



Town of Groveland Zoning Board of Appeals

183 Main Street
Groveland, MA 01834

APPROVED March 4, 2020
MOTION: Kathy Franson made a motion to approve the February 5, 2020 meeting minutes as drafted. Chris Goodwin seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0, unanimous in favor.

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Board/Committee Name: ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Date: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2020
Time of Meeting: 7:30PM
Location: TOWN HALL

Present: Kathleen Franson, Jason Normand, John Stokes, Chris Goodwin

Absent:

Staff Present: Rebecca Oldham; Paul Haverty with Blatman, Bobrowski & Haverty, LLC MHP
Consultant

Jason Normand, Chair: The Zoning Board of Appeals meeting for Wednesday, January 15, 2020 was called to order at 7:31PM.

PUBLIC HEARING

CONTINUED: Application #2019-3, 4 Sewall Street, Groveland Realty Trust, LLC c/o William Daley: requests a Comprehensive Permit pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L 40B, §§ 20-23 and 760 CMR 56.00, to construct 192 apartment units in four (4) residential buildings, a clubhouse with related amenities, such as a pool, and associated access ways, sidewalks, parking, utilities and stormwater infrastructure located in the Industrial (I) Zoning District.

MOTION: Kathy Franson motioned to OPEN the continued public hearing for Application 2019-3, 4 Sewall Street. John Stokes seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0, unanimous in favor.

Stephanie Lopez De Veraza with Saam Architecture: The four buildings are identical in design. They have a rectangular footprint, and are four occupiable stories, which steps down to three occupiable stories on either end of the building; however, including the garage level on the ground floor the height is effectively equal to a four and five-story building. The exterior materials are stone veneer at the garage level façade, with horizontal vinyl siding on upper stories and asphalt shingles on the roof. The roof is a 6:12 pitch hip style overall, with numerous gabled dormers. Attention has been given to articulation of the footprint, facades and rooflines which serves to help break up the overall massing. The facades are nicely detailed by corner boards, window and door trim with cornices, and moldings on flat panels adjacent to columns at the exterior deck railings and between windows at some locations. The massing of the siding areas is broken up in several locations by horizontal trim at the floor lines. On the renderings it appears as if the siding areas are painted in several different colors which further helps to break up the massing. Although not authentic in material or scale, the overall design intention clearly references typical historic New England vernacular. The massing and scale of each building is much larger than the adjacent residential properties and most of the industrial properties with the possible exception of the Chesterton building. The individual buildings and overall project greatly exceed in size, scale and massing the residential and commercial properties adjacent to the project site (except for the Chesterton complex across Salem Street). However, the location in an industrially zoned area is such that it does not intrude on heavily populated and established residential or historic neighborhoods which exist in other parts of the town. The project is well set back into the site (approximately 800') although a concern is that the height and size of the buildings will be even more prominent due to the grading as currently shown on the site plan set of drawings. Grading plans indicate a grade of 80 where the Sewell Street access meets Salem Street, and grades rise as one moves south through the site, with the northernmost building having a garage level elevation of 111.5, the next building is 122 and the third is 131.5, which is over 50' higher than the elevation of the road level at Salem Street. Consideration should be given as to whether there is a way to use grading to help

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43 diminish the scale of the project. As noted above, although the building footprint and detailing is
44 nicely articulated, the building(s) are quite high. The maximum height for this district per zoning
45 regulations is 35', defined as "...the vertical distance measured from grade plane to...the mean height
46 between eaves and ridge, for gable, hip and gambrel roofs". The height for the mean level of the
47 highest roof of the buildings is approximately 65'-6" +/- (actual height being approximately 75' above
48 grade), which is well above the maximum height permitted in any zoning district in town. The
49 Building Section of the architectural drawings indicates a distance of 4'-2" from the top of plate to the
50 beginning of the roof slope. It is not clear why this height is required, but the possibility of reducing it
51 somewhat should be explored, and perhaps also decreasing the slope of the roof slightly, which could
52 lower the overall roof peak height. Also, although now the norm for new residential higher-end
53 construction, nine-foot ceiling heights are generous. In the not too distant past, eight-foot ceilings were
54 typical, and are still common for new entry-level homes. Perhaps a compromise of 8'-6" or even 8'-0"
55 should be considered for ceiling heights, which multiplied by four stories could potentially lower the
56 overall building height by two to four feet. The appearance of the exterior finish materials thoughtfully
57 reflects traditional residential design, with clapboard-style siding and stone veneer. The amount of
58 trim and detail features adds a richness to the façade. The drawings indicate the siding as vinyl; the
59 material of the trim and windows is not stated although it is assumed that these would also be vinyl.
60 The use of vinyl is a cause for concern. Vinyl siding is widely used today because it has the lowest
61 first cost, however, environmental exposure causes vinyl plasticizers to deteriorate, causing siding to
62 fade and become brittle. Since painting vinyl is not advisable, faded or chipped vinyl siding may
63 require replacement before its full life expectancy. Also, the environmental costs of vinyl are high – in
64 use, vinyl materials may off-gas volatile organic compounds such as formaldehyde from the binding
65 agents used, and the production and eventual disposal of vinyl is associated with environmental
66 pollutants. The units are well designed and spacious. All units, even the smallest, have nice amenities
67 such as a closet near the entry and generous storage spaces. A very useful feature is having space for a
68 washer and dryer in every unit. Kitchens in all units are nicely sized and functional. The purpose of
69 the additional renderings shows what the development would look like when it is complete and all the
70 plantings are fully mature. Information is not available to us to indicate what size the plantings will be
71 when they are first planted, therefore, we can't predict how long it may take for it to actually look like
72 this. The drawings show that care has been taken to visually isolate the development with fairly dense
73 landscaping around the perimeter, while leaving nice expanses of open green space closer to the
74 buildings which will allow the benefit of light and air. The incorporation of underground parking and
75 the way the access to that is tucked into the grading at the building ends will allow the grounds to be
76 dominated by landscaping rather than a sea of parking lots and cars, which is a nice feature
77 Kathy Franson: How long before the trees mature? The fear is it would take 25 years before any
78 screening was offered.
79 William Daley, Applicant: Not at all. About 2 years at most.
80 Tim Wentz with Gate Architecture: Given the low income requirement of the project a minimum of
81 192 units were required to make the project viable. Our office looked at many building configurations,
82 including single buildings and larger multiple buildings and concluded that four 5 story buildings
83 presented the ideal ratio of building mass to overall site usage. To decrease the number of stories
84 would simply cause larger building footprints which affects the overall green space of the project
85 along with increasing impervious coverage and ultimately a greater environmental impact. The
86 buildings are well setback from the road which in effect decreases the scale of the building. The site is
87 remote enough from density populated residential areas that the overall impact to the mass and scale of
88 the project is minimus to the overall Town of Groveland. The 4'-2" raised heel of the roof truss is a
89 result of where the building section was cut, which in this case was at the narrowest portion of the



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90 building. Where we have building offsets the roof trusses have no heel, so that the raised heel where
91 the section was cut cannot be reduced. With regards to roof pitch, we maintained a 6:12 slope which
92 we feel is the minimum recommended for the snow climate that Massachusetts has in the wintertime.
93 In addition, the greater the slope of the roof, the more attractive the building becomes. Pitches below
94 6:12 has a negative effect on the overall proportions of the façade. With the comment of 8' ceilings
95 instead of 9' to reduce overall height of the building I can only say that 9' ceilings are the de facto
96 standard for residential properties today. In the past 10 years of designing over 18,000 apartments we
97 have never once had a ceiling lower than 9', including low-income housing. In addition, with code
98 requirements today requiring 3' window sills, an 8' ceiling would only allow a 4' high window which
99 greatly reduces the amount of natural light that would be available to the dwelling unit. Modern vinyl
100 siding is a much-maligned material. Vinyl sidings qualifies for energy efficiency. Vinyl siding without
101 care can last up to 60 years and with careful maintenance can last over 100 years. Vinyl siding has
102 proven to have a lower environmental impact than the majority of cladding options including brick,
103 stone and stucco. This analysis includes global warming, fossil fuel depletion, air pollutants, human
104 health cancer, ecological toxicity, smog, acidification, indoor air quality and ozone depletion along
105 with others.

106 **BOARD:** We can discuss the legal memo update when Town Counsel is present at the next meeting.

107 W. Daley: We have provided an extension letter for another 30-days to give the peer review team more
108 time.

109 **BOARD:** To allow the reviewer more time we will not hold another meeting in February and will
110 reconvene in March.

111 **MOTION:** Kathy Franson motioned to CONTINUE the public hearing for Application 2019-3, 4
112 Sewall Street until March 4, 2020. Chris Goodwin seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0, unanimous
113 in favor.

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115 MINUTES APPROVAL

116 **MOTION:** Chris Goodwin made a motion to approve the January 15, 2020 meeting minutes as
117 amended. Kathy Franson seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0, unanimous in favor.

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119 OPEN DISCUSSION

120 *None.*

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122 ADJOURNMENT

123 **MOTION:** Kathy Franson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by John
124 Stokes. The vote was 4-0, unanimous in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:16PM.