



To: Wilton Zoning Board
Wilton Planning Board
From: Wilton Economic Development Team (Eco Dev)
Date: July 13, 2021
RE: Case #7/13/21-1

As is often customary, the applicant in this case, presented their conceptual plans to the Economic Development Team, at their meeting on July 6, 2021. The team would like to offer these observations and considerations as the Zoning Board and Planning Board conduct their reviews. We understand not all of these points are in the charter of zoning or planning. Please take note of those that apply.

- 1) The buildings on this property, are historic, but have fallen into disrepair making them costly to renovate. The asbestos, river proximity and infrastructure issues, among others, have discouraged a number of prospective buyers, and there is a risk it will continue to deteriorate.
- 2) The building falls under a Demolition Review for historic buildings, and the applicant has approached the Heritage Commission with a proposal for incorporating the painted mural into the property design, preserving that art, which is an indication of their willingness to work with the town and their respect for our historic artifacts.
- 3) The proposed improvements to the line of sight traffic on the northern corner is a plus in this design.
- 4) The addition of green space is desirable, given the location close to Stony Brook, and we recommended an alternative to asphalt that would create a permeable surface for the parking area. The same TrueGrid pavers used in the recently constructed Stony Brook Trail are available in industrial versions designed for parking lots. This approach decreases the percentage of impervious surfaces and furthers the goals of our MS4 stormwater strategy.
- 5) While some of the team found the proposed design of the buildings to be acceptable, others found it to be out of place with Wilton's downtown village residences. While the design only encompasses two floors of living space, the full garage at ground level, combined with the sheer mass of 11 units, makes the entire structure taller and many times larger than any other building in the area.
- 6) We would like the developers to be open to having the appropriate town entities (Eco-Dev, the Heritage Commission and the Planning Board) make recommendations on modifying the design to be more in keeping with our downtown village.
- 7) Small Condo Associations struggle to sustain funding and fulfill their property managerial responsibilities. Wilton has already experienced this when an HOA, or similar entity, votes to disband and there's no one to contact when issues arise. We'd suggest some buyer contract language, a performance bond, or deed language that spells out and ensures management oversight doesn't become an option.
- 8) Eco Dev supports downtown density as a characteristic of Strong Towns*. This was one of the recommendations of the Plan NH Community Design Charrette in 2017. More people downtown, can mean more foot traffic for our small businesses, restaurants, and entertainment venues. However, that means a safe walkable pathway to attractions, and the sidewalks connecting this property to downtown are in disrepair and non-existent in some places. There's some precedent that off-site improvements, such as sidewalks in this case, might be warranted, if density rules are waived. This would benefit the entire neighborhood.

**Note: A new way forward for sustainable quality of life in cities of all sizes Strong Towns: A Bottom-Up Revolution to Build American Prosperity are forward-thinking ideas that break with modern wisdom to present a new vision of urban development in the United States.*

Thank you for the opportunity to present these considerations, as both Zoning and Planning conduct their reviews and deliberations.

Respectfully submitted,
The Wilton Economic Development Team