



Town of Dennis

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TO: Elizabeth Sullivan, Town Administrator
FROM: Paul H. Foley, Town Planner
DATE: September 28, 2023
RE: Hope Lane/Village Courtyard 40B Preliminary Proposal

It is my understanding that the developer of the proposed 40B project at Hope Lane/Village Courtyard is asking the Select Board to sign-on to their proposal as it stands today as a "Friendly 40B". I believe it is premature for the Board to make such a decision. At this point, it does not appear to me to be a joint project where there has been a give and take discussion with improvements that mitigate the Towns concerns with traffic, pedestrian connections, parking, septage, density and design.

Due to my relative newness and busy schedule I have not had a lot of time to review this preliminary proposal. At a quick glance, I have a number of questions and would like to look at the site and proposal more thoroughly. Hopefully, though a true back and forth, we can work together and create a revised plan that mitigates some of the Towns concerns and still allows the developer to build a creative project that fits the area and adds some units for empty-nesters and the Towns affordable housing supply.

Among my questions are whether they can do the proposed division around the building at 744 Route 6A, as it would be creating a non-conforming lot with less than half the area required in the LB District. As the plan stands now, some of the parking spots for 744 would lie partly on the new lot. 18 Hope Lane is undersized for a single-family home under zoning, much less 5 dwelling units. It also appears that 18 Hope Lane is used as parking for, and has merged with, the adjacent plaza owned by the developer.

Beyond questions of density and design there are improvements to the existing traffic situation that should be considered. Currently there are several existing parking spots on the west side of Hope Lane close to 6A that force cars to back into Hope Lane very close to the intersection. These should be removed. The vehicular and pedestrian circulation should comply with the Dennis Complete Streets Policy. Adequate parking for the existing uses as well as proposed uses needs to be met. There are a few specimen trees that should be saved and, if rehabilitated, could improve the site.

In my opinion the Town should be engaged in a true discussion of possibilities and alternatives rather than agreeing to the relatively minor improvements to the preliminary plan that have been presented so far. While apparently there was an informal presentation to Staff a year ago, I think the proposal would benefit from a through Staff Review with the Town departments. This may reduce the peer review costs to the developer. The latest documents we received did address some of the Town Engineers earlier comments but I do not believe the Engineer has had time to thoroughly review them. I spent some time at the intersection with the Town Engineer and it is clear that this area presents some real challenges.