewitt, Mr. Shipe, Mr. McCarthy, and Mr. Thornton. Attorney Tarby said he filed on behalf of his client a concept plan under the auspices of Sections 23.3.1 and 23.3.6 of the Woburn Zoning Ordinance. He said this is the second application of Section 23, after the project at 120 Commerce Way. He said the committee's primary role is to provide a written report to the Planning Board and the City Council. He said the committee would ordinarily have 90 days to prepare the written report, but the applicant agreed to extend the deadline by a reasonable amount of time. He said an additional 90 days may be permitted. He said the extension was filed with the City Clerk's office. He said the written report is advisory in nature. He said the applicant has one year to submit a special permit application. He said the City Council is the special permit granting authority. He said the CWCOD was created in 2009, and the current property owners of 316 New Boston Street were approached about providing a portion of their land for the construction of the New Boston Street bridge, in exchange for being included in the district. He said he does not believe the final plans for the bridge have been

completed. He said the intent was that the development of this property would lead to further development of the industrial park to attract other people to the area. He said his client feels the housing component is an essential step to further upgrade the area. Mr. Hewitt said he is looking forward to working with the committee through the permitting process. He said Fairfield Residential is a national company with a strong local presence in Boston, with 10 active communities. He said they have properties in suburban beltways. He said they have generally met the requirements of the CWCOD ordinance. He said the project includes 445 apartment units, all of which will be rentals. He said 10 percent of the apartments will be affordable. He said there will be a 5-story parking garage. He said there will be a courtyard and areas with amenities including a fitness room and pools. He said there will be two other free-standing 5-story structures. He said the breakdown of the units will be 10 percent studios, 30 percent 1-bedroom, 50 percent 2-bedrooms, and 10 percent 3-bedrooms. He said there will be a pet exercise area. Mr. McCarthy said the site is at the north end of New Boston Street, near the Anderson Regional Transportation Center. He said there are approximately 19 acres, with 3.3 acres in Wilmington and 16 acres in Woburn. He said the site is located in the Industrial Park zoning district and the CWCOD. He said there is undeveloped land in the surrounding area. He said there is a set of MBTA rail tracks, along with commercial businesses including landscape construction, with the former Woburn Landfill to the west. He said there are high voltage lines and an easement to the south. He said there is a 78,000-square-foot building on the premises that was formerly occupied by New England Resins & Pigments. He said approximately 30 percent of the site is impervious area. He said there is an intermittent stream on the side of the property which has the railroad tracks, along with wetlands. He said the stormwater discharges into regulated wetlands. He said the runoff from the roof of the building is diverted to the southern wetland area. He said there is not water quality treatment before it discharges to the wetlands. He said the Fairfield Residential project will use the existing municipal water and sewer service. He said the developer intends to construct three buildings – a 5-story building with 309 units and two 4-story buildings with 136 units. He said there will be 222 single bed units, 178 2-bedroom units and 45 3-bedroom units. He said 45 of the units will be affordable. He said there are 792 parking spaces, including 550 parking spaces in a garage adjacent to the 5-story building, and 218 surface parking spaces. He said ADA requirements for parking will be met. He said there will be a fitness center in the 5-story building, an outdoor pool and a dog park. He said access will be via one driveway, which will consider the realignment of the New Boston Street bridge. He said the site is within two miles of Route 93. He said the access road has been coordinated with the city's Engineering Dept. He said the realigned street will be 20 feet above the bridge and will slope down into the site. He said the grade of the slope will not exceed 5 percent. He said the interior driveways have been designed for safe circulation of vehicles. He said there will be an on-site storm water management system, which will replicate the existing drainage system and provide required water quality treatment. He said water service will be provided with a new 12-inch line and there will be a looped on-site system. He said the buildings will have sprinkler systems for fire prevention. He said there is an existing 15-inch sewer line and the project will connect to that. He said gas service will be provided by National Grid and electrical service will be provided by Eversource. He said there will be a robust and diverse landscape design to provide shade and color and reduce the visual mass of the buildings. Mr. Thornton said the proponents have held numerous meetings with Woburn City Engineer John Corey and officials

from the town of Wilmington to review traffic. He said there has been additional coordination with MassDOT and the consultant who is involved in the reconstruction of the New Boston Street bridge. He said data was collected from eight intersections, with the collections occurring in January 2020, before the Covid-19 pandemic started. He said they looked at crash histories, and in all locations the number of accidents was below the state average. He said the site is a 5-10-minute walk from the Anderson RTC. He said he expects the proximity of the site to Anderson station will encourage walking to public transit. He said there will be an estimated 108 new trips during the morning peak hour on weekdays, and 140 new trips during the afternoon peak hour on weekdays. He said the delay increases from 2-7 seconds and will not likely be noticed. He said of the eight intersections that were evaluated, five have signals and three do not. He said the design plans do not call for a connection between the street and the Anderson RTC lot. He said there are sidewalks proposed on the New Boston Street bridge but no crosswalks. He said the developer has offered to provide crosswalks with accentuated signal timing, with rapid flashing devices that have an 88-92 percent yield rate. He said the developer will contribute toward a pedestrian foot path to cover the 750-foot gap between the bridge and the RTC. He said the developer will provide public transit schedules on-site with times for the commuter rail, Logan Express and ride share services. He said the landscaping will be lower than 24 inches so as to not impede visibility. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to accept the petitioner's presentation and any relevant documents and make them part of the permanent record; approved, 5-0. Attorney Tarby said the site is bounded by the former Woburn Landfill. He said it is not included in the Industri-Plex site. He said there is a history of contamination that will be addressed as part of the development. Chairman Concannon asked if any members of the committee had questions for the applicant. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said the committee's job is not to examine all the details of the application, but rather to determine if the application meets all the preliminary requirements. She said the preliminary review says it does. She said what happens if the pandemic returns, or if there is a subsequent pandemic. She said she hopes there is a vaccine for Covid-19. She said this is a question she would not have previously asked but will ask when the petition comes before the City Council – whether the developer has put any thought into how the size and scope of the development will be impacted by a pandemic. She said she will be asking the developers to take into consideration not only the living space component but also the impact on traffic. She said people are not using public transit now. She said she would like to know what the developer's plans are long-term. She said she thinks the developer has met the requirements to move forward. She said the committee is going to ask for more information from City Engineer Corey and DPW Supt. John Duran. Attorney Tarby said the committee can decide if additional information is needed, but the ordinance does not call for comments from department heads until the developer files for a special permit. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said it would be prudent for the committee to ask for that now instead of at the first public hearing. Member Callahan said the bridge will provide direct access and asked if that has been considered in the traffic study. Mr. Thornton asked Member Callahan to repeat his question. He said there will be 1,200-2,000 vehicles coming off Route 93 and asked if the completion of the bridge was taken into consideration during the traffic study. Mr. Thornton said the completion of the bridge was taken into consideration. Member Callahan asked what the criteria was. Mr. Thornton said the existing volume is nothing. He said he contacted MassDOT and they provided the applicant with information that assumed the

reconnection of the New Boston Street bridge. Member Callahan asked if that information is displayed in the document that was given to the committee. Mr. Thornton said the volume goes from 20-30 vehicles per hour to 1,200 per hour. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to have the clerk of committees send a written communication to the City Council, the Planning Board and the application that the committee has determined the application form Fairfield Residential has met the criteria under Section 23 of the Woburn Zoning Ordinance for submission to the City Council for a special permit, and to notify the DPW, City Engineer, Police Dept. and Fire Dept. that they will be asked to provide reports to the City Council. Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Tedesco to also include the Supt. of Schools among the department heads who will be expected to provide a report of the impact of the development to the City Council. Chairman Concannon said there has been a motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen affirming the petitioner has met the criteria of Section 23.3.6 and that the committee provide written confirmation to the Planning Board, City Council and applicant that all of the questions listed under Section 23.3.5 have been answered affirmatively, and that the DPW Supt., City Engineer, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Supt. of Schools provide reports to the City Council about the impact of the development upon their respective municipal services; approved, 5-0.

**Cabot, Cabot & Forbes, 0 New Boston Street, construction of a 7-story, mixed use building that includes approximately 5,000-square-feet of retail space located on the ground floor, with approximately 250 multi-family residential units above:** Representing Cabot, Cabot & Forbes were Attorney Joseph Tarby, Murtha Cullina, 600 Unicorn Park Drive, Suite 7, Woburn, MA; Jay Doherty, CEO, and John Sullivan, Executive Vice-President, Cabot, Cabot & Forbes, 185 Dartmouth Street, Boston MA; Brian O'Connor, Cube 3 Architecture, 160 State Street, Floor 6, Boston, MA; Brian Williams, Allen & Major Associates, Inc., 100 Commerce Way, Suite 5, Woburn, MA; and F. Giles Ham, Vanasse & Associates, 35 New England Business Center Drive, Suite 140, Andover, MA. Attorney Tarby said the applicant is seeking to construct a development with 250 units of high-quality, transit-oriented housing along with 5,000-square-feet of commercial space. Chairman Concannon asked if the application was filed on June 30. Attorney Tarby said it was. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to accept the applicant's slideshow presentation and any related documents and make them part of the permanent record; approved, 5-0. Mr. Doherty said Cabot, Cabot & Forbes is a Boston-based developer which was also involved in the redevelopment of 120 Commerce Way. He said Cabot, Cabot & Forbes is a transit-oriented developer. He said the Commerce Way corridor is one of the most robust transportation centers in Woburn. He said Cabot, Cabot & Forbes last visited the committee in its quest for development of 120 Commerce Way. He said the proposed project is further advancement of that effort. He said the soil characteristics are similar to what was involved at 120 Commerce Way. He said the developer's agreement with the remedial trust also involves installing a solar farm on the overly contaminated portion of the land which is not buildable. He said a nearby power supply is something technology companies like. He said this area is becoming attractive to tech companies. Mr. O'Connor said he wanted to focus on the site and its proximity to the Anderson RTC. He said a residential use is allowed in the overlay district and is part of what the city of Woburn is looking to achieve in this area. He said the applicant strongly believes in mixed use

development. He said the project will create a really nice front door for the MassDOT area including the bridge. He said there are a number of pieces involved with the project and they are trying to locate them in the right places. He said they are looking at the parking situation on the west side of the parcel and want to make a barrier. He said it is critical that the residential community remain within the context of the RTC. He said the 5-minute walk to the RTC is critical to developing the piece of property. He said the residential building will have a courtyard, a pool and a dog walking area. He said the apartments will be a mix of studios, and 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms. He said there will be approximately 402 parking spaces. He said he tried to design a building that will communicate with the future. He said the building facades will not be flat and the planes will be bent to create a shadow line. He said the trick is to not to create too much residential texture. He said the project will hit the mark in terms of quality of materials. Member Callahan asked if the developer has considered how people in that area are going to commute and if there has been any thought to connecting the development to the Anderson RTC. Mr. Ham said that will be one of the items discussed when the proponents meet with City Engineer Jay Corey. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said she wants to make the same comment to Cabot, Cabot & Forbes as she made to the previous developer. She asked what thoughts the developer can put into the building if there is no vaccine for Covid-19. She said buildings are not designed with the idea of a pandemic in mind. She said it is probably a good idea to take that into consideration. She said she appreciates the time, effort and energy the developer has put into the project. She said she does want connectivity as Member Callahan has described. Mr. Sullivan asked for clarification. Chairman Concannon asked if there has been any thought or discussion about connecting the parking lot at Anderson RTC to the applicant's property. Mr. Sullivan said the project has been designed for a connection. He said there is a great opportunity to provide a connection if the city wants to do that. Chairman Concannon said there are plusses and minuses to a connection, but it is good that it has been considered. Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to have the clerk of committees send a written communication to the City Council, the Planning Board and the application that the committee has determined the application form Fairfield Residential has met the criteria under Section 23 of the Woburn Zoning Ordinance for submission to the City Council for a special permit, and to notify the DPW, City Engineer, Police Dept., Fire Dept. and Supt. of Schools that they will be asked to provide reports to the City Council, and that the applicant provide additional information about a connection to the parking lot of the Anderson RTC; approved, 5-0. Chairman Concannon said the letter will be submitted to the City Council by Tuesday night and the council will be conducting a full and robust review of the project.

Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Tedesco to adjourn. Chairman Concannon adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD

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Gordon Vincent  
Clerk of Committees

