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Town Planner's Project Review
Wednesday, May 10, 2017

- IX. **Riverwoods Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) – Stone Quarry Drive.** Preliminary (design review) application for CCRC to be located on a vacant 11.3-acre site in the northeast quadrant of the junction of Route 108 and Route 4 (one lot in from Route 108). The 315,815 square foot building, with a 95,141 square foot footprint, will contain 150 independent living apartments, 24 assisted-living apartments, 24 memory-care units, and 24 skilled-nursing units. The 55 foot-high building will range from 2 to 5 stories. There will be 107 enclosed and 172 outside parking spaces. Applicant - The RiverWoods Group, c/o Justine Vogel, CEO. Property owner - Rockingham Properties, c/o Dave Garvey, partner. Engineer – Jeff Clifford, Altus Engineering. Attorney – Sharon Cuddy Somers, DT&C. Map 11, Lot 8-1 through 8-15. Office Research District.
- I recommend that the Planning Board discuss the project, individual board members offer comments to provide guidance to the applicant, and the public hearing be set for June 14.

Please note the following:

- 1) **Overview.** The proposed project will be located on an 11-acre parcel situated in the northeast quadrant of the Route 108/Dover Road and Route 4 interchange. There is fairly high ground with the highest point at 80 feet. The finished floor will be at about 62 feet. The site is in the Stone Quarry commercial subdivision that leads to the Durham Public Works Facility. The parcel is on the southerly side of Stone Quarry Drive. Fifteen lots (8-1 through 8-15) will be combined to accommodate the project. As many know, there is a long-established Riverwoods development in Exeter. Riverwoods is a non-profit organization.
- 2) **Preliminary.** This is a preliminary application. The applicant will give a brief presentation on May 10 and a more detailed presentation at the public hearing. Many issues will not be addressed until a formal application is submitted, such as stormwater management, lighting, signage, final landscaping, etc.
- 3) **Schedule.** The applicant told us that they have an ambitious schedule. They will likely want to close the design review after the public hearing on June 14. They told the staff they would like to submit a formal application for the August 9 meeting and would then hope for final action on the site plan application by October. Of course,

the Planning Board and staff work as efficiently as practical to facilitate project reviews, given various constraints.

- 4) Zoning. The site is zoned Office Research (OR). Audrey and I have not yet conducted our zoning review. I do not see any significant items at this point that do not meet zoning. I will complete my review in advance of the public hearing. The use is for an eldercare facility which is permitted by right. The proposal meets the definition of a “life care community” under the definition for *eldercare facility*.
- 5) Site Plan Regulations. I will do my review of the site plan regulations in advance of the public hearing.
- 6) Building height. The maximum permitted height in the OR zone is 50 feet or 75 feet at the reasonable discretion of the Planning Board. The maximum height according to the applicant will be 55 feet. The building ranges from 2 to 5 stories in different areas.
- 7) TRG review. The project was presented to the TRG on March 21. I will send notes of that review shortly.
- 8) Outparcel. The applicant plans to establish a marketing office on the adjacent lot 8-0 fronting on Dover Road. We are reviewing the site to determine if site plan review will be needed for this. If so, the applicant would likely submit a separate application for the June 14 meeting.
- 9) Conditional use. A conditional use will be needed for driveways and parking areas situated within wetland buffers. After the formal application is submitted, the applicant will coordinate with the Conservation Commission for its review.
- 10) Traffic study. As part of a formal submission a traffic study will likely be needed. The applicant already met with NHDOT for a scoping session.
- 11) Permeable pavement. As part of the formal application it would be desirable to incorporate permeable pavement if workable.
- 12) Architecture. Architectural review is not involved in the Office Research District. However, the submittal must include full renderings. The Planning Board, staff, and public will be very interested in seeing the design. I recommend presenting designs at the June 14 meeting if possible. The architect is AG Architecture located in Wisconsin (not to be confused with Art Guadano of AG Architects, the designer of Durham’s new town hall).
- 13) Lot line. A lot line adjustment application will need to be submitted along with the formal site plan application, for the adjustment with the adjacent lot.
- 14) Emergency services. At the appropriate time, we will ask for input from the Police, Fire, and EMS services. All three have seen the preliminary plans.

- 15) Utilities. Water and sewer lines will need to be extended some distance to the site.
- 16) Units. There will be 150 independent living apartments, 24 assisted-living apartments, 24 memory-care units, and 24 skilled-nursing units. Most of the independent units will be 1-bedroom. Others will be 2-bedroom. The independent units will have full cooking facilities. The assisted living units will not have cooking facilities other than a refrigerator, sink, and microwave. There will be no cooking facilities in the memory support and skilled nursing units.
- 17) Parking. The plan includes 107 enclosed and 172 outside parking spaces for a total of 279 spaces. The applicant expects there to be a maximum of 60 employees per shift (to be confirmed).
- 18) Tour. The Town staff recently went on a tour of the Riverwoods facility. I don't know whether the applicant would be able to accommodate the Planning Board for a tour as it would need to also include interested members of the public.
- 19) PILOT. The Town will negotiate a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) with Riverwoods, since it is a nonprofit organization.
- 20) Site walk. I would recommend the board go on a site walk as part of the preliminary application, to better comprehend the project.
- 21) Retaining wall. There will be a retaining wall (shown in bold dashes) around much of the site. We will need information later on the details and height of the wall. Would this be visible from Dover Road?
- 22) General design. Here are some general comments on the design. Based on the building footprint, it appears that the building will be well articulated. This is not a plain box. There can be several attractive outdoor courtyard spaces, well defined by wings of the building. A good percentage of the parking will be contained inside the building. Most of the outside parking is hidden behind the building, minimally visible from Dover Road. Unlike, the Riverwoods site in Exeter, this project is not set into the woods with surrounding open space. There is a sidewalk surrounding the building. Much of it is adjacent to the driveway and parking spaces. It would be beneficial to add a buffer along the sidewalk to the extent possible. Certainly, the project will be visually prominent along Dover Road.
- 23) Landscaping. Robbi Woodburn is designing the landscaping. A preliminary plan is included.
- 24) Fire Issues. Corey Landry, Fire Chief, pointed out that the site would have an impact on fire and EMS service. Full access is shown around the building. The Fire Department will confirm later that this is adequate for their vehicles.

- 25) Public Works Facility. DPW and its snow dump is located just beyond this site. DPW trucks travel down Stone Quarry Drive regularly and in the winter during a storm can traverse at all hours. The applicant is aware of this situation.
- 26) Firing Range. The Durham Police Department maintains a firing range on the Public Works Facility beyond the site. The intention is to use the range until the county builds one but we do not know when and if that will happen. The applicant is aware of this situation.
- 27) Route 4 ramp. NHDOT is looking at installing a light at the bottom of the off ramp for the westbound traffic. We also heard that NHDOT may be cutting lots of trees along the ramp which backs up to the subject site. We have recommended to the applicant that they stay in contact with NHDOT so that the department does not remove any more trees than necessary.
- 28) Cultural resources. We will check with the Durham Historical Association for any known archaeological resources.