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***Town Planner's Recommendation***  
**Orion Student Housing**  
**Wednesday, June 12, 2013**

- X. Design Review to redevelop three lots into a mixed-use **student housing** development at **25-35 Main Street. Orion Student Housing**, Bill Fideli and Philip Wills (applicant), Tim Phoenix (attorney). The proposal involves preserving the houses at 25 and 35 Main Street, demolishing the houses at 27 and 29 Main Street, erecting a new house fronting on Main Street, erecting a large new building in the rear, and building a circular driveway in the front. Tax Map 5, Lots 1-6, 1-7, and 1-8, Central Business Zoning District.

**Recommended action:**

- I recommend holding a discussion and setting a public hearing for June 26.

Please note the following:

**Administrative/process issues**

This is a preliminary design review application so the board would not accept it as complete.

Orion has been working with the Historic District Commission for a few months and is continuing that review. I don't believe that a design has been prepared yet which the HDC is comfortable with yet. Orion is now using a new architect and will bring revised drawings to the HDC at an upcoming meeting, in July or August.

I think that the most recent design, as included with this application, may well change significantly, at least regarding the architectural design. Thus, I don't think that an in-depth review by the Planning Board of this design review application would be called for.

I sent the notices for a public hearing on June 26. If the board does not wish to hold a public hearing then we will resend notices to that effect (This general topic is on the agenda for discussion as Item XII.).

The applicant met with the Technical Review Group on December 18, 2012 to review what is largely the same plan that is now submitted. This was discussed with the TRG at that time to see if there were any significant concerns with the general design being presented to the HDC.

By submitting this design review application now the application is protected against the two zoning amendments that were initiated by the Town Council and are on the Planning Board's agenda on June 12.

**Site Issues**

It would be worth starting the discussion with Orion about the typical site plan concerns – general site layout, building footprints, drainage, parking, access, landscaping, green space, utilities, fire access, management of the building.

Half a dozen parking spaces are proposed. The applicant would market the project to students without cars. Orion owns a number of other sites nearby so they could possibly make parking arrangements at those sites for overflow parking, if appropriate. Nonetheless, some accommodation for commercial users at the site should be discussed. The Police Chief is not concerned with having no or minimal parking for students at this downtown location.

Mike Lynch pointed out that stormwater management at this dense downtown location will be a challenge. The system on Main Street is not sufficient and there would not be a lot of space in the rear.

The municipal water supply is good.

Gas is available to this site.

As the project gets further along we should discuss use of porous pavement. The TRG talked about possibly using a special paving material like Belgian block. This would fit in well with the historic district as well.

At first glance the Fire Department did not think there was a problem getting access to the rear but this would need to be clarified.

A one-way driveway into the site is shown.

The several lots would need to be combined to accommodate a large building.

### **Building Issues**

Some of the key issues that the applicant has been discussing with the HDC include the mass of the building, particularly as it would be seen from the rear, the general architectural design, and the proposed demolition of five buildings/additions – two buildings in front (27 and 29 Main Street), two rear additions (on 25 and 35 Main Street), and the barn.

One important issue that will need to be addressed is the requirement for first floor nonresidential use.

The rear of the buildings shows a lower level walkout with three floors above. The applicant will need to clarify with Tom Johnson, Zoning Administrator, whether a lower level may accommodate dwelling units under the zoning ordinance. The recent citizen's-initiated zoning amendment setting a maximum of three stories in a section of the Central Business District applies to this site.

The applicant will complete the energy checklist later on.

The applicant plans to have in unit washers and dryers.

The main building will be fully sprinkled.

The applicant proposes around 200 beds. There are presently about 60 beds on site.

There would likely be 1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom units with one student to a bedroom.

All inclusive utilities is being contemplated with the ability to monitor use of each unit.