



TOWN of BROOKLINE

Massachusetts

FIRE DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

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Chief of Department

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During my comments at the November 12, 2014 hearing concerning the proposed “Residences of South Brookline” at Hancock Village, I testified that the proposed development continues to cause me concern when it comes to the safety of the citizens I am sworn to protect and the firefighters who are under my command. This letter identifies the safety issues that have been addressed by the developer and those that remain outstanding.

A. Public Safety Issues That Have Been Addressed Adequately

1. Fire Apparatus Response Time

National Fire Protection Agency (“NFPA”) Standard 1710, *Standard for Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations by Career Fire Departments*, calls for the arrival of the first engine company within 4 minutes, followed by a full alarm assignment within 8 minutes in 90% of fire responses. The closest BFD engine company can arrive in less than 4 minutes. However, by my estimate, the remaining full alarm assignment companies would likely arrive between 6-11 minutes after receiving the alarm. This is outside of the recommended response time and gives rise to a public safety concern.

I continue to strongly disagree with the developer's assertion that the Town could rely on mutual aid from the City of Boston to address this concern. The Town does have a mutual aid agreement with surrounding communities, but cannot rely on mutual aid to provide what is referred to as "automatic aid" to decrease response time. As I have previously stated, mutual aid is activated only when all Brookline fire apparatus have been deployed in an emergency operation and reliance on mutual aid under these circumstances is unacceptable.

In response to my concern about response time as it relates to the proposed development, the developer has agreed to install an enhanced, NFPA 13 designed sprinkler systems in all the buildings, a Class I or III standpipe system in the mid-rise apartment building, and direct Fire Department alarm notification, for each building, designed in accordance with 527 CMR 20.07(3)(a), subject to the approval of the Fire Chief. In addition, I recommend that the developer be required to provide a fire hydrant plan that will be approved by the Fire Chief and

have an independent engineer test and ensure that both adequate water pressure and volume exist in the area for proper fire protection. While not perfect, these conditions adequately address my concerns relative to the fire apparatus response time recommended under NFPA Standard 1710, should a permit be issued.

2. Blasting

The proposed development will require a significant amount of blasting in order to remove the puddingstone outcroppings and underlying rock that exists on the site. The Town's blasting consultant, Mr. Andy McKown, has made a number of recommendations in his report concerning this issue (copy attached).

In response to this concern, the developer agreed to follow the protocol that is outlined in Mr. McKown's report in all respects. It is also my strong recommendation that (a) a fire detail be assigned, at the developer's expense, to each blasting site at all times blasting materials are on location; (b) that all blasting material be removed at the conclusion of each work period; (c) that all blasting material be transported into the Town directly to the site and removed directly from the Town thereafter; and (d) that all standard state and local laws and regulations pertaining to blasting be met and followed by the developer. These conditions adequately address my concerns relative to blasting, should a permit be issued.

B. Outstanding Public Safety Issues - Access and Egress of Fire Apparatus

In several areas of the proposed development, "dead ends" have been created within the site that will require responding fire apparatus to back up in order to turn around. This creates a dangerous situation from a public safety perspective. First, people have been killed by backing up fire apparatus. The proposed development will undoubtedly be occupied by children. Children, as curious as they are, will flock to the responding apparatus. When the apparatus is placed back in service and/or returned to quarters, the maneuver of backing up in a populated area, particularly with children present, will be a serious safety concern. Second, apparatus that are "stacked up" in these dead ends will be unable to return to service quickly, delaying the response time to other areas of the Town. The developer addressed this on the west side of the site by replacing the proposed hammerhead near the Baker School with a turnaround; however, there are three additional dead ends within the site that concern me from a public safety perspective.

1. Thornton/Grassmere Roads

The most recent site plan shows the placement of two residential buildings on either side of the intersection of Thornton and Grassmere Roads that did not exist in the earlier plan. The building on the west side of this intersection replaced open space that would have permitted fire apparatus to turn around, which will now require fire apparatus to back up when entering from Independence Drive. In addition, the entrance to the site at Grassmere Road currently obstructs vehicular use.

In response to this concern, the developer agreed to provide ramps up to the sidewalk at this intersection, along with an Opticon activated gate to permit emergency access and egress to

and from the site from Thornton and Grassmere Roads. This will permit fire apparatus entering and exiting from Thornton and Grassmere Roads straight passage. However, the replacement of a building on the west side of Thornton and Grassmere Roads continues to be of significant concern to me. I strongly recommend that the developer be required to provide enough space in this area to permit fire apparatus to turn around when exiting back out onto Independence Drive. If imposed, this condition would adequately address my concerns relative to backing up in this area.

2. The VFW Parkway

The east side of the proposed development at the VFW Parkway has been configured with a hammerhead, which continues to concern me from a public safety perspective. I strongly recommend that the developer be required to provide enough space in this area to permit fire apparatus to turn around, or directly access the VFW Parkway. If imposed, this condition would adequately address my concerns relative to backing up in this area.

3. The Mid-Rise Building

Although the rear of the Mid-Rise apartment building has been configured with a hammerhead that will require the backing up of fire apparatus, I am less concerned about this location than the others because it is less likely to be heavily populated in the event of a fire and would have less apparatus responding to that area. However, I strongly recommend that the driveway at the rear of the building (a) be restricted to emergency use; (b) conform to reasonable and appropriate width requirements; (c) be constructed to support our heaviest fire apparatus; and (d) be equipped with visual identifiers to aid drivers as they access or exit the site. If imposed, these conditions would adequately address my concerns relative to backing up in this area.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul D. Ford
Fire Chief

Attachment