

MAY 6, 2024

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Town of Bellingham Planning Board
Attn: Ms. Amy Sutherland
Assistant Town Planner and Zoning Compliance Officer
Town of Bellingham
10 Mechanic Street
Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

RE: Initial Peer Review – Site Plans and Stormwater Management
Prospect Hill Village Residential Development

Dear Planning Board Members and Ms. Sutherland,

BSC Group, Inc. (BSC) is pleased to submit this initial peer review for the Town Bellingham Planning Board relative to the Special Permit, Development Plan Approval, and Stormwater Management Permit for the proposed Prospect Hill Village multi-family residential development to be located off Prospect and Lake Streets in Bellingham, Massachusetts. Our peer review evaluated the project's compliance with the applicable requirements of the Town of Bellingham Zoning Bylaw (Chapter 240), Town of Bellingham Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 245), Massachusetts DEP's Stormwater Handbook, the Regulations of the Bellingham Planning Board, and standard engineering practices. This letter is provided to outline BSC's findings, comments, and recommendations. The following comments reflect our review of the materials submitted as referenced below.

BASIS OF REVIEW

As part of our peer review, BSC reviewed the following documents:

- Letter from Mr. Louis Petrozzi, President, Wall Street Development Corp. to Bellingham Planning Board, *RE: Prospect Hill Village, Application for Special Permit, Stormwater Permit, and Development Approval*, dated December 12, 2023.
- *Special Residential Townhouse Development Plan, "Prospect Hill Village", A Multi-Unit Residential Development, Bellingham, Massachusetts*, (43 sheets) prepared by GLM Engineering Consultants, Inc., dated November 30, 2023.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Applicant is proposing construction of 156-unit multi-family residential development on approximately 72 acres of land over three lots in Bellingham and two lots in Franklin. Each unit will include two (2) bedrooms and will be divided into 52, three-unit townhouse style buildings. The project includes two driveway entries off Prospect Street in Franklin. The more southerly main entry will consist of a boulevard style driveway with two 16-foot-wide drive lanes and an 8-foot median. The secondary and more northerly entry will consist of a 24-foot wide, two-way driveway. An additional, emergency only access driveway is proposed at the western-most end of the property connecting to Lakeview Avenue.

The project proposes a sewer collection system that will drain to an on-site sewer pump station with a force main to a gravity sewer to be installed in Blackmar Street. Water service is proposed through a connection to the existing municipal water system that runs through the westerly portion of the property near Lakeview Avenue. Stormwater management is proposed through a series of catch basins that will discharge to five (5) drainage

basins throughout the property. In addition, the majority of the buildings include underground infiltration chambers for roof runoff, and an additional underground infiltration system is proposed on an adjacent property to manage stormwater runoff from a portion of the main entry drive.

The Applicant has submitted an Application for Development Plan Approval, Application for Stormwater Management Permit, and Application for Special Permit, to the Bellingham Planning Board. Due to the presence of multiple on-site wetland resource areas, a Notice of Intent (NOI) will need to be filed with the Bellingham Conservation Commission.

PROJECT COMMENTS

Zoning Compliance

1. Zoning Section 240-17B. requires submission of the following information which has either not been submitted or has not been submitted in full compliance with the section.
 - a. 240-17B.(1)(a) requires submission of a locus plan at a scale of one-inch equals 200 feet. The locus plan provided is at a scale of one-inch equals 800 feet. BSC notes that the locus plan as submitted is legible and provides sufficient information to determine the location of the project and understand the general area surrounding the project site.
 - b. 240-17B.(1)(f) requires that site plans indicate areas of retained vegetation as well as locations of significant trees. The project plans do not consistently or completely show limits of clearing or areas where vegetation will be retained, and no specific tree identification is included.
 - c. 240-17B.(1)(i) requires submission of a landscape plan, which has not been provided. BSC believes submission of a landscape plan for a project of this scale is critical and that the landscape plan should include details of how the project will restore disturbed areas and slopes and will maintain visual screening to adjacent properties.
 - d. 240-17B.(1)(j) requires information regarding proposed signage. Is any signage proposed at the entry drives on Prospect Street?
 - e. 240-17B.(1)(k) requires the “location, height, intensity, and bulb type of all external lighting fixtures, the direction of illumination, and methods to reduce glare onto adjoining properties.” In the project narrative, the Applicant has generally described the proposed lighting and stated that photometrics “will be provided at the discretion of the Planning Board.” While we defer to the judgement of the Board with regard to photometrics, BSC believes that sufficient details and information on lighting should be provided to ensure compliance with this Section as well as Section 240-49 Light and Glare.
 - f. 240-17B.(1)(m) requires a “table of information showing how the plan conforms to the Zoning Bylaw.” Portions of this information are included on the Cover Sheet of the site plans, but not all information. We recommend that a table showing, at a minimum, the required and provided dimensional standards in Section 240-40 be provided.
 - g. 240-17B.(2) requires submission of building floor plans and architectural elevations. While these plans are not required for BSC’s review, there was no notation of them having been submitted on the project’s applications for the Board’s review. Floor plans and architectural elevations are also required by Section 240-106A.(3).
2. The project is located within two municipalities – Bellingham and Franklin. Has the Applicant provided sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with Section 240-18?
 - a. BSC notes the January 25, 2024, letter from the Mr. Bryan W. Taberner, AICP, Planning & Community Development Director for the Town of Franklin to Chairman William F. O’Connell, Jr. of the Bellingham Planning Board detailing the Town of Franklin’s concerns with the project. Has any

additional review or commentary been provided to the Board from the Town of Franklin and has the Applicant had any additional discussions with Franklin regarding the project?

3. The project is proposing four parking spaces per unit (2 garage and 2 driveway), which exceeds the parking requirements of Section 240-59A.(2)(d).
 - a. The project also proposes 11 parking spaces, including 2 accessible spaces, at the Community Building. Based on the footprint of the Community Building, this appears to be sufficient parking.
4. Is the project proposed to be staged or phased? If so, a proposed staging plan should be submitted for review as required by Section 240-106A.(2).

Project Application and Site Plans

5. The second paragraph of *Background and History* in the Project Narrative states, “The Property still has many areas of excess gravel that may be extracted during the development of the Property.” We request clarification on this statement. Is the reference to gravel extraction simply as part of the excavation necessary to construct the project or is the Applicant’s intention to continue commercial gravel extraction operations as previously performed on the site?
6. The Project Narrative refers to construction of an on-site sewer pump station with a force main to a gravity sewer main “to be installed” in Blackmar Street. It is unclear from the narrative or plans as to who will be installing this new sewer main in Blackmar Street. No information for the proposed force main is shown on the site plans, and it is not clear where the proposed pump station is located on-site. We request that all information regarding the proposed sewer routing be provided for clarity.
 - a. The Narrative states that “The Department of Public Works has confirmed that there is adequate sewer capacity to service this Development.” Has documentation confirming this been provided to the Board? BSC is currently only in receipt of an email from Mr. Jesse Riedle, DPW Director, dated January 19, 2024, that states “Designed flow capacities at Dupre sewer will require confirmation of added flow. Permitted capacity from WWTF may be required.”
7. Has the Applicant confirmed that sufficient water capacity is available for the Project? The above referenced January 19, 2024, email from Mr. Riedle states that “Fire flow tests should be conducted to confirm adequate flows and pressures.”
 - a. It appears that the Project is proposing a single water connection from the existing municipal main running through the western portion of the project site. It is more typical for projects of this size to loop a water main to ensure sufficient flows and pressures. Has the Applicant explored the potential for a looped water system?
8. Has the Bellingham Police Department provided review comments on the project? BSC notes an email dated January 3, 2024, for Police Chief Ken Fitzgerald which details Chief Fitzgerald’s initial thoughts regarding potential traffic and speed mitigation.
9. Has the Bellingham Fire Department provided review comments on the project?
10. BSC requests the following information with regard to the emergency access driveway to Lakeview Avenue (shown as Road F on the site plans):
 - a. Was this a request of the Fire Department?
 - b. What is the surface material of this driveway?
 - c. The driveway crosses Town of Bellingham owned land. Has the Applicant obtained an easement for this driveway from the Town?
 - d. We recommend that, at a minimum, signs designating this driveway for emergency access only be installed. Should the Fire Department allow, we would also recommend a gate or post and chain barrier at each end of the driveway to ensure that it is only used for emergency purposes.

- e. The site plans show a proposed cul-de-sac at the end of Lakeview Avenue, which is located on private property. This cul-de-sac would likely require some form of access or use easement between the property owner and the Town. Has this been discussed with the Town?
- 11. BSC recommends that the Site Plans be updated to show the Bellingham/Franklin Town Line to more clearly demonstrate which portions of the project are in which Town.
- 12. Would the Applicant consider a narrower drive lane for each side of the boulevard main driveway? Two 16-foot drive lanes and an 8-foot median result in minimal space for buffers or screening to adjacent properties.
- 13. Would the Applicant consider shifting the sidewalk closer to the driveway and eliminating the grass buffer strip at the stream crossing? By eliminating the buffer strips, the crossing can become shorter and less impactful to the stream and wetlands.
- 14. The project requires site work on both 373 and 381 Prospect Streets including stormwater management and grading. Have required easements and rights been obtained to perform this work?
 - a. We recommend that a small swale or other grading be performed on 373 Prospect Street to ensure that overflow from the proposed underground infiltration system does not pond on the property or flow towards the existing house.
 - b. There is a significant hill in the northwest corner of 373 Prospect Street that extends into the site at the main entry driveway. We request clarification if that entire hill, including the portion on the 373 Prospect Street property, is being removed or if a wall or other grading element is required to construct the entry drive and maintain the portion of the hill on 373 Prospect.
- 15. Please note that Sheets 22 and 23 (Grading & Drainage) are mislabeled as Layout and Existing Conditions, respectively.
- 16. Portions of Road C and Road D include grades as flat as 0.80% over significant lengths. It is BSC's experience that paving with asphalt at grades that flat is extremely difficult and significantly increases the likelihood of ponding and even grades sloping in the wrong direction. Should the Board approve the project, we recommend a condition of approval that requires detailed as-built plans of these areas or other methods to ensure that the roadway grades slope appropriately and stormwater runoff flows as intended.
- 17. Appropriate Erosion Control Plans have been provided presuming that the project will be constructed in a single phase. Should the project be split into multiple phases or stages, phase specific erosion control plans will need to be developed. We recommend that a condition of any Board approval include that, should the project be phased, phase specific erosion control plans be provided to the Board for review at least two weeks prior to the start of construction.
 - a. Additionally, we recommend that specific erosion control and flow control/diversion plans be prepared for the construction of the stream crossing. As these plans will likely require the input of the project site contractor, this requirement could be included as a condition of any Board approval.

Project Application and Site Plans

Please note that a copy of the Project's stormwater report and calculations has not been provided to BSC as of the date of this letter. Upon receipt of this information, BSC will update this letter with our review of the site-specific stormwater design and calculations.

We look forward to discussing this project with you further at the upcoming public hearings on the project. Please feel free to contact me at (617) 896-4386 or drinaldi@bscgroup.com should you have any questions on the information in this report.

Sincerely,
BSC Group, Inc.



Dominic Rinaldi, PE
Senior Associate