



Haverhill

Economic Development and Planning
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April 29, 2021

TO: City Council President Melinda Barrett and members of the Haverhill City Council

FROM: William Pillsbury, Jr. Economic Development and Planning Director

SUBJECT: Waterfront District Subzone F Site Plan Review (Major)- 15 Middlesex Street-- 18 Market rate units

The applicant requests action on a site plan review (major) to construct 18 total units at 15 Middlesex Street. The role of the City Council is to conduct a public hearing relative to the site plan (major) pursuant to the criteria in the Waterfront district ordinance.

The proposed project is consistent with housing stock in the surrounding neighborhood as the city council has previously granted special permits for triplex and multifamily units in the area.

The ordinance allows for reports to be filed from city departments. I recommend that their comments and reports be made part of the site plan action of the city council.

The role of the City council under the Waterfront zoning ordinance is to act as Plan Approval Authority (PAA) for projects allowed by right and requiring approval of a major site plan.

As Economic Development and Planning Director I have reviewed the application package for consistency with the ordinance and what follows is a recommendation based on a review of the project in light of the objectives of the ordinance and the specific requirements and standards of the Waterfront District Subzone F.

1. **255-9.3.1 Purpose**

A detailed review of the project against Section 255-9.3.1: 1-17 indicates that the proposed major site plan meets the relevant major objectives of the district.

2. **255-9.3.4 : 6 Subzones**

The goals for Subzone F states that a project proposed design should:



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Creates an active waterfront -which is present via the public parking spaces and rail trail access provided;

Create connections both physically and visually to the downtown

Expand access to the the Rail Trail –a major benefit of this project is that the applicant proposes to provide easements for public access to and from Middlesex Street at the property and provide public parking for the rail trail.

3. 255-9.3.5 Design Guidelines

In subzone F 100% residential use is recommended-project complies

The proposed project complies with the relevant recommended design guidelines in 255-9.3.5: 1-11

4. 255-9.3.9 Major Site Plan review criteria

Proposed project complies with the review criteria of providing for physical access to the River and affords additional mitigation in the form of public parking for the rail trail.

The narrower building footprint better maximizes visual corridors along the Merrimack River. The building is oriented to the street edge as recommended. Dumpsters shall be screened from public view.

255-9.3.20: Plan Approval Decision

1. Waivers- Except where expressly prohibited herein, upon the request of the applicant the PAA may waive dimensional and other requirements of this article in the interests of design flexibility and overall project quality and upon a finding of consistency of such variation with the overall purpose and objectives of the WD or if the PAA finds that such waiver will allow the project to better achieve the intent and overall purposes of this article.

The applicant requests 3 waivers:

(See zoning opinion letter attached)

I believe the waivers are appropriate in the case of this individual project .



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The density waiver is appropriate based on the lot size and the need to construct vertically to achieve design flexibility and create a financially viable project.

The height requirement waiver request is more consistent with the purpose and objectives of the ordinance based on the fact that this parcel is uniquely located on the westerly side of the bridge and the majority of the subzone is on the easterly side for which the height requirement was envisioned for this subzone. The proposed height at this location is more consistent with Harbor Place and Heights project.

The parking waiver is appropriate as it allows the project to comply with the intent of the ordinance as the project will provide public parking and direct public access to the Rail Trail. The provision of a connection and access to the Rail Trail is a key component to the Waterfront ordinance.

3. By-Right plan approval- The city council finds that the project is consistent with the purpose and intent of the section including that the applicant has:

1. submitted the required fees and information
2. meets the requirements and standards set forth in the section
3. provided that impacts have been mitigated to the greatest extent possible

RECOMMENDATION: Based on a comprehensive review of the proposed project I recommend that the City council approve the requested waivers and make the findings necessary that the project as presented is consistent with the purpose and intent of the section. Any specific requirements contained in the reports filed by the city departments shall be made part of this finding and carried forward into the development review/building permit process. Additionally, the city council should incorporate into the development review process to follow that the applicant be responsible to construct the public parking and rail trail access as proposed and this work be completed prior to the issuance of occupancy permits.

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March 8, 2021

William Pillsbury
Economic and Planning Director
4 Summer St, Room 201
Haverhill, MA 01830

Re: Riverview at Middlesex – 15 Middlesex Street
Site Plan Review (Major) Zone WD-F
Owner/Applicant: Alain Sfeir, Trustee of Middlesex Haverhill Realty Trust
Zoning Opinion

Dear Bill,

With respect to the above referenced project, I have examined Haverhill Zoning Ordinance and I have determined that the project will require three waivers.

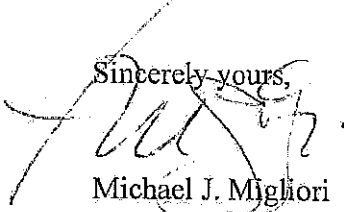
The first waiver will be for density. The WD-F zone in section 9.3.11 allows 20 units per acre by right. Based on the size of the lot at 15 Middlesex Street (1/4 acre) we would be allowed 5 units by right. The project is requesting 18 units; therefore, we would require a waiver for density.

The second waiver is for parking. The WD-F zone in section 9.3.15 requires 1.5 parking spots per unit. We have 18 units there by requiring 27 parking spaces where we are proposing 18 parking spaces; therefore, we would require a waiver for parking.

The third waiver is a dimensional waiver. The WD-F zone in section 9.3.13 allows for a maximum building height of 55', the building proposed has a height of 91'; therefore, we would require a dimensional waiver for height.

Should you have any questions or need any additional information please contact me.

Sincerely yours,


Michael J. Migliori

MJM/dma