



BELMONT FIRE DEPARTMENT

HEADQUARTERS

54 LEONARD STREET

P. O. BOX 421

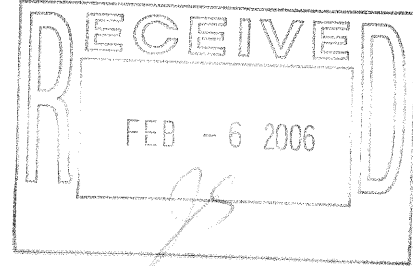
BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS 02478

FIRE PREVENTION

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Belmont ZBA
C/o Mr. Jay Szklut
Planning and Economic Development Manager
Office of Community Development
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478



February 2, 2006

RE: Proposed 40-B Application

Dear Mr. Szklut,

We have reviewed the proposed 40B application and have some comments and concerns that the Fire Department would like to express. From the Fire Department's standpoint the issues surrounding this project are not that different than the previously submitted housing proposal. The Fire Department has five major issues with the development.

The first issue is Fire Department vehicle access around the building(s). The developer has not addressed Fire Department vehicle access "Fire Lanes" around the buildings. Under 527CMR10.03 (10) "*The Head of the Fire Department shall designate public or private fire lanes as deemed necessary for the efficient and effective use of fire apparatus. Fire lanes shall have a minimum width of 18'*". From the drawings submitted it does not appear that there is an eighteen foot wide Fire Lane around each building. The Belmont Fire Department requires an eighteen-foot wide Fire Lane around each building that will support the weight of operating fire apparatus. The proposed development does not allow sufficient access to or around buildings B&D.

The second issue is the water supply availability for the fire protection of the development. As is currently planned the developer has proposed only one water supply option. The proposed development is out on an "island" and creates unique and difficult water supply issues for firefighting and redundancy. It will be at the end of the proposed method of reaching the development. As proposed, the development will be fed by only one water main. There are no plans to have a redundant or back up water supply. Should there be issues with the water supply that would necessitate shutting down the main; the development would be without water. If there were a need to supply water for firefighting operations, at the development, it would require long relay pumping operations that would require resources The Belmont Fire Department does not have. A redundant water main system design, connected to the Town of Belmont's water system

is required. In addition the developer should supply more documentation including hydraulic calculations and modeling for this development. Water being so critical to the Fire Department, this project should not be allowed to move forward until an adequate water supply design can be accomplished.

The third issue is the design of the proposed development is that it places the parking under the wood frame dwellings. Although this design allows for a project that consumes less footprint it creates some significant fire protection challenges. The documentation submitted and the design concept of having many vehicles garaged in a wood frame building could cause multiple hazards. This design places many gallons of flammable liquids (gasoline in gas tanks) in the garage areas under these wood frame dwellings. In addition when an automobile burns there are large amounts of toxic smoke and other products of combustion generated. A fire in these garages would not be routine, and are very labor intensive. Consideration must be given to the current state of apparatus and manpower for firefighting operations within the garage. The Fire Department also lacks any specialized equipment, and the funds to purchase such equipment, that might aid in extinguishing a fire in the garage. More detailed construction documentation will need to be provided, to determine if this is a safe design practice given the limited resources of the Town.

The fourth issue deals with the type of responses and the call volume for the proposed development. The developer has not supplied an assessment on the expected demand for fire and emergency medical services. Depending on the demographics of the development, the call volume could be significant. The Fire Department has the ability to absorb a small amount of call volume but a dramatic increase in fire or EMS calls will require additional resources. This impact will cause a concern regarding response times to and from the development. This project will have a considerable detrimental effect on the rest of the Town. In either case, resources will be involved in responding to and from an "island" as previously mentioned. Consideration must be given to the current state of apparatus and manpower and the impact on emergency response. The location and demands of this development should not be allowed to jeopardize the safety of the rest of the citizens of the Town.

The fifth issue involves the Fire Prevention Bureau. A development such as this in Belmont will require the continuous involvement of the Fire Prevention Bureau which is currently limited in resources. The Fire Prevention Bureau is currently overburdened with code compliance, and plans review of projects, and has been operating under this heavy workload with limited resources for many years. Additional development projects will have a negative impact on the Fire Prevention Bureau, which will have negative ripple effects on the rest of the Town.

These five issues cause the Fire Department the most concern. We feel that there are reasonable solutions for each of the projects. The location and design issues are unique and self created by the developer. It is incumbent upon all those involved to make sure that the existing residents of Town remain safe and that the proposed development is safe for the Town's new residents.

We request that any approval of this project be conditional upon the resolution of each issue to the satisfaction of the Belmont Fire Department.

Please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau with any questions.

Sincerely,

CAPTAIN  A. Pizzi
Captain John A. Pizzi