

## **SITE PLAN REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD**

### **NOTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**

**Wednesday, June 12, 2013**

### **PRINCETON MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**Community Room –7:30 P.M.**

**Princeton, New Jersey**

**PRESENT:** James Begin, Alyce Bush, Robert Cerutti, Harry Cooke, Wendy Kaczerski, Holly Nelson, William Wolfe

**ABSENT:** Lydia Robinson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jack West, Land Use Engineer; Derek Bridger, Zoning Officer; Kerry A. Philip, Secretary

Chairman Wolfe called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. reading the Opening Statement as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, acknowledging that notice of this meeting was issued on the 10th day of December, 2012.

### **MINUTES**

a) May 15, 2013 - postponed to next meeting.

### **APPLICATIONS**

a) AvalonBay Communities, Inc. (continued from June 5, 2013)  
Prelim/Final Major Site Plan w/variances  
Witherspoon Street  
Block 21.02, Lot 1 and Block 7101, Lots 8-14  
File #P1313-047P

Representatives for the Applicant: Jon Vogel, applicant; Tom Carman, Melillo & Bauer; Stuart Lachs, Perkins Eastman; Leona Barone, Maser Consulting.

Jon Vogel, applicant, discussed the circulation pattern for the property. Visitors will access the garage but it is unsure if all three points of access will be open for the public. Signage will be installed to detail this. The leasing office will issue electronic key fobs or tickets for guests if their arrival is known ahead of time. Mr. Vogel anticipates a ticket machine in the garage or some other type of technology when the leasing office is closed. The leasing office and doctor offices will be able to validate tickets. The operation is similar to the parking garage downtown. R. Cerutti asked the applicant to prepare a memorandum to the Planning Office detailing what their final approach will be for visitor parking. W. Wolfe advised that another signage variance may be required. R. Cerutti asked why the interior road is one way. Mr. Vogel explained that they wish to limit impervious coverage and provide open space. H. Nelson does not see too much of a loss for the development if this is made a two-way roadway. J. West stated that he has to work with the traffic engineers but this should not be a problem since the proposed road width is 20 feet. One outstanding item is the fire truck access from the service drive to the alleyway. Mr. West also advised that fire trucks are not able to access the space between the garage and the

building but the fire official advised that access is not necessary because the truck would be too close to the building.

Pertaining to the pool and water drainage, Mr. Vogel explained that they will partially drain the pool and put a pool cover on it so the water can expand. The water will be drained to a location recommended by the health department. Tom Carman, landscape architect for the applicant, stated that the water from the pool will be pumped out through the filtration system. Stuart Lachs, architect for the applicant, stated that a pipe connects from the filtration room to the sanitary or stormwater system. Pertaining to snow removal, they have not had to move snow off a site previously but if there is a heavy storm they will find a place to move the snow. R. Cerutti advised that it is against code to put the snow on adjacent roadways.

W. Wolfe stated that the adjacent properties on Harris Road should remain zoned for single family residential. The snow chutes, fuel tanks, and oxygen tanks should be removed with this application, as a condition of approval. Also the residential lots remaining encumbered by the parking deck, driveway turn-around, or other non-residential uses should be subdivided by the applicant, to preserve the integrity of the single family zone, and to enable potential future sales.

Pertaining to waste pick up, W. Wolfe stated that he was concerned about the noise from trucks backing in and asked if the applicant would consider using lot 8 as a turnaround area for the garbage trucks. Mr. West stated that this is possible but this may impact adjacent lots and may also result in a variance. R. Cerutti suggested relocating the garbage trash compactors so the trucks could enter the property from Henry, the apartment in building #2 located in the southeast corner of the building could become the trash room which may be preferred since it is five feet lower than the grade in that section of the building. He feels that this would be a good location for the trash room and additional bike storage space. A ramp would be needed in order to get the trash bin out for pick up. R. Cerutti asked if the bicycle storage will be adequate and asked the total capacity in the two rooms. Mr. Vogel stated that this building will provide more storage than any of their other communities. Mr. Carman stated that there are also proposing bicycle racks throughout the site. Mr. Vogel stated that the bicycle parking areas will be covered and they will also convert portions of the garage (in the corners) for bike parking. Mr. Lachs stated that there will be 2 rooms for bike storage, each providing 325 sf. A final count will be provided at the next meeting.

W. Wolfe stated that two small entrances on Witherspoon Street for access to the corridors are not in scale with the rest of the complex and there is a lack of engagement with Witherspoon Street. It was recommended that the applicant consider opening the center of this area for a view of the plaza. The applicant could make one opening in the center of the building by moving one studio apartment to the other side. The open area could be a part of a formal entry to the leasing office.

A material sample board was requested in addition to color renderings of the facades at the last meeting. Mr. Lachs stated that they are not sure about all the materials but he did have the drawings that were presented to the public recently at a neighborhood meeting. After reviewing the neighborhood meeting boards, H. Nelson asked for a drawing of the building at a larger scale for our review. Mr. Lachs stated that hardyplank is proposed for the siding, the color of the siding is unknown but there will be some differences to the pallet of materials because they did not want all the buildings to be identical. H. Nelson advised that detail of the steps show two

different profiles. Mr. Carman stated that a better detail will be provided. Mr. Carman stated that there is a play area at the south west corner of Building #1. H. Nelson stated that since the details have not been provided she was concerned about children climbing the trees near the park. Mr. Lachs stated that the line of the railing near the steps could be extended closer to the building to deter kids from climbing the trees.

A. Bush asked that the affordable housing units be dispersed evenly throughout the building. She also expressed concern about nothing being done in the larger buildings for pest control. Mr. Vogel stated that the trash room is overseen twice a week by a service provider. With using trash compactors and chutes it makes it very easy to manage. Mr. Vogel stated that composting is not being considered because composting must be done by the residents and a third chute is needed for each floor and this requires additional maintenance. W. Kaczerski stated that AvalonBay's website references on their buildings located in the northwest doing composting. Mr. Vogel stated that they are aware of the problems associated with this so they decided not to do that here.

W. Wolfe stated that the affordable two bedroom units appear to be smaller than the market rate units. Mr. Lachs confirmed that the affordable units are 2 bedrooms with one bath whereas the market rate units are 2 bedrooms with 2 baths. W. Wolfe stated that there are no floor plans for the townhomes, the townhomes appear to be in violation of the height to setback ratio requirement. Mr. Bridger confirmed that a variance is needed and all the variances are noted on the cover sheet of the civil engineering plans. Ms. Barone read all the variances out loud. Mr. Bridger stated that variance is needed for the signage on Witherspoon Street but this is warranted because the traffic from both directions need to see the sign. He also stated that the townhomes have rear loading garages and if the townhomes are shifted further into the site the garages would be facing the street and there would be no room for a driveway. W. Wolfe stated that he feels a smaller scale at the front of the building would be better.

H. Nelson asked the applicant for a rendering of the building as seen by someone walking past the building on Witherspoon Street. Mr. Vogel stated that 3-D renderings will be provided. H. Nelson stated that the stone base seems to separate the building even though landscaping is proposed and recommends lowering the foundation line and adding more brick. W. Wolfe stated that the southern end of the building should be reviewed because it appears that the foundation is below the window sills but in another rendering it is at grade.

W. Kaczerski asked why solar panels are not proposed. Mr. Lachs stated that asphalt shingles are proposed for the roof and this material offers low reflectivity. Mr. Vogel stated that solar water heaters will be used. W. Wolfe stated that the price of solar electric panels is very inexpensive and there is a tax credit as an incentive. Mr. Vogel stated that they don't pay taxes so a tax credit does not apply to them. H. Nelson stated that renderings of the landscape plantings are needed for a better understanding of what will be seen.

W. Wolfe stated that the single level bridge over the new street should be enclosed only by glass, so that much of the mass and hence the oppressive effect of the bridge can be mitigated. Any connection at the fourth floor level should have light railings and no roof. To reduce the decks to minimal horizontals, 12 feet of corridors within the buildings on each end of the bridge can be ramped to one intermediate level. To minimize intrusion into open space, the sides of both bridges should be reduced to minimal structural steel truss members designed to act with the

decks below and above as a coherent tube structure spanning without added columnar supports. The sides of the bridge to the parking deck should be open to the air. To reduce the bridge's height, the level connecting to the deck roof should not be covered, if the parking deck remains uncovered. Access ramps at the ground should be located directly below this bridge to provide cover. The necessary landing should be located to intersect the pathway that follows the length of the open space. Both the uncovered ramp shown, and the extra covered walk abutting the parking deck should be eliminated.

Mr. Carman stated that a sculpture is proposed in the center of the Witherspoon Street façade along with landscaping. W. Kaczerski stated that many details have not been provided, it appears that this is an incomplete application because there are many unknowns. Mr. Vogel stated that there are many things that the board is requesting and some detail is not typically known at this stage. He stated that they guarantee this to be the best building that AvalonBay has constructed. Mr. Vogel then advised that they are not making any commitments to the LEED standards but they will attempt to do this. Tree protection will be in accordance with municipal requirements.

With no further business before the Board, motion was made and seconded to continue the discussion in a special meeting Wednesday, June 19th. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry A. Philip  
Secretary