

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals, Town of Sherborn, MA

FROM: The Fields at Sherborn LLC / Ben Stevens, Manager (Applicant)

RE: BETA Group Inc. (BETA) Peer Review Comments dated August 10, 2015

DATE: August 12, 2015

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*RE: "Density, Unit Size and Bedroom Count"*

“....and as many as 13 units will likely have their rear or side yard restricted in size due to the 50’ no alteration zone”

The Applicant has not filed under Sherborn’s local wetlands by-law but only under the state Wetlands Protection Act where no similar restriction exists. Furthermore, the Applicant has agreed to a revegetated/restricted area in the rear yards of any units located close to wetlands. These yards will all be limited to a depth of no more than 25 feet and wetland transition edge plantings will be installed to provide additional protection. In addition, 3 foot high barriers will be installed to control access and intrusion into wetland areas by individuals and domesticated animals along with signage identifying all wetland protection areas. The Applicant has found in its three last projects of similar size (100 units total) in neighboring towns with similar demographics to those in Sherborn that limiting access to rear yards has not resulted in any decrease in property value or desire to own these units. In fact, in some sense it helps secure privacy for the residents and therefore enhances the value of the units.

*RE: "Bedroom Counts"*

BETA’s unit/ bedroom chart makes the assumption that there could be up to 129 bedrooms vs the 84 bedroom count upon which the proposed septic design has been based.

BETA’s review assumes that all rooms other than kitchen and living rooms will be bedrooms. This assumption is unrealistic and is inconsistent with real conditions. As mentioned, the Development Team has built and sold over 100 similar units in three locations: all with Title 5 septic systems and a mixture of 2 and 3 bedroom units. Under Title 5, a 2 bedroom septic design assumes up to 4 people, a 3 bedroom assumes up to 6 people. Not one of the 100 units that we have built has more than 4 people living in the unit. Because of the buyer profile of these units, and the pricing, the typical household is an older couple, a single individual, or a young family with one child or sometimes 2 children. Also, with the nature of a large shared septic system, there will be combinations of household types; for example, for every 4 people in one unit, there will normally be a single resident household balancing out the total numbers. Additionally, the proposed shared septic system will have an additional nitrogen secondary treatment system and contracted service, pumping and testing. The proposed septic system is likely to be better performing and maintained than a typical home system.

In any case and in accordance with Title 5 requirements, the Applicant has no issue with placing a deed restriction which would restrict the number of bedrooms in each unit.

*RE: Site Layout and Circulation*

The Development Team will provide the baseline intersection data, the abutting parcels and the turning radius templates for further review

The Development Team feels that an internal sidewalk is unnecessary and may be hazardous given the unavoidable conflicts with the unit driveways. Having sidewalks would also require locating units farther towards the property edge as we would need to maintain an adequate depth for the driveways in addition to having an ADA-compliant sidewalk. We would agree to add a sidewalk along the edge of the roadway from Washington Street to near the drive of Unit 36. We would also build a school bus stop area if requested. The Applicant would also be willing to grant a sidewalk easement or grading easement along Washington Street for the future potential of installing a sidewalk if the Town decided in the future to install sidewalks along Washington Street.

*RE: Parking*

The Development Team will add the snow storage areas and the 2 parking spaces if requested.

*RE: Site Grading and Earthwork*

No fill is anticipated other than what will be needed structurally for the houses, septic system and the roadway. A total quantity of proposed fill will be provided to BETA for review.

*RE: Landscaping*

The Applicant has no issues with providing landscape plans detailing screening and/or fencing at direct abutter locations and will also provide detailed plans for any proposed retaining walls. The Applicant has no objection to native field grasses for the septic field areas as well as some of the buffer areas where such plantings are determined to be appropriate. The Development Team is working with an experienced landscape architect and wetland scientist to select the best native species to use to enhance and protect buffer areas. These plans will be presented to the Conservation Commission, ZBA and BETA.

The Development Team has determined that the overall density and building/site layout works appropriately for this type of development and feels that The Fields at Sherborn will be a desirable community to live in. The building configurations and setbacks from one another are similar to Development Team's other projects and were well received at these other comparable locations. This is a 40B development, not an open space development; it is natural for it to be higher density than typically seen in town but it is not out of character for the area, especially given the site's proximity to the Holliston commercial area.

*RE: Utilities*

A final utility plan will be provided.