

June 17, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Bob Gambale, Chair
Ipswich Zoning Board of Appeals
Town Hall
25 Green Street
Ipswich, Massachusetts 01938

RE: Project: Essex Pastures Comprehensive Permit Application
Property: 26, 36, 38, 42 and 44 Essex Road
Petitioner: Essex Pastures LLC (John J. Bruni, Manager)
Owner: Southern Cross Realty Trust (John J. Bruni, Trustee)
Continuance Request and Request for Updated Peer Review

Dear Chair Gambale and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Applicant Essex Pastures LLC, the Applicant has filed with the Board the following materials, including:

1. Updated set of civil plans, consisting of six (6) sheets, entitled "Comprehensive Permit Filing, Essex Pastures, dated June 1, 2020, prepared by Hancock Associates, Inc.;
2. A set of plans, consisting of four (4) sheets, entitled "Vehicle Movement Turning Plan, dated June 1, 2020, prepared by Hancock Associates, Inc.;
3. An updated set of architectural plans, consisting of twenty-four (24) sheets, entitled "Essex Pastures, Ipswich, MA," dated May 18, 2020, prepared by The MZO Group;
4. A stormwater management report, consisting of 176 pages, entitled "Stormwater Report in Support of Comprehensive Permit Filing, Essex Pastures," dated June 2020, prepared by Hancock Associates, Inc.;
5. A set of updated landscaping and lighting plans, consisting of 5 sheets, entitled "Landscape Plan," (all dated March 5, 2020 except Sheet L-1 which is dated March 9, 2020), prepared by James K. Emmanuel Associates; and,
6. "Technical Memo – Essex Pastures Rooftop Equipment Noise Prediction," dated March 6, 2020, prepared by Noise Control Engineering, LLC.

In addition to those materials previously filed with the Board, enclosed herewith are the following:

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- a. Essex Pastures: Unit Mix Summary, dated June 17, 2020 (updated the currently proposed unit mix);
- b. Comparison of Current Essex Pastures Plan With Initial Proposed Plan (which highlights the changes to the project since the original filing was made with the Board); and,
- c. Continuance request to July, 2020 meeting, and request for extension of the 180-day period to August 31, 2020.

Since it has been a number of months since the Applicant's team was before the Board, the Applicant has updated, revised and adjusted the site layout based upon the use of the entire 13.2-acre property for the redevelopment of the site.

By way of background, the original application proposed the redevelopment of only 11.1 acres of a 13.2-acre site to include the development of a total of 194 rental units contained within three 4-story buildings, two 3-story buildings, and 20 townhouse units located in 4 buildings, along with parking and other improvements formerly proposed to be separate from a proposed 2.1-acre commercial lot to contain existing commercial uses.

As you know from prior hearings, based upon comments and recommendations of the Board and its consultants, as well as from the public, significant project modifications have been made to building height, building massing, building design, building placement, setback adjustments, buffering and screening, landscape and lighting enhancements, snow storage improvements, on-site circulation improvements, and the reduction of 5 curb cuts off Essex Road to 2.

The Applicant now proposes the use of the entire 13.2-acre site for the redevelopment which now includes the construction of 191 residential apartment units. These residential units are now located in five 3-story buildings (153 units), two 2-story buildings (16 units), 3-townhouse style buildings (18 units), and one rehabilitated building (4 units above the Lahey Health Primary Care building). A Clubhouse/Pool facility has now been included along with a Maintenance Building. The development now incorporates the Lahey Health Primary Care building (approximately 6,900 sf of existing medical office space with 1,000 s.f. of proposed additional medical space).

The following summarizes the adjustments which have been made since the beginning of the year:

Site Layout

With respect to the Site Plans, we noted the following:

- As noted above, the site layout now incorporates the formerly proposed 2.1-acre commercial parcel located along Essex Road between the two points of egress for

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the development so that the project is proposed on a single lot consisting of approximately 13.25 acres.

- Inclusion of the additional land into the Project site enables the elimination of three existing driveway openings off Essex Road, which will, in turn, improve the level of safety for vehicles accessing the site and use of this stretch of Essex Road by providing as much separation between points of site access as possible.
- The revised site layout has incorporated 354 parking spaces throughout the site to accommodate parking for the residents, as well as for those using the commercial space. The parking includes adequate accessible spaces and loading zones to comply with MAAB and ADA requirements. Individual parking spaces have been adjusted to meet the Town of Ipswich size requirements of 8.5'x17'. All accessible spaces will be a minimum of 8 feet wide.
- The townhouses and site roadway along the western portion of the site have been adjusted to avoid any permanent construction or dwellings within the 50-Foot No-Disturbance Zone and the additional 15-foot No-Build Zone associated with the resource area along the western property line.
- The site roadway network has been revised to provide a consistent minimum width of 22 feet. Curb radii have been increased at key locations to allow unconfined movement throughout the site by emergency vehicles. Vehicle Movement Turning Plans showing emergency vehicle routes through the site roadway network have been included.
- A traffic island has been added near the eastern site entrance adjacent to the clubhouse. The one-way roadway between buildings E and F has been maintained to enhance internal site circulation.
- Parking areas along the northern and eastern property lines have been adjusted to provide slightly greater depth, and consistency of landscape buffers to the adjacent properties.
- Many minor adjustments have been made to the layout of the buildings, roadways, parking areas, and sidewalks to improve lines-of-sight, provide consistent building setbacks from roadways, and minimize impervious areas where possible.

Architectural Design

Since the last plan set has been reviewed by the Board, the following adjustments have been made to the architectural plans:

- The floorplan of the clubhouse is now shown. (Sheet A-1)
- The front porch has been reduced in size, and a door has been added for 24/7 access to the mail room;
- The pool is reduced in size, and a hot tub area is added in the site plan view;
- Building C entries have been reconfigured to better access the site features. (Sheets A-2 and A-3);

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- The Building B entry portico is widened slightly to provide more enhanced pleasing (Sheet A-15); and,
- Maintenance Building plan incorporates a larger overhead door to accommodate anticipated maintenance equipment needs. (Sheet A-21).

These changes are in addition to the many prior adjustments made to the architectural plans, including: reduction of larger multifamily buildings from 4 stories to 3 stories; the larger buildings have been separated by a large swath of open space through which pedestrian connections have been added; the incorporation of the formerly proposed commercial lot into the Project to enable the Project to tie into the streetscape in a cohesive fashion; adjusted the location of buildings to follow the geometry of the roadways; the addition of the clubhouse serves as a buffer and transition between Essex Road and the residential units to the rear; the introduction of the 2-story buildings along Essex Road also serve to transition and buffer improvements and buildings to the rear of the site; and building designs have been articulated and enhanced.

Stormwater Management

An updated Stormwater Management Report has been filed, and which states as follows:

- The site improvements and proposed stormwater management system were designed to meet the Stormwater Management Standards described in the MassDEP Stormwater Handbook;
- The stormwater management system will collect and treat surface and roof runoff, and mitigate any increase in peak flows as a result of the increase in impervious area;
- The stormwater system will minimize the transportation of suspended solids off-site by utilizing: deep sump catch basins, hydrodynamic separators, and a settlement forebay associated with the central detention basin.
- Roof drainage and will be collected at the individual buildings, and routed to infiltration areas, and ultimately to a central detention basin. Surface runoff from paved surfaces will also be routed to infiltration areas, and the same central detention basin. However, the runoff will pass through structures designed to eliminate upwards of 80% of the suspended solids prior to discharge to the groundwater aquifer.

Landscaping

The Landscape Plans have been revised to add more defined landscape detail to the updated site plans based upon the site civil plan adjustments, including:

- Plantings re-designed and integrated into updated layout (includes 9 additional deciduous trees, 7 additional flowering trees, 9 fewer evergreen trees)

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- Increase in total lawn area from 1 acre to 2 acres
- Updated water usage table

The plan submission also includes:

- Photos of proposed plant types (trees/evergreens/select shrubs)
- Cross section of parking lot/building planting treatment
- Proposed materials and site features

These plans build upon prior landscape design last submitted to the Board, which included: lighting locations and light specifications; street furniture specifications and locations on the site plans; and landscaping to complement the pedestrian walkways and related connectivity throughout the site.

Traffic and Circulation

An updated traffic memorandum was prepared to update the Traffic Impact and Access Study (TIAS), dated February 21, 2017, and previously submitted supplemental memorandums (August 22, 2018 Traffic Memorandum – Lakeman’s Lane intersections and November 12, 2018 Traffic Memorandum Northgate Road/Heartbreak Road Analysis) associated with the Project. We note the following:

- The purpose of this traffic memorandum was to: a. provide an updated traffic analysis, updating traffic volumes at intersections where the baseline traffic volumes are now over two years old and analyzing all study area intersections to date; b. confirm that the Project will consolidate existing driveways from five (5) down to two (2) based upon recommendations from MassDOT; and, c. confirm whether the study area intersections will operate at generally acceptable levels of service based upon the proposed project and related data.
- As you know, the existing site includes Bruni Marketplace (a small mixed-use development which includes 8,500 square feet (sf) of commercial space), the Lahey Health Primary Care facility (approximately 6,900 sf of medical office space), four (4) apartments above the Lahey Health Primary Care building and four (4) single-family residences. Currently, five (5) driveways serve the existing site (two (2) Bruni Market Place and three (3) for the single-family homes).
- The proposed 191-unit 40B development will now consist of the construction of 173 residential apartment units and 18 residential townhouse style units, a Clubhouse/Pool facility, a Maintenance Building, and 1,000 square feet (sf) of additional medical office space. The Lahey Health Primary Care facility (approximately 6,900 sf of medical office space) with the four (4) apartments above the Lahey Health Primary Care building have been brought into the 40B project and will share access. The three single family homes will be eliminated, as will the 8,500 sf of existing commercial retail space. Two new full-movement

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driveways will be provided to serve the 40B project, and will replace the five (5) driveways.

Since the Applicant has requested a hearing continuance, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Board contact its traffic and civil peer review consultant, TEC, Inc., and request TEC to update its traffic and peer review of the Project based upon the updated plans and reports. The Applicant also requests the Board to re-engage its architectural peer review consultant to update its review of the design and layout. The Applicant shall submit additional funds to cover this additional peer review as determined necessary by the Board. Please note that to be most useful, it would be appreciated if the updated peer review could be received at least one week in advance of the Board's July 2020 hearing to enable the Applicant to respond to the same as necessary.

In the interim, please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



John T. Smolak

JTS:

cc: Mr. John J. Bruni, Manager, Essex Pastures LLC
Distribution List

Encl.