



Memorandum

To: Planning Board
From: Planning Department
C: Town Clerk, Town Attorney, Scott Doyle (T.C. Planning)
Subject: Varna Multi-Use LEED ND Project
Date: March 15, 2013

The Planning Department has completed a review of the proposed mixed-use development at 5 Freese Road in the hamlet of Varna. The 2-acre parcel is currently a vacant fill site owned by Nick Bellasario and Otis Phillips.

The Sketch Plan, as provided by the applicant, shows the basic layout of the site and size of the buildings. The proposed mixed-use development includes a mix of 20 townhouse and apartment-style units (1, 2, and 3 bedroom); 3,500 square feet of commercial space (1,700 sq.ft. on the first floor/ 1,700 sq.ft. office on the second); parking to accommodate all uses, on-site stormwater management, sidewalks, bus shelter/pull-off and landscaping. Additionally, the applicant is applying for LEED ND, and currently meets 35 of the required 40 points. It is anticipated that as the site plan moves forward, the remaining criteria which pertain directly to building/construction requirements will be fulfilled. For example, the applicant can earn points for public outreach beyond any required public hearing.

The level of detail and attention to detail in the Sketch Plan is relatively proportionate to the magnitude of the proposal. In addition to the Sketch Plan, the applicant has provided a front perspective which gives a general overview of how the buildings will maintain architectural consistency with the surrounding community.

While the sketch is generally consistent with the character, size, and layout of the desired development in Varna, there are several adjustments and clarifications the Planning Department would like to see in the full site plan. These involve:

- Side access via sidewalk and/or patio or side entrance on the Freese Road side of the mixed-use building;
- Possible relocation of the bus pull-off located in front of the mixed-use building with appropriate shelter/seating, and on street parking where the bus pull off is currently located;
- Rearrange parking spaces in the rear of the mixed-use/apartments to shift some parking to the rear of the eastern apartment building;
- Clarify and possibly rearrange parking, loading and unloading at the rear of the mixed-use building; and
- Add on street parking in front of apartment buildings on the driveway,
- Relocation of a portion (70-feet) of the sidewalk on the eastern side of the property along Route 366 to Freese Road.

Recommendation:

The applicant has demonstrated a clear development proposal for the entire site, and the Planning Department recommends that the Planning Board approve the Sketch plan and require and move forward with full Site Plan Review including a Public Hearing upon its completion. In addition to the details mentioned above, the applicant should address all 30 items included in the Site Plan Checklist of the zoning code (Article XI, Section 1103), including a detailed stormwater management plan, lighting plan, landscaping plan, and obtain the appropriate DOT permits.

Additional items that the Planning Board may require now, or during Site Plan Review are clear agreements/conditions on maintenance of the sidewalks, and landscaping, as well as performance measures to ensure the anticipated scale of improvements (pavement, concrete standards, tree size and type, etc.). These could be a variety of measures from simple conditions of approval, to guarantees, restrictive covenants and especially a development agreement held by the town. These requirements and the instruments should be decided upon early as they will need Town Board approval before the project is issued a Certificate of Occupancy.

Further, the Planning Board should discuss hours of operation for the commercial establishment, and may reserve further site plan review once a tenant is secured in order to require appropriate conditions. For example, a pizza shop is one idea, and the exhaust for the hood and fryer will have to be carefully placed so that it may not interfere with an outdoor seating area. It is important for the Planning Board to establish these guidelines so that all uses on the site are compatible.