

Comments for ZBA: 11.5.20

Kevin Grunwald, Chair of the Truro Housing Authority, speaking on my own behalf. It's been one year since you began this process of reviewing the application for a Comprehensive Permit for the Cloverleaf Housing project. I'd like to start by thanking the Chair and members of the ZBA for your service on behalf of the town. You have demonstrated the utmost respect, patience and a thoughtful review of this application and the input of large numbers of residents. I applaud your efforts throughout the past year, and I believe that you are approaching the time when you will be able to render a reasoned decision that will best represent the interests of the Town.

Tonight I would like to make a few comments that address issues that I think may have been lost in all of the talk of nitrates, downstream flow, playgrounds, parking and sidewalks. I think it's important to remember that this application came before you in response to a critical, unmet need for safe, affordable housing in our community. I've said this before, but I think it bears repeating that approximately 2.4% of the year-round housing in our town is classified as being affordable. This translates to 27 homes or apartments that are affordable to residents earning up to 80% of the Area Median Income; far short of the 110 affordable units that are mandated by the State of Massachusetts. These numbers are important because they represent approximately 83 families who struggle to live here. Who are these families? They are your neighbors. They work for the Town, take care of your property, bag your groceries, and provide critical homecare services to our seniors and people with disabilities. They struggle to live here by paying more than half of their income for rent, living in illegal and unsafe basements and other rentals, and participating in the "Cape Cod Shuffle" going from winter rentals to campgrounds to

friend's couches. They may not always be visible, but they are definitely here.

The Cloverleaf development is before the ZBA because it has been filed as a Chapter 40-B Project. Chapter 40-B is a state law that was enacted in 1969 to facilitate construction of low or moderate income housing. It was designed to ensure that low or moderate income housing is available in all market areas by overriding regulatory barriers that make housing expensive to build. This is why part of the process is the granting of waivers by the ZBA to facilitate this type of development, taking into account public health and safety.

During the past year The Cloverleaf development has been plagued by a number of misconceptions and general misinformation, and I would like to address a few of these concerns:

- The Cloverleaf property was given to the town with the condition that it be used solely for housing, and at least 25% of that housing needed to meet affordability guidelines. There was never any intent, nor would it be possible, for this property to be used for a Public Works facility.
- The town released a Request for Proposals in 2018 to develop this property and received two proposals. One was from a non-profit developer, and the other was from Community Housing Resources, a for-profit developer. The proposal from the non-profit developer was approximately \$1M more expensive and anticipated approximately \$1.2M in assistance from the town. It is common for a developer to identify the town as one source of funding, and CHR identified that they would need approximately \$500,000. For a non-profit or a for-profit developer any profit that the developer can earn is capped, using a formula imposed by

the funding sources. CHR has a proven history of successfully developing affordable housing projects on Cape Cod, including Sally's Way in Truro.

- There was never a playground stipulated in the original request for proposals, and the building with 15 units was conceived early on in discussions prior to the release of the RFP as an ideal configuration for seniors wishing to downsize, age in place, and retain some proximity to their neighbors. At this time there is no rental space in Truro that meets the needs of this growing demographic group.
- When these units are initially rented there will be a local preference given to 70% of the applicants who currently live or work in Truro or have children attending the Truro Central School. If Truro residents are not selected in the initial lottery their application goes into the second, general lottery. Recent lotteries in Provincetown and Eastham demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of applicants currently live on the Outer Cape. This project will address the needs of our local residents.
- Approximately half of the units will be designated for families who meet income guidelines up to the level of 60% of AMI, six of the units will be for income levels of 60-80% AMI, and six units up to 110% of AMI. The remainder will be market rate with no income restrictions. This income mix reflects the needs of our community and providing a healthy and diverse community.
- You've probably heard way too much about nitrates and wastewater, but I just need to underline the fact that the recent memo from the Cape Cod Commission states that "the wastewater plan is consistent with the Regional Policy Plan's water resources objective and sufficiently addresses

the potential impacts to drinking water resources.” I think we can put this issue to bed now.

So where does this leave us? You’ve sat through countless hours of public meetings on this application, have reviewed many documents, and have heard from the applicant and his staff, third-party technical consultants and a large number of members of the public. I believe that throughout this process the applicant has demonstrated patience, flexibility, and a willingness to work collaboratively with you to insure the best possible outcome, and I think that is to be commended. Once again, I thank you for your work and wish you the best in your ongoing deliberations.