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November 24, 2006

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

PROJECT NAME	: Tri-Town Landing
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY	: Lunenburg
PROJECT WATERSHED	: Nashua
EOEA NUMBER	: 13896
PROJECT PROPONENT	: Massachusetts Housing Opportunities Corporation
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR	: October 25, 2006

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L., c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the proponent proposes the construction of a 204-unit residential apartment housing development in eight separate buildings, on a previously developed 9.23-acre site occupied by the former Tri-Town drive-in movie theater and located off Youngs Road in Lunnenberg. Approximately 25 percent of the apartment units (51 units) will be affordable and available for purchase by persons who meet the HUD Affordability Requirement. The project includes the construction of 316 new surface parking spaces, a 3,500 square feet (sf) clubhouse with kitchen and restroom facilities, a 1,925 sf in-ground swimming pool, and related utilities and stormwater management infrastructure.

The project's estimated total water supply demand (21,000 gallons per day (gpd)) will be served by the Town of Lunenberg's municipal water supply system. The Tri-Town Landing project's wastewater flows (approximately 18,000 gpd) will be collected by the Town of Lunenberg's sewer collection system and conveyed to the City of Fitchburg's Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) for treatment and disposal. As currently designed, the project's site drive will be located on Youngs Road.

The proponent has proposed to locate an Access Road along the western boundary of the project site to enable the Town of Lunenburg to continue to access approximately 13.4 acres of town-owned land containing a 6.9-acre capped landfill and an active sand and gravel mining pit owned and used by the Town of Lunenburg's DPW. The proposed Access Road will also serve an emergency access drive for the project.

The project is undergoing review pursuant to Sections 11.03 (6)(b)(14), and (6)(b)(15) of the MEPA regulations, because the project will involve financial assistance from the Commonwealth and will result in the generation of 1,000 or more new vehicle trips (1,376 total) on roadways providing access to a single location and the construction of 150 or more (316 new spaces total) new parking spaces at a single location. I note that according to statements made by the proponent during the MEPA site visit held for this project, the proponent is requesting a zoning variance from the Town of Lunenburg's parking space By-law to increase the number of proposed surface parking spaces to 367 spaces in conformance with the By-law's requirements.

The project will require a Section 401 Water Quality Certificate and a Sewer Extension Permit from MassDEP. The project also require Orders of Conditions from the Lunenberg Conservation Commission (and hence Superseding Order(s) from DEP if any local Orders were appealed). The project must comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for stormwater discharges from a construction site of over one acre. If blasting will be required during project construction, the proponent will need to prepare a blast design plan pursuant to the Board of Fire Protection Regulations (577 CMR 13.09) for the construction of roads, houses and utilities within the project site. Blasting mixtures that include perchlorate have been identified as the source of contamination in many Massachusetts public water supplies and thus should be prohibited from use in the project watershed.

Because the proponent is seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the project, MEPA has broad-scope jurisdiction extending over all aspects of the project that may have significant environmental impacts.

Wetlands

The western portion of the project site abuts Baker Brook and contains extensive wetlands resource areas located primarily along the western and southern portions of the project site. Although the Tri-Town Landing project will not impact bordering vegetated wetlands (BVW) resources, significant portions of the proposed apartment project including the construction of internal roadways, residential and recreation buildings, and stormwater best management practices (BMPs) are located within wetlands resource buffer areas, and Rivers Act setback areas. As depicted in the project site plan, portions of three separate apartment buildings and the proposed club house building, internal roadway, surface parking spaces, and stormwater management infrastructure, are located within the 100-foot wetland buffer zone. The project will result in the alteration of approximately 2.5 acres of wetland buffer area.

In their comments, the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) has indicated that the project site was previously altered to direct seasonal stream flow from an intermittent stream located in the southeastern section of the project site via underground piping to the western boundary of the project site to Baker Brook. As depicted in the project plans provided in the ENF submittal, the proponent has proposed to connect the existing seasonal flow drain pipe to the proposed stormwater management system with eventual discharge to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) abutting Baker Brook. I strongly encourage the proponent to examine methods of avoiding or minimizing encroachment into buffer zones including, but not limited to, reducing the total number of residential units. The proponent should also consider placing deed restrictions on any residential properties and common open space areas that will be located within 600 feet of any vernal pools, or within the 100-foot wetlands buffer zone as a method for avoiding and/or minimizing future wetlands and water quality impacts from resident activities. As noted in the ENF, approximately 1.37 acres of the project site will be permanently protected as dedicated Open Space. I ask the proponent to consider placing a Conservation Restriction (CR) on those portions of the project site proposed to be maintained as Open Space to ensure for their permanent protection.

Water

According to the information provided in the ENF submittal, the Tri-Town Landing project will generate a potable water supply demand of 21,000 gpd. However, in their comments, MassDEP has indicated that the proposed 204 residential unit project is more likely to have a daily water potable water demand of approximately 44,880 gpd assuming an average of 2 bedrooms per apartment. The proponent will need to resolve any issues pertaining to the project's water supply demand during the permitting process. According to the proponent's statements made during the October 31, 2006 MEPA Site visit held for this project, the proponent has identified three alternative scenarios for serving the project's potable water supply needs including; 1) obtaining potable water from the City of Leominster through a connection to Leominster's existing water supply main located adjacent to the project site within the Youngs Road right-of-way, 2) petitioning the Lunenburg Water District to expand the District's existing coverage area and to extend an existing water main located within the Whalom Road right-of-way approximately 1,900 lf to the project site, or 3) obtaining potable water from the City of Fitchburg by extending an existing water main located within the Summer Street right-of-way approximately 670 lf to the project site. As described by Mass DEP, the Lunenburg Water District has exceeded its permitted and registered water withdrawal amounts under its Water Management Act permit by approximately 57,000 gpd. I note that a permit modification to the Lunenburg Water District's Water Management Act permit may be required to enable the project's potable water supply to be served by the Lunenburg Water District.

I anticipate that MassDEP's permitting process will require the proponent to demonstrate that a sufficient potable water supply capacity exists under the proponent's preferred water supply scenario to meet the project's potable water supply needs including requirements for fire flow, distribution pressure, and storage capacity.

The proponent will need to demonstrate to MassDEP that the final project design meets the Commonwealth's water conservation standards. I strongly encourage the proponent to incorporate water conservation and water use efficiency in the project design to comply with the March 1989 state plumbing code. Specifically, the proponent should commit to employing efficient residential water conservation technologies for the project including water saving devices, low flow toilets, and low flow appliances (dishwashers, washing machines). The proponent should also consider implementing an Irrigation Management Plan (IMP) to further reduce the project's irrigation water demand. An IMP could involve the use of amended soils and compost, the planting of native and drought-tolerant species of trees, shrubs, and turf grasses, an automated water efficient irrigation system, and a water management protocol for drought conditions. I ask that the proponent consult with MassDEP, and refer to the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission's *Lawn and Landscape Water Conservation, An Addendum to the Water Conservation Standards for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, October 2002*, during the final design of the proponent's IMP.

Wastewater

According to the information provided in the ENF, and statements made by the proponent during the MEPA site visit held for this project, the wastewater flow generated by the Tri-Town Landing project will be directed from the project site, via a proposed new on-site sewer pumping station, to the Town of Lunenberg's sewer collection system and subsequently conveyed to the City of Fitchburg's Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). The proponent has proposed to construct approximately 650 lf of new gravity sewer main extension within the Youngs Road right-of-way from the project site to the existing sewer min located within Summer Street and the Town of Fitchburg's Easterly WWTF. According to MassDEP, the proponent will need to successfully demonstrate the adequate downstream sewer capacity of the Summer Street sewers to convey the project's wastewater flows. The proponent must demonstrate to MassDEP that the Town of Lunenberg's sewer conveyance system and the City of Fitchburg's WWTF have the capacity to accommodate the additional wastewater flows from the project, and that these additional flows can be accommodated within the total volume of wastewater flow allocated to Lunenberg under the existing IMA.

Stormwater

The proponent's stormwater management plan incorporates both structural and non-structural best management practices (BMPs) consistent with MassDEP's Stormwater Management Act Guidelines and the Wetlands Protection Act performance standards. According to the information contained in the ENF submittal and provided by the proponent during the MEPA site visit, stormwater flows from within the project site will be collected through deep sump hooded catch basins located throughout the entire project site and piped to four subsurface infiltration chambers and subsequently discharged to BVW abutting Baker Brook and the project site's western boundary.

I encourage the proponent to evaluate sustainable design alternatives such as Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in site design and stormwater management plans. LID techniques incorporate stormwater best management practices (BMPs) and can reduce impacts to land and water resources by conserving natural systems and hydrologic functions. The primary tools of LID are landscaping features and naturally vegetated areas, which encourage detention, infiltration and filtration of stormwater on-site. Other tools include water conservation and use of pervious surfaces. Clustering of buildings is an example of how LID can preserve open space and minimize land disturbance. LID can also protect natural resources by incorporating wetlands, stream buffers and mature forests as project design features. For more information on LID, visit http://www.mass.gov/envir/lid/. Other LID resources include the national LID manual (Low Impact Development Design Strategies: An Integrated Design Approach), which can be found on the EPA website at: http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid/.

Traffic

Upon project completion the Tri-Town Landing project will generate approximately 1,380 new vehicle trips per day on local project area roadways. The proponent has conducted a traffic impact study and has committed to a set of traffic mitigation measures designed to enhance traffic flow and safety in the project area including the installation of STOP signs to be located at the project site drive/Youngs Road intersection, and the Weatherbee Street/Summer Street and Weatherbee Street/Youngs Road intersections. The existing STOP sign located at the Youngs Road/Whalom Road intersection should be relocated to increase visibility. I strongly encourage the proponent to commit to working closely with the Cities of Fitchburg and Leominster and the Town of Lunenburg to include the construction of sidewalks along the western side of Youngs Road from the project site to the Bakers Brook bridge, and from the Bakers Brook bridge to Summer Street, along Summer Street from Whalom Road to the City of Fitchburg line.

Transit

The proponent should consult with the Cities of Fitchburg and Leominster, the Town of Lunenburg and the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to identify opportunities for providing a public transit bus connection from activity nodes to the proposed project. I strongly encourage the proponent to work closely with the municipal official and the Lunenburg School District to locate school bus pull-offs, marked pedestrian crosswalks, and advance warning signs on the east-bound and west-bound sides of Youngs Road near the proposed project's site drive, to accommodate school-age children that may be expected to reside in the proposed apartment complex.

Construction Period

The proponent should analyze and mitigate construction-period impacts, including temporary impacts to wetlands, and the extent of any blasting and/or re-grading during construction.

The proponent should consult with MassDEP to ensure that the proponent will meet any performance standards associated with a federal NPDES permit for all project construction activities. As I have indicated above, if blasting will be required during project construction, the proponent must prepare a blast design plan. The proponent should work closely with the local Fire Departments, Conservation Commissions, and local area residents in the design and implementation of the blast plan.

Based on the information provided by the proponent and consultation with relevant public agencies, I conclude that no further MEPA review is required. The review of the ENF has served adequately to disclose potential impacts and mitigation, and to demonstrate that project impacts do not warrant the preparation of an EIR. The proponent can resolve any remaining issues in the permitting process.

November 24, 2006
Date

Robert W. Golledge, Jr./ Secretary

Comments received:

11/17/06	Department of Environmental Protection - CERO
11/03/06	Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA)
11/14/06	Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

RWG/NCZ/ncz
EOEA #13896