



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

730 Massachusetts Ave.
Arlington, MA 02476
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ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

August 6, 2020

John V. Hurd, Chair
Select Board
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

RE: 1165R Massachusetts Ave, Arlington MA
Comprehensive Permit Site Approval Application

Dear Mr. Hurd and Members of the Board,

The Conservation Commission wishes to provide comments and information regarding 1165R Mass Ave Property, LLC's proposed 130-unit multi-family residential rental development (the "Project") at the approximately 2-acre property located at 1165R Massachusetts Avenue. The Commission hopes this letter assists the Select Board in formulating its comments to MassHousing on the Comprehensive Permit Site Approval Application (the "Application").¹

1165R Mass Ave Property, LLC submitted its Application to MassHousing to receive Site Approval (also called project eligibility approval) under the Commonwealth's comprehensive permit statute, G.L. c. 40B. As you may know, Site Approval is required before 1165R Mass Ave Property, LLC can file a comprehensive permit application with the Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals. One of the criteria for MassHousing's Site Approval is that "the conceptual project design is generally appropriate for the site on which it is located, taking into consideration factors that may include topography, [and] environmental resources, ... " 760CMR 56.04(4)(c).

The Conservation Commission takes no position as to whether the Project is "generally appropriate" for the Property. After a comprehensive permit application is filed with the ZBA, the Conservation Commission will evaluate whether the Project complies with standards in the Arlington Bylaw for Wetlands Protection and its regulations. Separately from the comprehensive permit application, the Applicant will have to apply to the Conservation Commission for a permit under the Wetlands Protection Act.

The Application presents the project at a very conceptual level. The Commission anticipates that more details and additional information about the Project will be provided in the comprehensive permit application filed with the ZBA and any application filed under the Wetlands Protection Act with the Commission for a wetlands permit.

¹ The Commission reviewed the 21 page comprehensive permit site approval application submitted to the Select Board and Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine, prepared by Mary Winstanley O'Connor, dated July 1, 2020. The Commission also heard a presentation for the Applicant Team during the Commission's July 23, 2020 meeting.

Topography

The Property varies in elevation by approximately 10 feet across the site.

Environmental Resource Areas

Mill Brook bisects the Property and Ryder Brook flows from the Minuteman Bikeway north of the Property to Mill Brook. The Applicant has informed the Commission that they will submit a Request for Determination of Applicability to the Commission to determine whether the Commission has the jurisdiction over a stream called Ryder Brook. Due to the location of the Mill Brook and Ryder Brook, most of the jurisdictional environmental resource areas within the site are the 100-ft Wetlands Buffer, the Adjacent Upland Resource Area, and the 200-ft Riverfront Area. The floodway and floodplain is generally confined to the channelized Mill Brook. The Applicant has also informed the Commission that they will submit a Request for Determination of Applicability to the Commission to determine whether the site is eligible for the Historical Mill Complex exemption from the Riverfront Area requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act (310 CMR, Section 10.58 (6) (k)).

Pervious Area

The Property is largely impervious with hardscape (existing: 67.9%) and building (existing: 25.7%). There is very limited open pervious and vegetated space (existing: 6.4%). The proposed development proposes to reduce the impervious hardscape (proposed: 34.1%), increase the impervious building (proposed: 43.4%), and overall increase the open pervious and vegetated space (proposed: 22.5%). The pervious open space is proposed to include native vegetation enhancements. The Commission hopes to see as much greening of the area as is practicable, especially along resource areas.

Wildlife Habitat

Since the Property is largely impervious, it does not currently have productive wildlife habitat. There are no known endangered, threatened, or special concern species onsite. There is very limited vegetation on the site.

Please contact the Conservation Commission should you have questions.

Very truly yours,

Susan Chapnick, Chair
Arlington Conservation Commission