

12/12/05 - (6)

TOWN COMMENT

**Acton Community Housing Corporation**

**Nancy Tavernier, Chairman**

**TOWN OF ACTON**

Acton Town Hall

472 Main Street

Acton, Massachusetts, 01720

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TO: Board of Selectmen  
FROM: Nancy Tavernier, Chair, Acton Community Housing Corporation  
SUBJECT: Madison Place  
DATE: November 17, 2005  
Cc: Jenn Shea, Dennis Ring, Jay Peabody

At the BOS meeting of November 28, there will be a presentation by developers of a proposed new LIP project called Madison Place. ACHC has met with the developers on two occasions to discuss the conceptual plans for an 8 unit development located at 737-741 Main St. The design of the development will be similar to Franklin Place consisting of 4 duplex buildings with an identical floor plan. There has also been an initial meeting attended by the direct abutters. ACHC plans to schedule a public information session in January to which Town board members will be invited. ACHC members toured one of the completed Franklin Place units and found the quality of the unit to be outstanding and most attractive both inside and out. The Madison Place units will have a somewhat different exterior but will be otherwise the same.

Madison Place is a small scale development to be located across the street from the North Acton Village zoning district, a designated village center in the Acton Master Plan. Its location is consistent with state and local Smart Growth principles in concentrating denser development in village centers and providing a diversity of housing options. Although there is not yet a North Acton Village Plan, the basic zoning is in place as a result of the Master Plan votes taken in 1990. This development's proximity to NARA and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is also a significant positive for the location.

Members of the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and ACHC have been meeting as a 40B Working Group, with consultant Judi Barrett, to develop a Joint Comprehensive Permit Policy Statement. This policy intends to create an incentive for developers to present proposals for small scale developments, of 12 units or less, and to encourage the location of these small developments in or adjacent to the existing village centers. In exchange the policy is intended to encourage an expedited process. This LIP application is a good example of a desirable 40B that meets those criteria.

ACHC has been discussing the affordable selling prices of the 2 units, which must be priced to serve households at 70-80% of the Area Median Income. Depending on the financing variables used, the price range would be \$181,000-\$203,000. We have

proposed lower prices to the developers and they have expressed a willingness to consider this request contingent on the time it will take to reach the Comprehensive Permit decision point. A sliding scale of house prices as related to the time involved in the pre-development phase will be presented to the ACHC after the Pro Forma is finalized. This provides a great incentive to the Town to work in a cooperative mode to expedite this approval which will result in a monetary benefit to the future first time home buyers. In addition, ACHC intends to use CPA funds to lower the price of the affordable units further, to increase the affordability of the units.

Under the LIP procedures, in order to apply to DHCD, the developer must obtain the signatures of the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen and the Chairman of the local housing partnership, in this case ACHC. On Nov. 17, the ACHC voted unanimously to support the conceptual design for Madison Place and has authorized the ACHC Chair to sign the LIP application.

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Nancy Tavernier, Chairman

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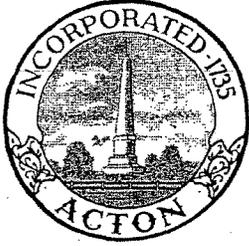
TO: Jenn Shea, Dennis Ring, Jay Peabody (737 Main St. LLC)  
FROM: Nancy Tavernier, Chair, Acton Community Housing Corporation  
SUBJECT: Madison Place  
DATE: November 17, 2005

The ACHC appreciates the two meetings you have attended to present the conceptual plans for an 8 unit development located at 737-741 Main St. On Nov. 17, the ACHC voted unanimously to support the conceptual design for Madison Place and has authorized the ACHC Chair to sign the LIP application.

We have the following comments on the proposal:

- The exterior of Madison Place should be somewhat different from that of Franklin Place so that it will not appear to be an identical design even though it is. We understand the floor plan will be the same and we approve of the amenities provided.
- We request the 2 affordable units are not adjacent to each other, neither in the same duplex nor in close proximity to each other. e.g. units 2 & 3.
- The 2 affordable units must be priced to serve households at 70-80% of the Area Median Income. Depending on the financing variables used, your proposed price range would be \$181,000-\$203,000. We have proposed lower prices to you in exchange for an expedited approval process.
- We would support your offer to create a sliding scale of house prices as it relates to the time involved in the pre-development phase. We will review this sliding scale after the Pro Forma is finalized.
- In addition, ACHC intends to use CPA funds to lower the price of the affordable units further, to increase the affordability of the units. We would most likely make these funds available to the developer at the time of the Building Permit issuance. They would be applied directly to offset the price of the affordable units. We will determine the funding level after seeing the sliding scale.
- In the preparation of the Pro Forma, we would urge you to use a higher interest rate for the mortgage assumption, say 6.5%. We also think the estimated \$100 monthly condo fee is not realistic. It should be based on the current experience at Franklin Place.

We look forward to working with you on the Madison Place LIP project.



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Engineering Department

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**INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION**

**To:** Garry Rhodes, Building Commissioner

**Date:** October 19, 2005

**From:** Engineering Department

**Subject:** Madison Place Preliminary Plan – October 13, 2005 - Meeting

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We have the following comments regarding the above mentioned plan dated October 5, 2005:

1. The existing northerly driveway entrance and the proposed northerly driveway entrance along Main Street are shown in close proximity to 2 existing road bounds. There should be a note on the plan requiring these bounds to be preserved during construction
2. The engineer should show the location of the mailboxes for the development on the plans. If allowed by the Postmaster, we recommend that the mailboxes be located within the site to prevent residents who stop their vehicles to get their mail from interfering with the flow of traffic on Main Street.
3. The applicant will need to obtain final approval for the street addresses from the Engineering, Police and Fire Departments. There is already an existing street in Acton named Madison Lane. The entire site could use 737 Main Street as the street address and each individual unit could be identified by an assigned unit number.
4. The Applicant has shown a sidewalk along their frontage on Main Street. We would like to have a proposed green strip between the road pavement and the new sidewalk. We would also like to further investigate the overall master plan for a sidewalk on this section of Main Street. If we decide that the overall sidewalk would be located on the opposite side of Main Street, we would suggest that the engineer design and construct the sidewalk on the other side of the road.

# ACTON NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

## INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

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**To:** Garry Rhodes, Building Commissioner **Date:** October 18, 2005  
**From:** Tom Tidman, Director  
**Subject:** 737 – 741 Main Street "Madison Place"

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The Conservation Commission has reviewed 737 Main Street under an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) filing and has accepted the wetlands delineation line. In addition to reviewing on-site wetlands, the Commission noted the presence of rare species habitat as indicated on the Estimated Habitats Rare Wildlife & Certified Vernal Pools: July 1, 2003. The estimated habitat area of the parcel coincides with the 200' riverfront area.

- ◆ The project as proposed is planned for an area of the site more than 100' from on-site wetlands and outside the 200' riverfront area. The exception to this occurs behind proposed Units 3 and 4, where grading and a block wall extend into the 100' wetlands buffer.
- ◆ A Notice of Intent will be required for all proposed work within 100' of wetlands.
- ◆ Lawn areas (play areas) for the units appear to be limited to the leaching field. Has any consideration been given to utilizing the uplands area behind proposed Units 7 and 8?
- ◆ Is there any potential to retain a public access easement to the future Bruce Freeman Rail Trail along the south end of the lot?

# ACTON MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES DEPARTMENT

## INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

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**To:** Garry Rhodes, Building Commissioner *Date:* 10/18/05  
**From:** Dean A. Charter, Municipal Properties Director   
**Subject:** Preliminary Review, Madison Place, 737 Main Street

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I have reviewed the plans submitted for the above noted development, and have the following comments, most of which were discussed at the preliminary review meeting with the applicant:

1. This site directly abuts the Bay Colony Railroad, which is the proposed site of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. The developer should provide a narrow public access strip from Main Street to the rail bed to allow access to the trail from the immediate neighborhood. I do not feel that there is a need to provide a parking area, as there is the potential for parking areas in less obtrusive locations.
2. The preliminary landscape plan proposes using Sugar Maples at the front of the site. Given the proximity of the proposed trees to Main Street, which gets heavily treated with deicing chemicals, the fact that the trees will be slightly down slope of the treated roadway, and the intolerance of Sugar Maples to deicing chemicals, I suggest another species be chosen.
3. The preliminary landscape plan proposes using Burning Bush *Euonymus* extensively in the planting beds. This species has been placed on the Commonwealth's proposed "Prohibited Plant List" as an invasive species. By the time this project is actually built, new plantings of Burning Bush might be prohibited. I suggest another species be chosen.
4. Considering that most of the open area at the front of the site will be used for primary and reserve infiltration areas for the septic system, I suggest that the tree plantings be focused directly behind the proposed sidewalk and/or in front of the individual dwelling units.
5. Adequate informal buffer plantings should be provided to the benefit of the North and South neighbors.

## Kim DeNigro

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**From:** Roland Bartl  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 27, 2005 2:49 PM  
**To:** 'Jenn Shea'; 'Dennis Ring'  
**Cc:** Acton Community Housing Corporation; Planning Board  
**Subject:** Madison Place 40B proposal; 737-741 Main Street

Jenn and Dennis:

I haven't had a lot of time to look over the folder that you left me in my office, but here are some items for you to consider:

- Provide a path for the Madison Place residents to the future Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in the back of the property.
- Sell affordable units below the regulatory maximum sales price.
- The site is in the Groundwater Protection District Zone 3. Look at the zoning requirements there and how they can be met. This is not a good part of the bylaw to ask for variances from. However, the bylaw allows the Board to consider alternative drainage designs that achieve the same water quality results.
- How is the sight distance on Main Street?
- Assuming that this would be a private way, consider reducing the width of the loop road to 12 feet (see various Bellows Farm loop roads).
- I think you will not need the extra parking spaces on the inside of the loop (shown on landscape plan). You are proposing two-car garages for each of the eight units, plus driveway parking for another two cars at each unit. That seem to be plenty and is more than what zoning would require.
- How realistic is it for the landscape plan to show trees on the inside of the loop, when this is the septic system location?
- Consider recessing the double garages a bit in the unit floor plan so that they don't dominate the front elevations as much. Remember there will be eight of them in a row.

Thanks for letting me comment -

*Roland Bartl, AICP  
Town Planner, Town of Acton  
472 Main Street  
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978-254-9636*

10/27/2005