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CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME : Charlesview Redevelopment
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Boston (Allston)
PROJECT WATERSHED : Charles River
EEA NUMBER : 14188
PROJECT PROPONENT : **The Community Builders**
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : February 20, 2008

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.03 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

The project consists of the relocation and reconstruction of Charlesview Apartments from its current location near the corner of Western Avenue and North Harvard Street in Allston to a new location approximately a half-mile to the west along Western Avenue. The site of the new Charlesview development will be acquired via a land swap that has been negotiated with Harvard University. The 4.5-acre site, owned by Charlesview, Inc., that houses the current Charlesview Apartments will be swapped for the two sites containing, in aggregate, 6.9 acres. The first site (the Brighton Mills site) is approximately 6.2 acres and is currently located on a portion of the underutilized Brighton Mills Shopping Plaza on the south side of Western Avenue. As proposed, this site will include 282 mixed income rental units, inclusive of the 213 existing Charlesview

affordable units, surface and underground parking, new streets, landscaped park areas, as well as new commercial development and shared community space. The second site is opposite the northeast corner of the Brighton Mills site and consists of approximately 0.72 acres along the west side of Telford Street between Western Avenue and Soldiers Field Road. This site will contain up to 118 affordable and market rate homeownership units and an underground parking garage. The proponent will be seeking designation of the Brighton Mills site as an urban redevelopment project under MGL c.121A.

The total project square footage will equal approximately 556,486 square feet (sf), with 400 total housing units. In comparison to existing conditions on these previously developed sites, the project will result in the reduction of impervious areas by 2.9 acres, add 3.66 acres of new open space (pervious area), add up to 187 additional housing units, generate 87,800 new gallons per day (GPD) of wastewater (for a project total of 93,300 GPD), and demand 90,630 new gallons per day of water (for a project total of 96,630 GPD). The proposed project is expected to generate 3,099 traffic trips (unadjusted) or 1,490 traffic trips when adjusted to take into account expected mode share, i.e., public transportation, bike, and pedestrian trips. These trips are already captured on the existing roadway network through the existing uses and are not considered "new" traffic trips in accordance with the MEPA regulations.

Jurisdiction and Permitting

The project is undergoing MEPA review pursuant to Sections 11.03(1)(b)(6) because it requires a State permit and consists of approval in accordance with M.G.L. c.121A of a new urban redevelopment project that consists of 100 or more dwelling units. The project will require a Sewer Connection Permit from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The project will also require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit (NPDES CGP) from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). Finally, the project will require numerous local permits including: Article 80 Large Project Review, Chapter 121A Designation, and potentially a Planned Development Area Approval from the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA).

The proponent is not seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth and the project does not require a land transfer from any Commonwealth Agency. However, the project does involve an Agency action by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) for designation as an Urban Redevelopment Project under M.G.L. 121A. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction for this project is broad and extends to all aspects of the project that are likely, directly or indirectly, to cause Damage to the Environment.

Land / Urban Design

Charlesview will result in the conversion of underutilized commercial areas into a mixture of residential, community, and retail uses. The proponent has stated a major design goal of massing buildings in a fashion to integrate the development into the existing neighborhood. The project will re-establish the traditional street grid network and create a streetscape to

encourage pedestrian connections through the neighborhood. Varied housing types will include a mixture of townhomes, traditional apartments and condominiums, affordable and market-rate units, and units with one, two, or three bedrooms.

Critical to the success of this project and its overall integration into the Allston neighborhood is the clear definition of public and private spaces. Best urban design practices, including building massing, landscaping, streetscape design, and the placement of grassy areas and recreational spaces, should be used throughout the project limits to encourage public use of these open spaces, sidewalks and streets. The connection between the project site and the surrounding neighborhood should be strong and inviting to maximize the opportunities provided by the project's location.

Several commenters cited concerns regarding the proposed building height (10-stories, 105 feet) for the Telford Street site. The proponent will seek variances from Boston Zoning to achieve the preferred Floor to Area Ratios (F.A.R.) and building height. The building will be located proximate to both the Charles River Reservation and Soldiers Field Road. I anticipate that the proponent will prepare both a qualitative wind study and appropriate shadow studies in accordance with the requests from the City of Boston Environment Department as part of the Article 80 review process. I encourage the proponent to collaborate with DCR and the BRA to identify opportunities to limit impact to nearby public spaces and parkways, while balancing the economic and affordable housing needs associated with the project.

Traffic and Transportation

MEPA does not have jurisdiction over traffic and transportation related issues associated with this project, as no state permits are required for impacts to state roadways. The project is expected to generate 3,099 unadjusted traffic trips, or 1,490 traffic trips when adjusted according to Boston Transportation Department (BTD) guidelines to take into account expected mode share, i.e., public transportation, bike and pedestrian trips. The project is expected to reduce the overall number of vehicle trips in the area due to the conversion from retail uses to predominately residential uses. The project site is located adjacent to existing MBTA bus routes, and will provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing infrastructure. Parking will be provided in both underground parking areas, with some on-street parking. The proponent has indicated that parking will be provided at ratios within BTD guidelines for affordable and market rate units. During the Article 80 process, the proponent should confirm that sufficient parking will be retained on the Brighton Mills site for the remaining retail uses.

The proponent should work with the City of Boston to determine intersection and pedestrian crossing improvements that may be necessary to safely and effectively convey pedestrian traffic from the Brighton Mills site to the Telford Street site and the Charles River Reservation. The project should provide clear and logical sidewalk connections to adjacent uses and facilitate pedestrian flows through and around the site from nearby neighborhoods, public transportation and retail destinations. Streetscape improvements should be consistent with existing or proposed sidewalks and streetscape amenities within the Western Avenue corridor and be designed specifically to enhance the pedestrian experience.

I encourage the proponent to provide landscape and hardscape improvements along Soldiers Field Road and Telford Street that will encourage pedestrian and bicycle activities and are consistent with the adjacent parks within the Charles River Reservation. Furthermore, to encourage and enhance pedestrian connections from the project site and nearby neighborhoods, the proponent should seek opportunities to provide a pedestrian oriented streetscape along Telford Street to the existing Telford Street pedestrian bridge. I acknowledge the present conditions of the Telford Street pedestrian bridge, owned and operated by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and its need for repairs and non-compliance with the current standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This bridge is an important connection from the Allston/Brighton neighborhoods to nearby public parks and the Charles River. While this connection enhances the overall Charlesview Redevelopment project, improvements to this structure should be collaborative effort. The proponent should continue discussions with DCR about potential improvements to this pedestrian bridge and what role, if any, the Charlesview Redevelopment project should have in future bridge improvements.

Stormwater/Groundwater

The existing project site is predominately covered by impervious surfaces. The preferred project alternative will introduce 3.3 acres of new landscaped green space, which will assist in the management of stormwater runoff water quality and quantity. According to the ENF, some stormwater will be infiltrated to recharge groundwater, while remaining stormwater flows will be directed to the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) storm drain system. The proponent should strive to retain stormwater on-site through the use of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) and low impact design (LID) techniques and to reduce overall discharges to the Charles River. To mitigate stormwater flows, the proponent has proposed the installation of catch basins with sediment sumps and oil/grease traps to remove Total Suspended Solids (TSS) prior to discharge. An Operations and Maintenance Plan will also be prepared for the stormwater system.

The proponent should prepare quantified stormwater runoff calculations as part of the Article 80 review process. The Charles River is impaired by high levels of phosphorus and will be subject to a proposed Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) established by the U.S. EPA, anticipated to be effective in 2008. The proponent should specifically address opportunities for reductions in phosphorous loading as part of the stormwater management calculations. The proponent will also be required to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan in accordance with both NPDES and City of Boston requirements.

Existing groundwater levels on-site are located approximately 12 feet below existing grades. The one-level underground parking garage will require excavation to depths approximately 13 to 14 feet below grade. The project may require coverage under the U.S. EPA draft Remediation General Permit (RGP) for Groundwater Remediation, Contaminated Construction Dewatering, and Miscellaneous Surface Water Discharges. The project site is served by separate sewer and storm drain systems and therefore, the discharge of groundwater or

stormwater to the MWRA sewer system from construction dewatering or site drainage is prohibited.

Wastewater

The project will generate an additional 87,800 gpd of wastewater, for a site total of 93,300 gpd. The project will require a Sewer Connection Permit from MassDEP and an 8(m) permit from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Wastewater generated by the project will discharge into the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) sewer system, which flows into the MWRA system and ultimately to the Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Facility. BWSC's sanitary sewer system serving the site carries wastewater flows to connections with MWRA's Charles River Valley Sewer (CRVS). The CRVS, and the nearby South Charles Relief Sewer (SCRS), both are served by combined sewer systems that during wet weather carry high quantities of stormwater runoff along with sanitary flows. The CRVS/SCRS system presently experiences periods of overflow and surcharging during large storm events.

MassDEP, in cooperation with MWRA and its member communities (including Boston), are implementing a coordinated approach to flow control in the MWRA regional wastewater system, particularly the removal of extraneous clean water (e.g., infiltration/inflow (I/I)) in the system. The proponent will be required to assist in the I/I reduction effort by offsetting additional wastewater flows from the project through the removal of I/I at a minimum ratio of 4:1. The proponent should work with the BWSC and consult with MassDEP to determine appropriate volumes and methodologies of I/I removal.

Water

The project will increase existing water usage by approximately 90,630 gpd, for a total project water demand of 96,630 gpd. The project will not require a water-related permit from MassDEP, but will require the appropriate permits for connection to the BWSC and MWRA water infrastructure. I encourage the proponent, as part of its sustainable design efforts, to explore opportunities for implementing water conservation measures in addition to those required by the State Plumbing Code. The proponent should design landscaping features that include native, drought-tolerant species that require minimal water use to maintain. I encourage the proponent to make water conservation technologies and education an integral role in the development of this LEED certifiable project.

Historic Resources

The comment letter submitted by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) indicates that the Telford Street site is located directly adjacent to Soldiers Field Road, which is listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places as part of the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston historic district. Additionally, the Telford Street site is located in close proximity to the Charles River Reservation, which according to the MHC, appears to be

eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Finally, the proposed project site is within proximity to multiple properties included in and near the St. Anthony's Area, which are included in the MHC's Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth.

The proponent should provide the MHC with plans, elevations, and architectural renderings of the proposed new construction to assist in the determination as to whether redevelopment of the Telford Street site could have an "adverse effect" on the historic setting and character of the Soldiers Field Road and Charles River Reservation. The proponent should also provide the visual, shadow, and wind studies performed in accordance with the BRA's Article 80 Large Project Review process to the MHC for their consideration.

Sustainable Design

The proponent has indicated in the ENF that they intend to construct LEED certifiable green buildings in accordance with Boston's Article 37 requirements for green building design. Sustainable design features include development near public transportation, use of recycled or rapidly renewable construction materials, and the use of low-emitting materials to improve indoor air quality. This project has an opportunity to be a model for future affordable housing project and I encourage the proponent to continue to explore additional ways to further reduce overall project energy consumption and further sustainable design goals.

Construction Period Impacts

The proponent should prepare an erosion and sedimentation control plan in accordance with the NPDES CGP and any conditions outlined by the City of Boston. The proponent should take measures to reduce potential demolition and construction period impacts (including but not limited to noise, vibration, dust, and traffic flow disruptions).

The project must comply with MassDEP's Solid Waste and Air Quality Control regulations during construction. The project includes demolition and reconstruction, which will generate a significant amount of construction and demolition (C&D) waste. I encourage the proponent to commit to the incorporation of C&D recycling activities as a sustainable measure for the project. The proponent should consult with MassDEP for appropriate standards and guidelines for managing construction waste.

I encourage the proponent to mitigate the construction period impacts of diesel emissions to the maximum extent feasible. This mitigation may be achieved through participation in the MassDEP Diesel Retrofit Program. The proponent should work with MassDEP staff to implement construction-period diesel emission mitigation, which could include the installation of after-engine emission controls such as oxidation catalysts or diesel particulate filters. I remind the proponent that off-road equipment engines must use low sulfur diesel (LSD) fuel as of July 2007, as required by a 2004 regulation issued by the U.S. EPA. I encourage the proponent to further mitigate construction period air quality impacts through the use of ultra low sulfur diesel (ULSD) fuel in off-road engines, which contains even lower sulfur content than LSD.

The proponent can resolve any remaining issues during the state permitting process. No further MEPA review is required.

April 11, 2008
Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments received:

- 03/11/2008 City of Boston Environment Department
- 03/18/2008 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection - NERO
- 03/21/2008 Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
- 03/25/2008 Massachusetts Historical Commission
- 03/25/2008 Boston Water and Sewer Commission
- 04/01/2008 Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
- 04/01/2008 Charles River Watershed Association
- 04/02/2008 WalkBoston

IAB/HSJ/hsj