

Town of Bedford Planning Board Minutes September 11, 2023

A meeting of the Bedford Planning Board was held on Monday, September 11, 2023, at the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meeting House Road, Bedford, NH. Present were Charlie Fairman (Chair), Michael Strand (Town Council Alternate), Chris Swiniarski (Alternate), Matt Sullivan (Member), Steve Clough (Member), Matt Nichols, (Secretary), Priscilla Malcolm (Member), Logan Johnson (Alternate), Becky Hebert (Planning Director). Absent: Hal Newberry (Vice Chair), Phil Greazzo (Town Council), John Nelson (Alternate).

I. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Chair Charlie Fairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. introduced the Board members and appointed Ms. Johnson to vote this evening. Ms. Hebert reviewed the agenda and stated the new applications: the Conditional Use Permit of the Al-Haider Family Trust and the application of Eames Gilmore and Target Corporation have been reviewed by staff and it's our determination that these applications are complete and that neither of these applications pose a regional impact. Staff would recommend that the Board accept the applications as complete and accept the agenda for tonight's meeting.

II. Old Business & Continued Hearings: None

III. New Business:

- 1. Brian and Meghann White (Owner & Applicant)** – Request for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a detached accessory dwelling unit at 70 Eagle Drive, Lot 16-1-77, Zoned R&A. *(This application was withdrawn at the request of the applicant.)*
- 2. Al-Haider Family Trust (Owner) and Sani Zahra & Ali Hamza (Applicant)** – Request for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a detached accessory dwelling unit at 15 Mayflower Drive, Lot 21-26-5, Zoned R&A.
- 3. Eames Gilmore (Applicant) and Target Corporation (Owner)** – Request for approval of a site plan amendment to approve changes associated with the expansion of the drive-up stalls and service at Target and for the approval of sign waivers to permit two additional wall signs located at 220 South River Road, Lot 22-31-1-2, Zoned PZ.

IV. Concept Proposals and Other Business:

- 1. Bentley Commons Bedford, LLC (Owner) & Property Possible, Inc. (Applicant)** – Request for review of a conceptual plan to change the use of an existing 85 unit assisted living facility to a multifamily apartment building with 85 units, including 25% of the units designated as workforce housing, with associated parking improvements, located at 66 Hawthorne Drive, Lot 24-1-3, Zoned PZ.

2. The Planning Board will review and offer comments on the proposed Capital Improvements Plan for 2024.

V. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings (August 14, 2023 meeting)

MOTION by Ms. Malcolm to accept the agenda as read. Mr. Sullivan duly seconded the motion. Vote taken – all in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

II. Old Business & Continued Hearings: None

III. New Business:

Chair Fairman invited the first applicant to present.

2. **Al-Haider Family Trust (Owner) and Sani Zahra & Ali Hamza (Applicant)** – Request for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a detached accessory dwelling unit at 15 Mayflower Drive, Lot 21-26-5, Zoned R&A.

Ms. Sani Zahra presented the application: Good evening, everybody. My name is Sani Zahra. I'm the property owner of Al-Haider Family Trust at 15 Mayflower Drive in Bedford, NH. Me and my husband own this property. We are asking for Town of Bedford for the permission to make one in-law apartment in our property. We have a two-car garage separate from the main house. We want to convert that garage into an in-law apartment. We have all the specifications ready and all the items that the Board needed for today's meeting. We already submitted that. We have the septic unit approved by the State of New Hampshire for six bedrooms. We are building a 4-bedroom house and a two-bedroom in the ADU. There's like a total of 6 bedrooms. We have this approved septic plan for the six-bedroom from the State of New Hampshire. And as you can see it's like right here. It's our approved plan. And this one is basically our proposed drawing of how the ADU unit is going to look like. So basically, we are not changing, pretty much drastic change from the outer layout. It's just, we are removing the two-car garage doors here and we are converting into just adding one entry door in the center and like 2 windows on the side. The outer look is not going to be a drastically changed. And this unit is not facing towards the road. It's facing on the side of the house. It's basically on the right side of the building. That's the proposed plan for this unit. It's under 800 square feet. And we are making like 2 bedrooms here, which will be like a standard-sized bedroom with one bathroom, a dining area and a kitchen area. There are the stairs, as you can see here in this picture. This is the existing garage. How it's like we're looking right now. We are putting like two bedrooms here and like a kitchen and a dining area, just like a simple and in-law apartment. And now we can like see this one better. So that's how it looks right now. And that's the proposed plan of the outside look.

For the materials, we have like playing very safe with the materials, for the main house. We are putting black windows with the white vinyl siding, so it's going to be a black and white theme for the main house and that's the same goal for the ADU unit. Instead of the black windows, we're going to do the white windows. And that's the only change for the ADU unit. That's the picture of the property as like, prior to that. We are doing a major renovation in the main house. The current house doesn't look like that. We are putting an addition up. I also sent those pictures in of how it's going to look after the renovation is going to be complete.

This picture here describes like after the renovation is going to be done. The house is going to look like this with the addition on top. So that's pretty much the idea of the main house. And for the... I got to ask that I should submit like the theme that I've been thinking for the main house renovations. And that's the theme like a black and white theme that we are looking for our main house renovations. If the Board gives us the permission to convert our two-car garage into an in-law apartment, we're going to be doing this specifically the same theme as we are doing in the main house. It's going to be a black and white theme. I'm just going to ask for like a little leeway of putting white windows instead of black windows, and that's about it. If you have guys have any questions.

Ms. Malcolm asked Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question? I have driven by this area. There's a lot of construction going on. It is impossible to tell what your main house is going to look like, whatever it is. Is there any consideration for postponing this application until your main house is close to finished? Because I know one of the requirements for an Accessory Dwelling Unit—I love the idea of an accessory apartment—but it says the exterior design of a detached accessory apartment shall be compatible with the existing single dwelling. I have no idea what your existing single dwelling is going to look like. You brought a picture of... I don't know what. Are you sure you don't want to postpone this? Ms. Zahra replied so basically, the reason we want to push this first priority was basically to sell our current house, and this like, the renovation at the main house is going to take a while. To provide the funds to make this renovation happen, we have to sell our first property. For the four- or five-month period, we don't have a place to go. This one was an idea to just like do the in-law apartment so we can move right next to our main house and... Ms. Malcolm said so you're going to move into the accessory apartment. Ms. Zahra replied yes, for the time frame where we are like doing all the renovations in the main house. Because the main house is going to take a while to get completed, but we have like all the plans in place that the picture right now it's on the project. It's like the same—we are looking for the black and white basic theme. It's like all the materials are like all sorted for the main house. We already got our windows. It's like everything is moving along and we're going to do our best to buy all the materials that we bought for the main house for the ADU unit as well. Ms. Malcolm said thank you. Ms. Zahra replied you're welcome.

Ms. Johnson asked what is the square footage of the existing house? Ms. Zahra replied so, prior to this renovation, it was 2,700 square feet. We're building another 1,550 square feet on top. It's going to be like closer to 3,600-3,700 square feet. It's going to be like that. Ms. Johnson said but it would still, even with the existing house, it would still fall within the requirement? Ms. Zahra replied yeah. It's like it has to be less than 1,000 square feet or 50 percent of the... so, it's going to be like less than that. Our total area is 29 by 29 feet. I made this plan based on giving a little bit of leeway of the walls around. I'm just planning to be under 780 square feet for this ADU. Chair Fairman asked are there any other questions from the Board? Comments? Seeing none, is there anybody in the public who would like to talk about it? I see no response there. What is the pleasure of the Board?

Ms. Logan said sorry, I have one more question. I just want to make sure—It has its own driveway, right? Ms. Zahra replied it has its own driveway. It's a separate driveway with almost you can park three cars in front of the house. Ms. Johnson asked and that's already existing. Ms. Zahra confirmed it's already existing, yes. Ms. Johnson said thank you. Chair Fairman said I don't believe there are any waivers needed. Would somebody like to make a motion?

MOTION: Mr. Nichols moves the Planning Board grant the Conditional Use Permit for a detached accessory apartment located at 15 Mayflower Drive, in accordance with the application materials submitted by the applicant, last revised on July 21, 2023. The Planning Board finds the applicant has shown substantial compliance with the criteria for granting the Conditional Use Permit in accordance with the following findings of fact:

- The plans are found to be in compliance with the purpose and intent of Section 275-21(J) of the Zoning Ordinance;
- The Board also includes all facts found in the meeting minutes for this application and incorporates all meeting minutes into this decision.

This approval is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall submit a building permit for review and approval by the Building Department.
2. Prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy for the detached accessory apartment, School and Recreation Impact fees, per Article 120 of the Land Development Control Regulations, shall be paid.

Ms. Malcolm duly seconded the motion. Vote taken – all in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Chair Fairman said you're all set, thank you. Ms. Zahra replied thank you. Chair Fairman said good luck with it. The next item on the agenda:

3. **Eames Gilmore (Applicant) and Target Corporation (Owner)** – Request for approval of a site plan amendment to approve changes associated with the expansion of the drive-up stalls and service at Target and for the approval of sign waivers to permit two additional wall signs located at 220 South River Road, Lot 22-31-1-2, Zoned PZ.

Ms. Casey Lieberman of Kimley-Horn presents: Hello my name is Casey Lieberman. I'm a civil engineering representative from Kimley-Horn representing Target Corporation. Should I just get into it and explain the overall scope? OK, so I'll start off with the drive-up portion of it. I'm not sure if you're familiar with the drive-up program, but currently there are... let me see here. We're planning to expand the existing eight drive up parking spaces. Right now, there's currently 8 existing drive-up spaces at this Target. And so, the purpose of the drive-up program is so you order items online. Target lets you know when they're ready for pick up. You pull into the parking space, mark that you're there, and it's a 2-minute turnover rate. The employee brings the goods out to your car. You mark what window you want, then you're in and out. It's a two over. You're there for 2 minutes and then out of there. It was a great success throughout the country. Target is expanding it to 24 spaces at every Target nationwide. You can pretty much see it: the left-hand side shows the existing drive-up spaces, and the right-hand side shows where the 24 parking spaces will be.

In between about every two spaces, there's these loading areas, which they're really just there for employee safety, as well as the addition of that crosswalk, the stop bars and up top, you can see stop

signs as well—all for employee safety. Employees will be utilizing an existing door that's not one of the main entrances, so it doesn't disrupt with any of the traffic flow or any of the customers coming in and out of the store. It'll just be a separate employee only door there. Within these spaces, there are going to be post and panel signs that are double sided at the head of each space. Each of them will just indicate what parking space number you're at because you mark what space you're at when you show up to the store so, when your orders are brought out.

Lastly, this is the post and panel signs that are out at the head of each space. On the right-hand side, there's going to be a drive-up beacon that's internally illuminated. It's really just for directional purposes so that when customers pull into the parking lot, they have ease navigating to where the drive-up spaces actually are. That is the drive-up. Does anyone have any questions before I get into the remodel side of it?

Ms. Hebert asked can you show on the plan where the drive-up sign will be and where the drive-up beacon will be? Ms. Lieberman said yes. It's a little hard to see on here, but these two call outs here and here, those indicate the locations of the drive-up beacons and there will be two of those. When I zoom in you'll see there's a post and panel sign at the head of each set of stalls. When you come along the front drive aisle, you'll be able to see those beacons as well as from any other spot in the parking lot. It doesn't disrupt the flow of traffic.

Ms. Malcolm said Mr. Chairman, may I question this lady? Chair Fairman said certainly. Ms. Malcolm asked do I understand this that when people drive up to Target, there are now going to be two crosswalks in front, one for the main entrance and one for this additional, whatever this is? Ms. Lieberman replied yeah, currently there is no crosswalk for the existing drive-up spaces, which is not safe for the employees. And so that's why we really try to enforce the addition of this crosswalk as well. Ms. Malcolm asked what is the distance going to be between this crosswalk and the existing crosswalk at the front door? Ms. Lieberman answered the main entrance is always to the left-hand side. This crosswalk is... I can't tell you the footage. Let me just try to tell based off of... Ms. Malcolm asked could you tell me how many cars you can accommodate in that space between the stop signs? Ms. Lieberman asked between which stop signs? Sorry, I'm trying to zoom in. It's a little glitchy. Between like these two stop signs? Or over here? Oh, this stop bar and this stop bar. Ms. Malcolm said that's correct. Chair Fairman said judging from the parking spaces, it looks like it's 2-4-6...10 yards, maybe? Ms. Lieberman said yeah, maybe a bit more. That looks like it's around... this is one car here. Mr. Swiniarski said it's probably a bit less if there are people walking. Ms. Lieberman said there's about like 20. Chair Fairman said and you're going to have people walking not on the crosswalks, too. Ms. Lieberman said yeah, just by the looks of it, because there's a car right here, it looks like there would be about 20 cars that could fit there. Ms. Malcolm asked 20 cars between the two stop bars? Ms. Lieberman replied yeah, you could tell. I don't like these. I don't know if you could, like measure on here and set it to scale, but there's a car right here. It looks like you could fit like 4 here, and then another like 12 over here. I'm just basing off of the one that's sitting out front.

Ms. Johnson said I have a question. You're planning to keep the existing drive-up stalls as well? Ms. Lieberman answered no, sorry, I forgot to mention that. So yeah, the existing drive-up spaces will be converted back into standard parking spaces. The emphasis is to move these spaces away from the main entrance, so it does not disrupt traffic. And yeah, we just really want to encourage employee safety, which is why we're just trying to move it as far as possible instead of expanding where they currently are. Ms. Johnson said I feel like there's a lot of cars there all the time, always vying for those front spaces. The further you could move it away from that front entrance, the better. Ms. Lieberman replied yeah, that's definitely what we try to do here, but if we moved it any more to plan right, then I feel like it'd be too

close to this driveway and from maybe about a year back we got comments saying that they didn't want it. They want it further from this driveway, than from the front door. It used to be all the way at the right-hand side, so we just kind of met in the middle on that.

Ms. Hebert asked is the stop condition mandatory for everyone entering the site, because that's a really busy entryway? And the front of the store is very congested. It's how people get to both the Lowes and the Target store, typically. Ms. Lieberman said yeah, it's not like a Target standard or anything like that. Like I said, it's really just added for the employee factor, but we could always change it to a yield sign if you think that will promote the flow of the site better.

Chair Fairman said it's kind of interesting. Who would ever have guessed that as a result of COVID, we have some big change like this? A lot of places now have drive-in and pick-up, call in and pick-up. Becky, I wonder, I don't think in this case it matters, but I wonder if we need to look at this as what it does for the parking requirements on the site. Because those are no longer just open parking spots. In this site, I think there's more than adequate parking, but in some cases I don't think there is. And we may want to put that on. Mr. Swiniarski asked you're talking Town-wide? I've thought the same thing driving around Town. Many parking spaces were taken out of particular site plans as a result of COVID and never changed back. I don't know what we'd do about that. Chair Fairman said yes, those people are still using them. That's the reason they're not changing back. I just think that unrelated to this applicant, we need to look at that. Or what we do about that?

Chair Fairman said one question I have: Is your cell phone coverage there good enough for—because they call on their cell phone, right? So many parts of Bedford have terrible cell phone coverage. I don't know about that parking lot. Ms. Lieberman replied yeah, that's a good question. I honestly don't know the answer to that. Mr. Strand said I can answer that for you, Charlie. The cell coverage is not good there, but it doesn't impact the App. Chair Fairman said but you go to Peter Woodbury, you can't get cellphone coverage, and McKelvie is terrible. Mr. Strand said in my experience, yeah, the App works for the sake of this program. I can attest to it because I can't stand going to Target, so I do use this program. My question is relative to Becky's, actually. Have you guys thought about the impact on traffic flow? Because in my experience for the Bedford Target at least, I don't think I've ever pulled up and there hasn't been a vacancy in the pickup area, but I would definitely see it causing some traffic flow problems. If you were going to add to this program that may not necessarily be needed at this site, I might recommend doing the secondary or the supplemental parking spots in a different part of the parking lot. Ms. Lieberman said yeah, and so just to speak on that, that's really one of the main purposes of why they are encouraging these extra spaces is because you won't have as many customers going in and out of these stores because since there's not enough drive-up spaces, they feel confident that all 24 will be occupied all the time, so it will help things flow even better honestly. And when it comes to like choosing where these spaces go, it's like a little tough. It's like sometimes if we can, we'll move to the side of the store, but it really also has to do with the floor plan of the store and where there's enough space so that all these orders can be prepared. In this case, it's really just based off of where the existing doors are and where this existing employee door is. But in terms of traffic flow, when our design team does this, it's definitely something they consider. And I know we've worked—this came back after like a year of it kind of being on hold, I know. About a year ago we worked with the Town to make the best location work based off of the traffic flow. I can't tell you I've done a full traffic study, but... Mr. Strand said I just think your marketing team—no doubt that nationwide you probably have a higher need for this stuff especially in more urban areas, but I think your marketing team may be underestimating the degree to which the average Bedford resident does enjoy going into Target. I'll leave it at that. Chair Fairman said just to be clear, the existing drive-up stalls are going to go away, right? Ms. Lieberman said yes, they'll be converted back into standard

parking spaces. Chair Fairman said I'm not sure it says that on the plan. Ms. Lieberman said I'll go to the plan that shows that. The sheet, once it loads, is the proposed conditions though. Chair Fairman said as long as it's on the plans. Ms. Lieberman said yeah. These keynotes, when you zoom in on them, for the sake of time, I won't just because it's glitchy, but yeah it specifies that they will be sandblasted and restriped into standard parking spaces. Chairman Fairman said I still don't see it. That's one of the conditions you say, one of the notes? Ms. Lieberman replied yeah. Chair Fairman said OK, that's fine. Are there any other questions or comments from the Board? Ms. Lieberman explained, it's Keynote 1 and 3 here. Number 1: sandblast, remove existing striping and drive-up signage, and then Number 3: restripe standard parking spaces using 4-inch-wide white stripe. Chair Fairman said OK. Thank you. Are there any other questions or comments? Is there anything from public?

Mr. Nichols asked can we talk about the sign? There's a sign on the building... Ms. Lieberman said oh, yeah. I was going to get into that. Yeah, I could get into the remodel side now. The reason I just brought up drive-up first is that everything, the remodel is there to promote the drive-up. Ms. Hebert said one question. It looks like there might be third lighted sign in the island at the end cap there. Ms. Lieberman asked, right here? Ms. Hebert said yes. Ms. Lieberman answered I think that is a stop sign. And then there's a flush curb here, so there won't be any need for a curb. Ms. Hebert said it looks like maybe the stop sign should move. Ms. Lieberman said oh, you know what, that might have been a miss on our end. I just realized that yeah, when someone on the design team moved these over, they never moved those signs. Good catch. Thank you. Let me write that down.

Chair Fairman said why don't you go through your sign waivers. Ms. Lieberman replied oh yeah and let me get into the remodel side. The lack of the moves of those signs show that we had to move them from the right-hand side once upon a time. OK. Now getting into remodel. About every couple of years, Target upgrades just the facades of their stores. So to start off, unrelated to the signage, they are proposing new brown EIFS behind the bullseye and behind the proposed drive-up sign. And then the existing Target sign is going to be replaced. I think it's a decrease in square footage, with a white bullseye.

Chair Fairman said show us the existing. That's existing, right? Ms. Lieberman said yes, correct. Chair Fairman said OK, now what do you want to go to? It's not clear to me. Ms. Lieberman said the proposal will be this white bullseye sign, 13 feet. They're just rebranding to... they're just eliminating the target from the signage nationwide. Changing from red with the target to just a white bullseye, 13 feet. Then, in addition, they are also proposing a new drive-up sign which will be on the building directly across from where the proposed drive-up parking spaces are. And again, this is just to help with the traffic flow of the parking lot. When a customer pulls in, they know exactly what part of the store to drive to and they're not just stalling traffic trying to look around for where they're supposed to go. So yeah, the purpose of this is that it be seen from when you're driving in from the main road. Any questions on these? Then I think that's it, what's proposed on this side of things. And then there is one sign, but I don't think... it's going to be suspended behind the glass. It's the order pickup sign, which is... the order pickup program is separate. When you actually go into the store, it's suspended 2 feet behind the glass, and it hangs from the ceiling just to indicate that you go in for that. That's it.

Chair Fairman asked are there any questions or comments from the Board? Ms. Hebert said the site does have a sign waiver that was previously approved, and it allowed up to 246 square feet of overall signage. The staff recommendation is to reduce the drive-up signs so that they're staying within that total allowed sign area. Ms. Lieberman said OK, and asked, how much would it have to decrease by? Ms. Hebert replied by about 20 square feet. Ms. Lieberman said OK, there's a 44 square foot option where that'd be perfect.

Alright. Then I will make a note if that would be the condition or anything that we can? Ms. Hebert stated the pleasure of the Board. Ms. Lieberman said OK.

Mr. Swinarski said so you're saying they have an existing waiver, the proposed new sign that is a white target instead of a red target is a little bit of reduction, giving them a little bit of credit, but it's not enough credit to get the new drive-up sign. But if you reduce it to your 44 square foot sign, we make it under the existing waiver that they have, right Becky? Ms. Hebert replied yes. Ms. Lieberman asked and that's for the drive-up sign? Ms. Hebert stated that's for the drive-up sign. Ms. Lieberman said OK. Got it. Yeah. That's an easy fix.

Chair Fairman said now the bullseye is back lit? Ms. Lieberman replied yeah. It's internally illuminated. Chair Fairman said it'll be a lot brighter than the red sign. White signs, I think, frankly, become obnoxiously bright. And even though it's smaller, it will be a very bright sign. It's still pretty big. Mr. Swinarski more so than a red target? It's like the worst thing ever. [crosstalk] I agree though, the white is very bright. Chair Fairman said it's going to be a lot brighter than the red one. Mr. Swinarski asked do we have any concern you could see it... yeah, well, that was my question. Do we think that that light shines out onto the street? Can't imagine it would. Chair Fairman said I don't think so. Ms. Johnson said probably good for the parking lot to have that extra light. Mr. Swinarski added shut it down on 4th of July so people can see the fireworks. Mr. Nichols said so then there's no waiver for the signs if they agree to reduce the drive-up, right? Is that right? Ms. Hebert replied this is a very old sign waiver. It was approved in 2004, I think. Yes, 2004. I would restate the approval for the new sign package with the smaller sign. Mr. Swinarski said OK, yeah. Ms. Malcolm said and you wanted 55 square feet. Was that what you wanted? Ms. Hebert replied I said it could be up to 55, but I believe they have a standard size. Sign is it... Ms. Lieberman said yeah, when asked to decrease in the past, there's been a 44 square foot sign that we have used, which I know we could change to. Ms. Hebert said OK. Ms. Malcolm asked so, you'd accept 44? Ms. Lieberman affirmed. Ms. Malcolm said OK. Ms. Lieberman said no, Target would much rather prefer that than not entirely having it.

MOTION: Ms. Malcolm moves the Planning Board approve a waiver from the Bedford Zoning Ordinance, Sections 275-68, 275-74 H(4) & Table 6 of the Performance Zone Sign Standards, to allow the proposed wall sign (44 sq. ft.), at the Target Store, as presented by the Applicant, located at 220 South River Road, Lot 22-31-1-2, as the Planning Board finds that the applicant has shown substantial compliance with the purpose statements of the Performance Zone, in accordance with the following findings of fact:

- **The plans are found to be in compliance with the purpose and intent of the Performance Zone.**
- **The Board also includes all facts found in the meeting minutes for this application and incorporates all meeting minutes into this decision.**

Mr. Nichols duly seconded the motion. Vote taken – all in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

MOTION: Ms. Malcolm moves the Planning Board grant final approval for the Site Plan amendment for the installation of the Target Store drive-up service area, located 220 South River Road, Lot 22-31-1-2, in accordance with the engineering plans prepared by Kimley Horn, last revised September 1, 2023, in accordance with the following findings of fact:

- The plans are found to be in compliance with the purpose and intent of the Bedford Land Development Control Regulations.
- The Board also includes all facts found in the meeting minutes for this application and incorporates all meeting minutes into this decision.

This approval is granted subject to the following conditions to be fulfilled within one year and prior to plan signature:

1. The 12 signs installed at the head of the drive-up parking stalls shall be for directional purposes only.

Mr. Nichols duly seconded the motion. Vote taken – all in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Chair Fairman said thank you very much. Ms. Lieberman said thank you.

IV. Concept Proposals and Other Business:

1. **Bentley Commons Bedford, LLC (Owner) & Property Possible, Inc. (Applicant)** – Request for review of a conceptual plan to change the use of an existing 85 unit assisted living facility to a multifamily apartment building with 85 units, including 25% of the units designated as workforce housing, with associated parking improvements, located at 66 Hawthorne Drive, Lot 24-1-3, Zoned PZ.

Mr. Bob Duvall presents: Good evening. If you bear with me a minute, I'll call up the plan. My name is Bob Duvall. I'm here on behalf of Property Possible, Inc. And with me is Victoria Alcova from Property Possible, Inc. They are the buyer and would-be applicant of the property, and Pat Panciocco, who's an attorney representing Property Possible.

The property, known as Bentley Commons, located at 66 Hawthorne Drive, Lot 24-1-3, sits on 6.04 acres of land on the Merrimack River and just off of Hawthorne Drive. It's an 82,000 square foot building. The original use, and it was built around 2007, was assisted living/nursing home. As an assisted living/nursing home, it's built with 85 smallish units. Being purposely built for that use is the reason why some waivers are required for a conversion of that use to multifamily residential. So that's what we're here to talk about; taking that building, which is now vacant. The building was essentially put up for sale by the owner, the Bentley Commons owner, because he found it was not economically justifiable to make some upgrades to the building to bring it fully up to code requirements for assisted living/nursing home use. And so, a prospective buyer has come forward and this is all quite recent. The seller first put the building for sale at the end of July, beginning of August. The residents were given some advance notice, but essentially all had to leave by September 1st, and they've made arrangements to place everyone, and the building is now vacant. It's a bit of a unique circumstance because this building was built for one purpose, and it really doesn't have much in the way of alternative uses. Other residential, multifamily residential would be the closest and most compatible use. But the very small units make it a somewhat unusual mix of units.

There's 85 units, and with the existing sizes and layouts of the units, it looks like the appropriate multifamily units would be 56 one-bedrooms, 14 studios and 15 two-bedrooms. And the cost of making more significant changes to the floor plan would be uneconomical because you would have to tear down load-bearing walls inside the building. It requires extensive structural renovations to this space to put any kind of other unit mix in there. The unit mix and the number of units is somewhat fixed by the original construction.

The building, as it sits, is assessed at 8 and a half million dollars, so it's a substantial investment in a nice property that's been well maintained. And to keep it in productive use, as I said, would require some waivers—density waivers for multifamily, and some parking waivers. It's important to note that the buyer is proposing to make this a workforce housing development. He's going to include 25 percent workforce housing units within the 85-unit structure.

Ms. Malcolm said excuse me, but could you repeat the mix again of how many two-bedroom and one-bedroom and studio? Mr. Duvall said yeah, there's 56 one-bedroom, and then 14 studios, for a total of 70 at one-bedroom. And 15 two-bedroom units, for a total of 85 units and 100 bedrooms. Chair Fairman said I'll be surprised if you're going to be able to find room for the kitchen in each one of these. They don't have kitchens in them, right? Mr. Duvall replied no, they do. And most, if not all of the units, have small kitchenettes, but they'd have to be upgraded to include full-size appliances and so forth. That that takes up a little bit of the room. But they all are plumbed in and wired for kitchens and so forth. Was there another question?

Ms. Hebert said I was curious why you couldn't put like, thinking of hotel rooms that have adjoining doors, like why you couldn't take two studios and make a two-bedroom unit with adjoining doors. Mr. Duvall replied well, it probably could be done, but again, each of these are set up as individual units. The simplest thing and the most economical thing would be to keep the same demising wall structure and just convert essentially a 1 to 1 unit—assisted living unit to apartment unit. Chair Fairman said there were some two-bedrooms in assisted living? Mr. Duvall replied yeah, there were some larger units essentially for people who want an extra bedroom that are included in the original assisted living concept. Mr. Swiniarski said we have a floor plan, right? Mr. Duvall replied yes. Ms. Hebert said no. Mr. Duvall corrected no, we don't. I didn't bring a floor plan. I don't have a floor plan with us at this time, but it is being developed by Property Possible and of course with an application would come a full floor plan. At this point it's really conceptual. In fact, the reason we're here is to get the sense of this Board about the waivers that we need. I should jump into that next. The density waivers are... Currently, multifamily requires a maximum of 12 units per building for workforce housing, and I say roughly 12 units per acre because it's based on buildable land now rather than just a lot size. The 12 units per building, obviously we have one building with 85 units. So that would be a substantial waiver. And the reason for all of these is this is not new construction. We're not proposing something to meet the regulations. We're trying to find a reasonable use for an existing building that otherwise would go vacant. And there just aren't many other compatible uses for that kind of a structure.

Ms. Johnson said I have a quick question. You said it's going to be 25 percent workforce? Mr. Duvall affirmed, 25 percent. Ms. Johnson said OK, so it's not 100 percent workforce, it's 25. Mr. Duvall said no, 25 percent, enough to qualify as workforce housing under the ordinance. Ms. Johnson asked how many units total is going to qualify for that workforce? Mr. Duvall replied well, roughly 22, 20, 21 or 22 units would be workforce. So, 12 units per building is one hurdle, one waiver that we need. There's also some landscaping waivers that would be required. I think it's due to change in the landscape requirement since 2007. Today, I really don't see much need to spend time on that because I'm sure we can cure the

landscape waivers or at least come up with a reasonable equivalent to the required landscaping at the time of site plan. In addition to the 12 units per building and the 12 units per acre, it's a six-acre site, so theoretically it would be limited to 72 units or less as multifamily housing. And again, we're dealing with an existing situation and that choice is not really between making the building conforming or the lot conforming. It's really between approving these waivers or trying to find another buyer/another use.

Parking waivers basically have the same genesis. It's because we're dealing with an existing building. There are 68 existing parking spaces on the site, and of course, just as assisted living needs smaller units, they also need less parking. At the required parking count of two per unit, that would be 2 times 85 is 170 parking spaces required. What we've done in this concept plan is basically pack in parking everywhere we could, where topography and circulation of fire apparatus didn't prevent. And we've come up with, essentially, a capacity, not to say we couldn't find one or two more if we kept at it, but we're not going to find 10 or 20 more parking spaces. And that site is heavily constrained by wetlands setbacks, normal side and front and rear setbacks and conservation land to the right, and a small wetlands running through the middle of that wasp waste at the middle of the site. There isn't really room for wholesale expansion of the parking lot. So, 68 existing, and we've found room for 117 on this site. And we have run this by the Fire Department to make sure they're comfortable with the vehicle circulation, and they are. I think this is pretty close to what we'd be bringing to this Board for a site plan review—a layout very similar to this one.

On the right, there is existing carports. You can say the grayed-out structure with the blue label and then on the lower right. And then on the lower left, that's a 16-car carport. And on the left we're proposing another 16-car carport, for 32 covered spaces where if the required number is 170 and at least one of which has to be covered, that would require 85 carport spaces. We're coming up short on that too. But I think as a practical matter, 117 spaces is the most that we can put on that site. And two per unit is somewhat of an old metric for multifamily parking. We're finding more commonly in urban and suburban developments, 1.5 is a more appropriate number. We're still a little under that 1.5 number and another metric, and probably the one that's best, because the per unit doesn't take into account 3-bedroom, 2-bedroom, one-bedroom. And given the somewhat unusual concentration of ones and studios here, that translates into a lower parking demand. The more common metric these days is one per bedroom. And in that case, 100 bedrooms would correspond to 100 units, and we'd be following that metric. I think the parking is appropriate for the site and of course any prospective tenant is going to realize that there is that many spaces on the site and that will enter into the decision whether to rent or not. And likewise for the covered spaces, we could build more. But in order to convert this building, there is going to be significant fit up costs inside the building. Investing in carports, which maybe some tenants may like as an amenity, is certainly not necessary to put this building out to rent and fill it up in short order.

So that's really what we're about here. And the waivers that we're facing for this Board. And before we proceed any further with this project, we'd like to get a sense from this Board of whether these waivers are approvable and any other advice or guidance you could give us to see if this project makes sense to proceed with.

Mr. Nichols said Mr. Chairman. Quick question and then maybe a long one. If you got rid of the carports, would you gain any car space? One or two? Mr. Duvall replied yeah, you might pick up one or two. Mr. Clough asked why would you get rid of the carports? Mr. Duvall said you know, they're very tightly framed. Mr. Clough said if you're a renter, wouldn't you want a covered space? Mr. Nichols said well, so I'll move on to my next point, I guess. I'm encouraged to hear that you've got data that says that maybe we don't need as much parking, but my first reaction was, if there is ever a surge event—I don't know what a surge

event is at an apartment complex—Super Bowl parties or something. This site just doesn't... there's no space. I just don't know what would... where... ? Ms. Malcolm added there's no guest parking, is what he's saying. Mr. Swiniarski said parking is the key, right? How many? Mr. Nichols said but not only that, there's just like nowhere else, like other sites, there might be spots for people. There's just literally no other spot to go. Mr. Duvall said well, going with the one per bedroom, that would mean 100 required spaces and 17 extra spaces by that metric. You could have maybe 3 or 4 Super Bowl parties with those 17 spaces. Mr. Swiniarski said I don't think the units are going to be Super Bowl party sized. Mr. Nichols said yes, that's true. Ms. Malcolm added very small units. Chairman Fairman said but people may have guests—will have guests. And, for instance, in this town, there is a tremendous amount of women that go to different places to play bridge, so you end up with four or eight people who play bridge. And some of that will end up parking out on Hawthorne Drive, frankly, which is, I think, OK. I don't see it as a big—I am concerned about the parking. I particularly was when I read it. But I think that, as Matt said, it would be interesting to see that data that indicates one and a half is more appropriate today than the two. It might be interesting data to get to Becky so we could all see them in the future. Mr. Duvall said I think the most progressive metric is the per bedroom count, because these per-unit counts just don't take into account... Chair Fairman said yeah, there's certainly, like we got so many studios and one-bedroom. Studio, I can't imagine having two cars. One-bedroom, you'd probably get 50 percent of them will have two cars, I would think. Some of them will, at least. But it does reduce the number.

Ms. Johnson asked do you know how big the one-bedrooms are? Mr. Duvall said I don't know the typical size of units, perhaps Victoria does. Ms. Alcova replied some of the units are a little different shape. I would say they're probably less than [unintelligible]. Ms. Johnson replied yeah, there's a big difference between how many people are going to stay in 1,000 square feet versus how many people are going to stay in 600 square feet.

Mr. Duvall said first of all, I don't know if you heard that in the record. I'll repeat it if not. Did you hear Victoria's answer? Ms. Hebert replied yes. Mr. Duvall said OK.

Chair Fairman said I'm not familiar enough to know, are there are sidewalks on Hawthorne? Mr. Duvall replied yes. Chair Fairman continued so, are you, in the final review of this, Bob, I'd like to make sure we show how residents will walk out, or is there a sidewalk, or? I don't see anything on the site plan right now, but I'd like to make sure that there are adequate sidewalks and crosswalks as appropriate, speed bumps, if necessary. Mr. Clough said there doesn't look like there's much room out there on Hawthorne. Mr. Duvall said there is a little bit of a—if you look carefully at the plan, since I can't seem to get the mouse to show up in the screen... Chair Fairman said near the parking I see something that might be a sidewalk. Mr. Duvall said here it is. You can see that there's, at the entrance—just to the right of the entrance there's an existing crosswalk from the front door that leads to the network. And the network is on, I believe on the on the inner side, on the Bentley Common side of Hawthorne Drive.

Mr. Swiniarski said I know you haven't done any sort of traffic assessment yet, but any thoughts about that? Because it's basically a change of use such that there would probably be significant difference in the traffic generated. What are your initial thoughts on that? Mr. Duvall replied that's a true statement that the assisted living is a low generator, low parking count, low generator, mostly employees and some visitors. The apartment use, the multifamily use—this would technically be midrise multifamily—is roughly .4 to .5 peak hour trips per unit. You'd be looking at a peak hour traffic of oh, somewhere in the 40 range—40 trips in the peak hour. And you probably had something like 15, maybe, before. An increase of 25 trips in the peak hour, which is, considering Hawthorne is relatively low-volume and its signal-controlled at the end, I'd say that's 25 trips is 1 per two minutes and the two-minute cycle out there,

you're talking about one more trip per cycle on average. It's not going to make a big difference to LOS or LOLA service or delays.

Mr. Strand said I have a couple of questions, Mr. Chairman. Chair Fairman said yes. Mr. Strand said one, do you know offhand how many one- versus 2-bedroom units there would be? And I apologize if I missed that earlier. Mr. Duvall replied yeah. Well, if you're counting studios and ones, there's 70 and there's 15 and twos. Mr. Strand asked 15 twos? Mr. Duvall replied 15 doubles, right. Mr. Strand continued any 3-bedroom, or no? Mr. Duvall said no. Mr. Strand said OK. I guess my only question is, which may be secondary at this point depending upon where this is in process, notwithstanding the obvious demand for affordable and workforce housing, are there any efforts or considerations to consider how to incentivize potentially more practical family housing, which, to me would equate to a 2-bedroom or 3-bedroom opposed to traditional, single person, one-bedroom units, if that makes sense? Mr. Duvall replied yeah. I'm not an architect, one. And no, they're just beginning—'they' meaning the prospective buyer, is just beginning to understand the layout of the structure and his cost for upgrading the units. And the possibility that we just touched on with an earlier question of changing the size of the units. Mr. Strand said I'm sure the goal is not to go in and do a bunch of remodel work, but just for nice schematics. Mr. Duvall said exactly, because actually it is only going to take away from the ability to provide affordable units. Mr. Duvall said yeah, from a schematic standpoint, I can't help but think, looking long term at, potential stressors on Police, Fire, it may be something to think about. And I guess my only other hypothetical would be if this did not move forward as planned, and I understand it makes sense to look at converting it this way, what would other potential uses for this property be? Mr. Duvall replied that's the that's the big question. Really, in order to build something, a reasonable investment, and put the property out to market, I think almost all other uses are excluded, but residential uses—just from the layout of the structure. It doesn't work for office. It doesn't work for school. It doesn't work for a clinic. There's very little that could be used, reused, and a different use. Not to say there's nothing and somebody couldn't do it, but the most obvious use and the simplest use to convert would be a straight conversion to multifamily. A mix of the units could be played with perhaps, but I don't think there's going to be another user who would be willing to pay essentially the assessed value. Mr. Strand said I would imagine that's the case. I think the purpose of my question is probably a little more hypothetical and rhetorical connected to my prior question, if that makes sense. Mr. Duvall said but that's the issue before all of us, frankly, especially the buyer, but the Community as a whole—this is a property that's assessed total land and buildings at \$10 million. To see this, go vacant for an extended period, is not good for the building first of all, and is not good for the Community. And the purpose of PZ being to make productive use of the land highest and best use and revenue for the Town, enabling this to go forward in a timely way before the ravages of time and abandonment take its toll on the structure, would be a multifamily.

Chair Fairman said thank you, Bob. I think you've done a great job explaining to the Board why this is a good use of the building. And why there are very limited options for this building. I'd like to have the Board members comment on the first two waivers relative to density. My take is that that this building is a perfect example of where waivers are appropriate. You've got an existing building, going to convert it and that's my view. But I'd like to see if any of the other Board members have any comments about those two waivers. We talked about the parking waivers. We need to discuss the density.

Mr. Clough said well, he's also saying that this is the baseline. Like they don't want to do anything to it except what he's presenting. They want to make it profitable and I think there's more that can be done. You just have to shave down on the price a little bit more. You know what I mean? I'm very concerned about the density. The density of the number of units and the number of people in one building. Do you know what I mean? You have a lot of older people there who aren't going to do drugs or make trouble or

whatever. It worked fine. But now you're converting to a lot of single units. I'm concerned about drug use coming into Bedford, and I mean these zoning ordinances are there for a reason. Chair Fairman said the same thing on the Chandler Apartment Building is they pushed the density up on that building intentionally to keep the number of two- and three-bedroom apartments down. Because once you go into 3-bedroom apartments, you start affecting your school district. But studios and one-bedroom and two-bedroom do not or have less effect on the school district. There'll be some, but there won't be a lot. And that's the reason that increase in the density in our apartment building is actually good for the Town, not bad for the Town in that sense.

Mr. Strand said I think that makes sense. It's a good point, Chairman. I guess I would have a couple comments and again I'm just the alternate here tonight. But to Steve's comment, I think on one hand we should be careful with some of the stereotypes often associated with multi-unit and quote unquote affordable housing, workforce housing in terms of drug use—not that certainly there is a risk there with 70 single units. I think I, again, as I alluded to earlier, look at it from kind of another perspective here and I technically live in a multi-family apartment—or not a multifamily apartment—but a building with multifamily units, and it's labeled workforce housing. My floor includes teachers, a maintenance super who works at the building. I don't think there's one single person on the entire floor, but again, you're looking at units with two- and three-bedroom apartments, people who have kids. You're incentivizing affordable. And affordable housing simply is a pragmatic term. I mean, it's probably a mortgage in many places in the state. But you're incentivizing, I think, pro-family growth opposed to this sort of workforce single unit deal. Not that we don't need it, again. And to Chairman Fairman's point, I think we can also, with your statement, acknowledge that enrollment in Bedford schools is actually down at current, I believe, and they don't typically have budgetary problems. I would be less concerned with that. Although I understand the logic, but I would like to see less than 70 single units in something like this and more multi-bedroom.

Mr. Sullivan said in terms of impact on Town resources, I wouldn't be surprised if the previous owner, with the first response requirements, especially out of the Fire Department, was one of the higher call spots within the Town. So that would also likely decrease here as well.

Mr. Nichols said I'm going to just ask a question to make sure that I understand. The density waivers that would be asked for here are no different than the other kind of apartment buildings that we have in especially, is that right? [crosstalk] I personally have zero issue with any of the density things that are being asked here. Mr. Sullivan added especially since the Performance Zone has much stricter density and multifamily requirements as opposed to the rest of the Town. Y

Mr. Strand said yeah, I think from a traffic-flow standpoint, based on what's already there in Hawthorne, I don't know that that becomes a huge issue. I just, again, would just like to see more two- or three-bedroom units.

Mr. Sullivan said I have a question about usage just because I could see easily mental association, even though it's 25 percent workforce housing, there isn't any plan at this point to have 55 plus? Mr. Duvall said no. There's no plan to make this 55 plus. Ms. Hebert asked Bob, how were the spaces in the assisted living facility that were not residential units going to be used or renovated? I know they had a commercial kitchen, they had congregate dining facilities. I haven't seen a floor plan, but I know a licensed assisted living facility needs to provide certain services. Mr. Duvall said so the question was: have you done any programming of the common spaces yet? Do you know what you're going to do with those spaces?

Ms. Alcova replied I don't have anything specific to address the common areas which is pretty much only on one floor as of right now. And there are residential units as well. It's probably going to be some common areas for the residents to spend time and... Mr. Sullivan added Super Bowl parties. Mr. Duvall said yeah and laundry room—you'll probably have expanded laundry. Ms. Alcova said of course. It will help to provide amenities for the residents, which would be necessary, such as laundry room. That's a great idea. Mr. Duvall said a gym—the usual amenities, I would think.

Mr. Swiniarski said I think there could be a challenge with criteria E and each of these waivers. When you think about this proposal as a whole, we're talking about preserving valuable historical, cultural and natural features. Remember where this property is. This is sort of the Future Development Center of the Town. It really is what will be the Town Center in the future. This is right on the river, and the overall proposal before us is A) we have a 15-year-old building, give or take that somehow can't succeed for its intended use because of money. And then, I mean the proposal is to make this the most bare bones, inexpensive way to utilize that as possible. This is not striving to be something excellent. This is striving to reuse what failed, and it's a little bit at the expense of one of the best places in Town, poised for future development. And that's concerning to me. Certainly, there could be better uses of this property. They probably cost more money to do, but that's the tradeoff. Being someone who works in this industry a lot in terms of development, we hear housing as the reason to do everything all the time. And there's certainly a need for housing, but housing is not a reason to throw away the rest of the concerns. Mr. Clough said I agree. Good point. Chair Fairman said I agree with you but let me just say that this area is fully developed. There's nothing else in this area that's going to be developed in the future. Hawthorne Drive, I don't believe there's any development coming. Mr. Swiniarski said I mean going down Route 3. Chair Fairman said actually, going down South River Road, there's very little development going to happen. Most of it is already developed. Mr. Swiniarski said but Charlie, it's pretty vacant. Chair Fairman said I just don't see a push for... what else are you going to put in here? An industrial building? Mr. Clough said you're taking his word for it, Charlie. Chair Fairman continued an apartment building, or you could tear it down and build another apartment building. Mr. Clough said hotel? Chair Fairman said I don't see what else, what other good use there is for that property. Look at the shape of that property. It is very strange. And at the back end, you've got the Hawthorne Trail and the river. Mr. Swiniarski said yeah, these are amenities. Chair Fairman said so, it's pretty limited space. I'm just looking at the picture in the staff report of the shape of the lot—very strange shape. Mr. Swiniarski said well, I guess to address the shape and the lot issue, if the lot was vacant, nobody would be proposing this building here. Mr. Clough said right. Mr. Strand asked what do you think they'd be proposing? Mr. Swiniarski replied I have no idea. [crosstalk] Chair Fairman said you could easily propose a taller building. Mr. Swiniarski said yeah, something different, and that's the... Chair Fairman said a taller apartment building. Mr. Swiniarski said that's the point I want to make. The goal here is reuse of what's there to save expense, and that's viable. There's nothing wrong with that. But we have to remember that that is the ultimate objective and maybe that's not the best objective for the Town. Even though it is, of course, for the property owner or future owner. Mr. Strand said for me, I don't know that it's as much a case of the what or the why, but the how. And to your point, doing the easiest version of something that didn't work, in the most profit driven version, although that's, I get it. I guess I would just want to see maybe a little more investment into something world class, state-of-the-art, really nice. Maybe some more again, family-friendly stuff would be my statement—which would cost money. But it might be a better addition to the Town.

Mr. Nichols said I think you painted an interesting picture, but I have never been down here until this came forward—being the Center of Town, and everything, right? I don't know. It was an interesting way you framed it, but also, we have to vote on what waivers are going to come through. We can have our own biases of what we want there, but ultimately, it's the owners decision, right? And we just have the

waivers to go off of whatever waivers they're going to end up bringing forward. Mr. Swiniarski said and that's why I think the criteria we have to follow for the waivers—B and E, for me, are tough criteria. Mr. Nichols said yeah, so, E I'm with you on. I think that's probably the best argument, but like the density and the parking, I mean these are things that we've—these are repeat things that every development comes forward with right?

Chair Fairman said Hawthorne Drive has a fairly large number of multi-unit residential units there now. Mr. Swiniarski said Right. And that's where criteria B comes into effect. We're looking for diversity in our development. I don't know. I've been on this Board for not quite two years, and it seems like there is an apartment application every other meeting. We don't meet our own legal criteria for granting waivers many times. It's not so much we don't meet it, but the applications don't meet it. We are supposed to be trying to encourage diversity of development, not just housing development. There has to be more than just housing.

Mr. Strand said well I think the concern is not necessarily with the waivers as they stand, and there could be certainly a valid case you made that perhaps the purview of this Board is only to look at what's put in front of us, but I think there's still has to be an ethical impetus to consider unintended consequences from something as simple as some simple waivers put in front of us.

Chair Fairman said so, Chris, you said that you think we have a lot of housing applicants. In your two years on the Board, can you tell us one that we've approved other than ADU's and single family? Mr. Swiniarski replied that we've approved—no, not yet. They've all come in as conceptual so far. Mr. Sullivan said we did approve the one off of South... Chair Fairman said and I don't know if there were more than one or two conceptual that we had. I just questioned your feeling that we've had a lot of housing applications. We can go back and look at it. We talked a lot about housing, but I don't know that we've had a lot of separate different applications. That's something we've talked about many times. Mr. Swiniarski said I'd have to think back on the exact examples—last month, obviously, did we not have I think three successive months of discussion on housing at Market & Main. Chair Fairman said as I said, we've had repeats of housing, but the number of housing developments is not very big. That's my point.

Mr. Sullivan said the last one we would have approved was the Sebbins Brook, and then that never actually materialized. Mr. Swiniarski said and that's another thing to look at is, though, the ones that haven't materialized and why. I don't know, but Becky, you probably have a count of what's approved and hasn't started yet and what are the reasons for that. Were there things applied for that aren't realistic or that aren't going to work. Because sometimes, when things like that are approved, there's two choices that a developer or property owner can make. The one choice can be push as hard as you can, cut every corner you can to get it built, and that results in a problem for the Town. Or the other choice they can make is don't build it, and we're seeing don't build it, I think. I think we have several approved developments that have not been built yet. It would be good to know why and what concerns are stopping these types of things from being successful. Chair Fairman said the only one I'm aware of is Sebbins Brook. Ms. Hebert said we just have one. [crosstalk] Mr. Nichols said I mean; I'm just going off of memory. I think it's an interesting line of thought, right? But the workforce housing is one that comes up all the time. And what's interesting about this one is that they came off right at the bat and said we're going to include it, right? Mr. Clough added with no parking. Mr. Nichols said well, yeah, I mean there's other things, right? But it's not that in this case, right? Which every other one comes and they say, well, we can't do workforce housing.

Ms. Johnson said I don't think there's no parking, either. I think there's parking. Chair Fairman said it's great that they've stepped forward and said they're going to have workforce housing. It's something we desperately need in Bedford, and I think it's nice to have a developer come in and say they're going to do that rather than give us excuses why they can't.

Mr. Duvall said could I make a comment, Mr. Chairman. I think it's important to look at this not as a tragedy, but as an opportunity. There's a building here that can be converted to multifamily housing, relatively economically, including workforce housing, in an area that's really a nice place to live, surrounded by higher-income, higher-level housing. It's an opportunity to provide a little diversity of housing in that area at relatively low expense which would make the rents affordable. Even if they're not technically affordable, they'd be lower. And there would be an affordable defined component as well. It really is an opportunity here that you wouldn't have if it wasn't for this unfortunate circumstance to the assisted living building. And it is a \$10 million investment already on the property.

Mr. Sullivan said market rate studios in Manchester are going for almost \$2,000 a month at this point. It's crazy. Chair Fairman said one comment, I'd like to clarify. Somebody said that they would like to see more investment, and therefore upgrade it. I suspect that it's a significant investment to convert this building, from what it is now, into an apartment building. Mr. Clough said not the way that he's presenting it. Chair Fairman said so, there's a lot of—yeah, you can always invest more. But there's quite a big investment to make that property into an approvable workforce housing concept.

Ms. Johnson said I think it's also unfair to say they're just going to do the bare bones of an improvement, because we don't know that. They're taking something that the easiest thing to do is to change it into these studios and one-bedrooms, but they haven't made their decisions yet, so we don't know what kind of investment they're putting into it or how they're doing their changes or what kind of countertops they're going to have in there. We don't know what it's going to look like. It doesn't have to be a bare bones kind of building when they're done. We don't know yet.

Mr. Strand asked Logan, forgive my ignorance, but those future requests would, again, come before the Board? Or would that be Town and Building Department only? Ms. Johnson replied finishes would be their decision. Ms. Hebert said the interior finishes would be their decision. The Planning Board doesn't usually get involved in the interior set up. Mr. Sullivan said it's always a good selling point, though. Mr. Strand said I guess I meant in terms of the breakdown, single- versus multiple-bedrooms, and what the final plan is going to be. Ms. Hebert replied that is Board's purview, yes, and the regulations require half of the units to be two-bedroom. Mr. Strand said OK. So, they would have to come back if these initial requests were granted. Ms. Hebert affirmed. Mr. Clough said they would have to undergo public comment, too. Ms. Hebert affirmed. Mr. Strand said OK. Then I'd be happy with it then.

Chair Fairman asked are there any other comments from the Board? Mr. Swiniarski said I just have one more question. Did you guys have any idea on the square footages of studios and one-bedrooms, approximately? Mr. Duvall replied well, the gross square footage of the building is 84,085 units. The gross square footage is 1,000. There is essentially a lost floor downstairs that wouldn't be used for units, so that probably brings the gross down to 750. So, you're probably talking a net of 600? Five hundred or 600 square feet? Ms. Alcova said yeah. For studios, one-bedrooms, it's average. Ms. Hebert asked would you be willing to limit the units to only one car per tenant? Or do you have a plan for how you'd manage the parking? Because if you have couples living in the one-bedroom units and there are two cars, you're going to have not enough parking combined with the two-bedroom units. Is there a way to control that with the lease agreement? Ms. Alcova said this is definitely a great comment. I'm sure that this will be part of the

decision making when people are moving in. They will see how much parking is available and parking spots could be marked. That's better way of doing it where tenant has their assigned parking spots to have it be clear for everyone and no arguments be made. Ms. Hebert continued because there would be no room for on-street parking on Hawthorne Drive, and it's a fairly busy roadway. It's on a curve. Mr. Clough said I agree. Ms. Hebert said I don't know that the businesses to the north and south would want to see parking on street all the time. There is an office building to the north, and there may be an opportunity for shared parking. Mr. Strand said I think if you also had, not to beat a dead horse here, but if you had more two- or three-bedroom units, I think it's likely you would have people with kids or dependents living with them. Then you would necessarily have people cosigning in terms of roommate and lease situations, in all likelihood, which would inevitably decrease your traffic volume and need for parking.

Chair Fairman asked are there any other comments? Bob, do you have any questions for the Board? Mr. Duvall said well, I think we got the sense of the Board. I would say it's cautious, but optimistic. We do have to report back to the buyer about whether this is worth going ahead with. And I heard some concerns, but I didn't hear anything that I think is insurmountable. I hope I'm not wrong on that, and we're going to need some more justification to support these waivers at time of site plan application where we'll have floor plans, and we'll have a look at the economics of making more twos and possibly even threes. I am a little bit surprised, I think, by the interest in having more twos and threes. I know the regulation requires 50 percent. Is that a fair statement that the Board would like to see more twos and threes? Or is that just a... Ms. Malcolm said I'm concerned with your putting in more twos and threes given the parking spaces you don't have. Mr. Duvall said yeah, I feel the same way. This is more appropriate for ones and studios. Ms. Malcolm said right. Chair Fairman said absolutely. I agree. Mr. Duvall said OK. Thank you. Mr. Strand said I may be a minority opinion, admittedly, on that one.

Ms. Hebert asked would the consolidation also limit the number of one-bedrooms, so it would be mixing up the units anyway? You might end up with the same bedroom count. Mr. Duvall said there would be fewer units, for sure. Ms. Hebert said something to think about. Mr. Duvall said but I think we have something to go back with and go to the next level of design and see what it brings us.

Ms. Hebert said I wanted to just also mention to folks that it's a nice site, and it has a great connection to the Heritage Trail, which is a nice amenity. We usually look for a recreational amenity like a dog park or some place where people can enjoy the outdoors. The site benefits from a connection to the Heritage Trail. It would be nice to see some investment in that or entryway to that area. Mr. Duvall said I agree 100 percent. There's so many affordable units that are sort of put in, tucked away, in less desirable places. This is really a nice place to live. It would be great to see that affordable product in a nice place like this. Well, thank you for your comments. Chair Fairman said OK. Thank you. Ms. Malcolm and Ms. Johnson said thank you.

2. The Planning Board will review and offer comments on the proposed Capital Improvements Plan for 2024.

Ms. Hebert said I will give you a quick overview of the Capital Improvements Plan process. What you have is the draft Capital Improvements Plan for 2024 prepared by our Town Manager, Rick Sawyer. This is a document for the Planning Board to review and comment on in advance of the CIP being presented to the Town Council, which will happen on September 27th. Rick is looking for your comments and feedback in advance of that September 27th meeting. But this is just the beginning of the budget process, and the full budget will be handed over to Town Council on October 25th and then it will go through the Council's typical review process with budget workshops with the Town department heads and public hearings in

January. There's lots of opportunity to comment and the Capital Improvements Plan is not fully adopted until the town budget is adopted by our residents in March. Things of interest to the Planning Board on this particular plan: there is a new item for the Town Hall renovations that the Board might be interested in. There's also funding for the new proposed Public Safety Complex on South River Road. There is a debt service for the proposed solar array at the Transfer Station. I'm not going to go through all the different projects, but there are some recreation projects, recreation improvements, the Planning Boards, Master Plan and impact fee studies are also included in the CIP. The safety complex is also included in the CIP. So, I'd encourage you to go through the document. It's broken up into kind of project-based items and then equipment-based items and to send any of your comments or questions to the Town Manager in the next couple of weeks.

Chair Fairman said OK. It's something we do every year. It's a little tedious to go through and look at them all. I recommended it is something Board members should do. Ms. Johnson said \$99 million, huh? Couldn't get to \$100. Ms. Hebert said \$99 million for 10 years. Anything else, Becky?

Announcements: For announcements, yes, the Housing Project, which has been named Bedford, A Place to Live, is starting to kick into gear. We have launched 4 surveys. They're online and they're linked to the Planning Department website, and a landing page specifically set up for the project. There is a resident survey, a prospective resident survey, a developer survey, and an employer survey. I would encourage you all the fill out the resident survey and share it with your friends and family. If you are an employer or a developer, I would encourage you also to complete the survey. You can complete more than one if you qualify for more than one category. If you know people who are looking for housing in Bedford, share the prospective resident link because I think it's going to be harder to get responses in that category and it would be interesting to hear what people on the outside are thinking about as they look for housing in Town.

The Joint Board, Commission, Town Councilor meeting with the consultant team to kick off the project with our Town land use boards and the Town Council, and to kind of give everybody an overview, get everybody on the same page, is scheduled for September 20th at the Bedford Public Library. The meeting will start at 6:00. It will run between 6:00 and 8:00, and it's going to be a series of breakout groups and discussion with the consultants to get everybody's thoughts and ideas and kind of get a better understanding of where people are at with regards to housing. We encourage you all to attend. I will send another e-mail blast out this week, so you have the information right in front of you. But this is a meeting that's specifically for our Board and Commissions. It's open to the public, but we're not soliciting a lot of public attendance for this meeting. There is a public forum that's scheduled for November 14th, and we will be inviting all residents and anyone and everyone who's interested in attending, to that meeting.

And your next Planning Board meeting is on the 18th. That agenda will be a little bit on the lighter side because of the Workshop, the Joint Board and Commission meeting is on the 20th, but the Board does need to talk about Zoning Amendments for 2024. The next meeting is a workshop, and that'll be your regular time frame, in this room. That's all, Charlie.

V. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings July 17, 2023 meeting.

Chair Fairman asked are there any comments, questions, corrections. There were none.

MOTION: Ms. Malcolm moves the Planning Board accept the minutes for August 14, 2023 as distributed at this meeting. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. Vote taken – all in favor. Mr. Clough and Mr. Strand abstained. Motion carried.

Chair Fairman asked is there anything else to discuss? There was no further discussion.

IX. Adjournment:

MOTION by Ms. Malcolm to adjourn at 8:39 pm. Mr. Sullivan duly seconded the motion. Vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried.

The next meeting of the Planning Board, a Workshop, is scheduled for September 18, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by
Sue Forcier