



258-12 and (2)

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Newton Housing Partnership

October 11, 2012

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Candace Havens
Director
Planning & Development

Robert Muollo, Jr.
Housing Planner

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Matthew Yarmolinsky

Ald. Ted Hess-Mahan, Chairman
Members of the Land Use Committee
Newton Board of Aldermen
Newton City Hall
Newton, MA 02459

Subject: The Station at Riverside Proposal

Dear Alderman Hess-Mahan and Members of the Land Use Committee:

The Newton Housing Partnership has twice had the opportunity to meet with Criterion Development Partners, the sponsors of the residential component of the proposed project located at 329 Grove Street, frequently known as "The Station at Riverside."

As part of its charge, the Partnership acts in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, the Board of Aldermen, the Planning and Development Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Community Preservation Committee, and the City staff on developments proposing to provide affordable housing units. The project as proposed would include 44 units of inclusionary housing, per Section 30-24(f) of the Newton Zoning Ordinances.

The Partnership has carefully considered the housing being provided, its design and location within the project, the project's amenities, as well as technical information related to the affordability of the project, which was provided by the petitioner as part of its special permit application. The Partnership has found the proposed project to be consistent with the criteria for our support, which are *affordability, feasibility, suitability, livability, and sustainability*. The affordable unit rents will be affordable to households earning 65% of the Boston MSA area median income, and the project will serve low and moderate income households.

At these meetings, the Partnership provided suggestions and noted that further clarity around the following technical points would be helpful as the proposal makes its way through the public review process :

1. As a point of clarification, in order to achieve the inclusionary housing requirement that the mean income of households of the affordable units be no more than 65% of the Boston MSA area median income, the petitioner is proposing to use the 80% Boston MSA income limit, as published by the U.S Dept. of Housing and Urban Development as the income eligibility threshold. The

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petitioner noted that the HUD-published 80% Boston MSA area median income is actually 66.5% of the area median income. This is because HUD does not consider the Boston MSA as a high cost housing area when determining income limits, and has capped the 80% of the Boston MSA area median income at the national area median income. According to the petitioner, this income eligibility threshold will ensure that the affordable units will serve households earning 65% or less of the area median income.

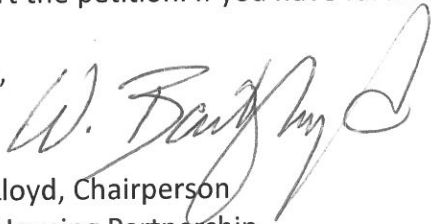
2. The Partnership notes that because of ambiguous drafting in the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) form regulatory agreement, it is not clear that each of the 44 inclusionary housing units will count toward Newton's Subsidized Housing Inventory. Clarification should be sought from DHCD as to whether these units will be eligible.

3. Further detail regarding where the accessible units that must meet the MAAB Group 2 standards will be placed within the residential component, their proximity to elevators, which percentage should also be affordable, will need to be established during the following stages of the development process, and it was noted that interested parties (such as the Commission on Disabilities as well as other advocates) should weigh in on how these determinations will ultimately be made.

4. It appears from the drawings presented that a pedestrian at the vertical middle of the residential building will have difficulty accessing the entrance to the intermodal commuter facility. Pedestrians, including those with disabilities, might benefit from the presence of a pedestrian walkway at the vertical middles of the residential building and the intermodal commuter facility.

In concluding, the eligible members present at the meeting on October 10, 2012 voted unanimously to support the petition. If you have further questions for the Partnership please let me know.

Sincerely,



W. Bart Lloyd, Chairperson
Newton Housing Partnership

cc Steve Buchbinder, Schlesinger and Buchbinder, LLC
Candace Havens, Director
Trisha Guditz, Housing Programs Manager