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James Freas
Acting Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 10, 2015
TO: Board of Aldermen
Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen
FROM: James Freas, Acting Director of Planning and Development
Alexandra Ananth, Chief Planner for Current Planning
Daniel Sexton, Senior Planner
CC: Petitioner

PETITION #124-15 and (2)

2 Wells Avenue

Request for Special Permit/Site Plan Approval to construct a three-story addition, which will increase the gross floor area in the aggregate by more than 20,000 square feet, and to construct retaining walls greater than four feet in height within the setbacks. The petitioner is also seeking various amendments/waivers from the Deed Restriction adopted by Board Order #276-68(3), as amended.

On June 23, 2015, the Land Use Committee (Committee) closed the public hearing and recommended approval of the requested special permits for the 2 Wells Avenue project. The Committee also recommended approval of the petitioner's requested waivers from certain provisions of the Deed Restriction. In their deliberations, members of the Committee raised questions concerning the current build-out of the Wells Avenue Office Park (Office Park) and the impact of the 2 Wells Avenue project on the build-out capacity of the entire Office Park under the deed restrictions. The Planning Department provides the following supplemental analysis and information in response to these questions. The information being provided is based on data obtained from the *Wells Avenue Market Study*, dated March, 2015, and the City's parcel data from the Assessor's Department and Geographic Information System, as well as observations gleaned from previous waivers granted from the Deed Restriction to other properties within the Office Park.

Current Status. The Deed Restriction, adopted in 1960, established a maximum total square footage of floor space for buildings in the Office Park, which was increased by the Board in 1972 to a maximum total square footage of 1.2 million square feet. Per this amendment, the square footage limit permitted for "office" uses was increased to a maximum of 600,000 square feet of total gross floor area in the Office Park. The amendment also stipulated in Provision #1 of the Deed Restriction that the total allowable floor area ratio for buildings in the entire Office Park and any subparcel have a maximum limit of 0.25.

The results of the Planning Department’s analysis of parcel data are presented below in *Table 1. Status of Wells Avenue as of July 1, 2015*. As the data indicates, staff determined that the current build-out of the Office Park is just above 1.1 million square feet of total floor space. In terms of floor space distribution by land use, approximately 74% of the building square footage in the Office Park appears to consist of office uses. The remaining land uses, which were authorized by waivers of the Deed Restriction, represent approximately 26% of the building square footage in the Office Park. The current gross floor area of buildings within the Office Park represents an approximate floor area ratio for the entire Office Park of 0.24.

Table 1. Status of Wells Avenue as of July 1, 2015

Land Use	Building SF	%	Land Area (SF)	FAR
Office	832,159	74%	2,929,974	0.28
Med. Office	78,713	7%	317,550	0.25
Office	753,446	67%	2,612,424	0.29
Education	201,123	18%	761,862	0.26
Recreation	94,335	8%	425,409	0.22
Vacant	0	0%	323,215	0.00
Parking	0	0%	355,450	0.00
Total	1,127,617	100%	4,795,910	0.24

The Planning Department was not able to provide data regarding the current levels of open space or building lot coverage, as this would require more extensive research of individual parcel plans.

2 Wells Avenue Build-Out. To understand how the 2 Wells Avenue project will affect the Office Park, staff analyzed the proposed building with the current level of development in the Office Park. The results of this analysis are presented below in *Table 2. Proposed Build-Out*.

As the data indicates, the proposed project will increase the total square footage of structures in the park, but will not exceed the 1.2 million gross floor area maximum. The net increase of gross floor area created by this project will elevate the total floor area ratio of the entire Office Park to the 0.25 maximum. The proposal will also result in a floor area ratio on the site of 0.30 or approximately 23,554 square feet over the maximum allowed by the Deed Restriction. While not illustrated in the table, the project will increase the total amount of gross floor area dedicated to office use to 75%, where 74% of the current gross floor area is dedicated to office use.

Table 2. Proposed Build-Out

	Building SF	Lot Area (SF)	FAR
2 Wells Avenue Current	68,800	436,175	0.16
Other Parcels	1,058,817	4,359,735	0.24
Total	1,127,617	4,795,910	0.24
2 Wells Ave. Proposed**	63,798	436,175	0.30
New Total	1,191,415	4,795,910	0.25

** The gross building square footage is presented as the net increase per the plans submitted with the special permit request via Board Order #124-15.

Recommendation.

Per the supplemental information provided above, it appears that development patterns within the Office Park have focused on buildings for office use as opposed to other uses allowed in the Limited Manufacturing district or by the Deed Restriction from 1960. The level of development within the Office Park also appears to be quickly approaching a number of the build-out limits established by the Deed Restriction. However, the Planning Department points out that these limits were established over 40 years ago to minimize impacts associated with the more noxious manufacturing uses allowed in the Office Park, which are not present today.

While the current project brings development levels within the Office Park to the envisioned limits under the Deed Restriction, the Planning Department does not believe this and other reasonable development project should be prevented from moving forward. It is clear from market trends and the Planning Department's working vision for the Office Park that this commercial area represents one of the City's most critical commercial areas and is a vital element in the City's efforts to maximize the potential of the N2 Corridor for commercial development. The Office Park, currently and in the future, represents the greatest opportunity for the City to expand office space and a limited mixture of other uses serving the innovation economy. The Planning Department recommends approval of the special permits and requested waivers to the Deed Restriction for the 2 Wells Avenue project.