

Remaining Concerns of the Four Corners Neighborhood Association re: Multi-Family (24) units) Age-Restricted Housing special Permit Application for 797 Boston Road from 119 Partners, LLC

April 23, 2024

We appreciate the revisions made by the Developers to the subject application, particularly those addressing concerns we previously raised over potential use of the Emergency Entrance as “cut through” vehicles to Forge Village Road, the retention of mature trees, and the need for additional parking spaces for residents and service vehicles. However, we continue to have concerns that warrant attention by the Planning Board before its approval is granted:

High Density of Development on 2.7 Acre Site

- We reiterate our concern that a development of such substantial size has the potential to compete with at least two larger-sized similar developments already approved by the Planning Board, and we remain concerned about adding another vacant property to existing and ongoing vacancies at other Four Corners properties.
- Would the Board consider recommending that the developer reduce the number of units to accommodate an elevator in each building regardless of whether or not it is *required*?
- Will there be a maximum number of occupants per unit designated on the certificate of occupancy? This is not specified in the documents provided. Will the occupants have limitations on commercial use of their apartment units? What number is/was assumed in the calculation of sewage flow and water usage requirements?
- How is the market value of adjacent and nearby single-family property likely to be affected? Has a local residential real estate expert in Groton been consulted on this question? What objective support exists for the claim made in the Application for a Special Permit that “the Project will enhance the value of abutting properties?”
- Since the Four Corners Intersection is undoubtedly the visual gateway to Groton, is the Application the welcoming look we wish to impart? Has Destination Groton been consulted? Can the Board offer any recommendations to improve the visual aesthetic from Boston Road that is currently just the back of one of the buildings?

- With four of the parking spaces to be designated for handicap accessible only, are 1.5 spaces per unit still adequate? Does the additional paved surface detract from the property aesthetics?

Questionable fit for 55+ Age Restriction and Related Safety Concerns

- We echo concerns raised by the March 27, 2024 Letter from the Commission on Accessibility, such as the necessity of ADA compliance and the need for an elevator for 2nd floor occupants. Note, for example, that no one-bedroom units have walk-in showers but instead a bathtub.
- With neither sanding nor salting allowed on porous surfaces, does such car parking space bode safety issues during snowy/icy conditions for occupants/visitors over 55 years of age?
- Has the State of Massachusetts been consulted? We are concerned that crosswalks with flashing lights for safety should be added. The intersection of Roads 225 and 119 is already experiencing the second highest number of accidents and traffic violations in Groton, based on the 2023 Traffic Study. To what extent will such statistics worsen? How might this be mitigated?
- Since the majority of calls to local police, fire, and EMS are from those 55 years and older, do these services anticipate additional calls and surveillance needs as a result of the Application? What additional costs to the Town are expected?
- What evidence is there that Groton needs more age-restricted housing, compared to more affordable housing options for new/young families? Groton's demographic trends and housing stock strongly suggest the latter. Where is the documentation supporting the Application's statement that this project "serves the need for more senior housing in the Town of Groton, which is essential and underserved"? Once this high-density project is approved, what risk is there to our neighborhood that the Developers will switch to non-restricted age limits on residents if demand increases rental rates?

Lack of Assurance for On-going Maintenance and Landscaping Services/ General Upkeep and Site Management of Rental Units

- Although the updated landscaping plan calls for wildflowers, they too need watering and weed control. Will there be an irrigation system added to safeguard survival of new trees and other plantings, especially during droughts and dry periods? What might be the environmental impact of pest control measures on local groundwater including area ponds and wells regardless of use of town water?

- While we appreciate the protection of existing mature evergreen trees in the revised landscaping plan, are there similar plans to protect mature, blooming trees and shrubs on the site's interior?

Will this development be required to comply with existing Sign Bylaws if the Application is granted? What is the proposed roadside signage envisioned by the Developers for this commercial, rental property, upon completion? Why is this not included in the Proposal?

- The existing zoning bylaws regarding age-restricted housing includes, "Maintenance of the integrity of the neighborhood," which we believe includes good property maintenance. In the March 28th Planning Board meeting when maintenance and site management questions were raised by us, the attorney representing the Developers stated that a qualified management firm would be hired and there would be an outline of such responsibilities in contracted services. Where is evidence of that promise and how will oversight be managed to assure neighborhood integrity? What criteria will be used in contracting for and renewing such services? Given the porosity of the paving material, how will critically important maintenance be assured without on-site management/maintenance personnel? What assurance does the Four Corners neighborhood have that the Developers/Future Owners will begin caring for and maintaining the property henceforth and meet the bylaw requirements to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood?

Respectfully,

Four Corners Neighborhood Association