MassHousing

Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency
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January 31, 2017

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL

Medfield Meadows LLC
18 Forest Street
Dover, MA 02052
Attention: John Kelly, Principal

RE: Medfield Meadows
Medfield, MA (MH# 873)
Project Eligibility (Site Approval) Application

Dear Mr. Kelly:

This letter is in response to your application for a determination of Project Eligibility ("Site Approval") pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B ("Chapter 40B"), 760 CMR 56.00 and the Comprehensive Permit Guidelines issued by the Department of Housing and Community Development ("DHCD") (the "Guidelines" and, collectively, the "Comprehensive Permit Rules"), under the following program (the "Program"):

- New England Fund ("NEF") Program of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston.

The original application proposed to build two hundred (200) units of rental housing in two (2) buildings on individual parcels separated by North Meadow Road (Route 27) (the "Project") at 39-41 Dale Street and 49 Dale Street (the "Site") in Medfield, Massachusetts (the "Municipality"). Subsequent to an initial review of the Site and the proposed plans and comments from the Municipality regarding the site plan, MassHousing requested that the applicant reconsider the Project and its compatibility with adjacent uses and compliance with 760 CMR 56.04(4)(c), the applicable regulations that govern the design elements of a 40B proposal.

On January 5, 2017 the Applicant submitted a revised proposal to MassHousing that purported to respond to concerns regarding the original site plan, reduced the proposed height of the buildings and the number of units from two hundred (200) to one hundred eighty two (182) rental apartments units in three separate three and four-story buildings on a total of 6.24 acres of land, which only reduced the density from 32 units per acre to 29.17 units per acre on the Site.

MassHousing staff has performed an on-site inspection of the Site, which local boards and officials were invited to attend, then revised the Site in connection with the revised application, and has reviewed the pertinent information from both the original and the revised applications for the Project submitted by the Applicant, and comments submitted by the Municipality and others in accordance with the Comprehensive Permit Rules.

As a result of MassHousing's evaluation of the information that was presented, and the Agency's evaluation of the Site, MassHousing is unable to approve your application for a determination of Project Eligibility. While it is expected that a Project proposal submitted in accordance with the zoning and regulatory relief available under Chapter 40B will differ from the surrounding context in many fundamental ways, the Subsidizing Agency must also address matters regarding the Project's relationship to existing development patterns in the surrounding area. This Site appears to be generally appropriate for residential development and while municipal actions to date have not yet resulted in the production of housing required, "to meet the municipality's need for affordable housing as measured by the Statutory Minima"; nevertheless MassHousing has determined that the conceptual project design for the proposed development is not appropriate for this Site.

The reasons for MassHousing's denial of your applications are as follows:

MassHousing considers the design of the building and the proposed site layout to be inconsistent with the design requirements outlined in 760 CMR 56.04(4)(c) and the related Guidelines dated May, 2013. Specifically:

- The proposed apartment structure is inconsistent with nearby existing residential building typology. This is particularly true for the rear portion of the north parcel and the proposed building's relationship to the existing neighborhoods closest to the Site along Joseph Pace Road, John Crowder Road and Dale Street. The applicant's revised site plans do not adequately mitigate the impact of the proposed building's connection to the existing neighborhood from the initial proposal; the Project still fails to make a reasonable transition to this well established residential neighborhood.

- The proposed three to four-story apartment structures are not compatible with nearby structures in terms of height, mass and scale. Building elevations indicate that the proposed buildings (the three proposed buildings range in height from 60' to 77.5' tall depending on the topography of the Site) are at least triple the height of most surrounding 1-2 story structures. The building massing in the original submission was entirely inappropriate for both the Site and its relationship to the adjacent residential neighborhood. While the revised site plan, particularly that of the north parcel, has addressed some of the most glaring impacts to its closest abutters, the overall perception of the massing has not been adequately reduced to make the findings required under the regulations. The proposed massing on the south parcel is not significantly improved by the revised site plans and the presence of wetlands on that portion of the overall development Site is a constraint to a more logical relationship to the Grove Street neighborhood.

- Appropriate density of residential development depends on a number of different factors, and must be reviewed on a case by case basis. In this case, however, it appears that the Project is simply too dense for the lot on which it is located; nearly the entire Site is occupied by the proposed building program and the limited areas for open space are not sufficient to mitigate the project's effective density. While there are no maximum density thresholds, it is advisable to develop at a density that takes some cues from the existing community context. The nearest rental development is the Parc at Medfield which has a considerably lower density of approximately 10 units/acre as compared to the almost 30 units/acre proposed for this Project.

- The site plan does not provide a satisfactory design treatment of the edge between the Site and the surrounding streetscape and does little to enhance the visual quality of the streetscape. The northern and southern building facades face Route 27, which is the principal access to downtown Medfield, and create a poor visual relationship to this adjacent roadway.

In MassHousing's review of any application for Site Approval under Chapter 40B, the Agency does not consider any one factor in isolation. Rather, the site as a whole is considered as well as whether the development proposal is consistent with applicable Regulations and Guidelines. After a thorough review of your application, MassHousing does not find that your proposal is able to meet all of the required findings. Therefore, your application is denied.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Greg Watson, Manager of Comprehensive Permit Programs, at 617-854-1880.

Sincerely,

Timothy C. Sullivan
Executive Director

cc: Chrystal Kornegay, Undersecretary, Department of Housing and Community Development
The Honorable James Timilty
The Honorable Denise C. Garlick
The Honorable Shawn Dooley
Mark L. Fisher, Chairman, Medfield Board of Selectmen
Michael J. Sullivan, Medfield Town Administrator
Sarah Raposa, Medfield Town Planner ✓