



**JOHN M. CORCORAN
AND COMPANY**

Creating Communities Since 1951

January 13, 2014

Gregory Watson
MassHousing
One Beacon Street, 28th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

RE: The Commons at Weiss Farm

Dear Mr. Watson:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us in December. Based on feedback that we have received from the Town of Stoneham and from MassHousing, we have revisited many aspects of our proposal included in the October 2, 2013 Project Eligibility Application for The Commons at Weiss Farm. As a result of this process we are proposing a number of changes to the site layout, design and architecture of the project. These changes create additional usable open space in the center of the site, reduce the visual impact of the community and aid in integrating the community into the surrounding neighborhood. Below is a summary of these changes and what we see as their benefits:

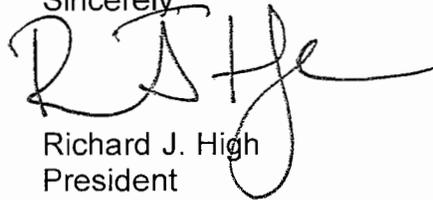
Change	Benefit
Addition of five 2-3 story townhouse buildings, containing a total of 15 units, located at the entrance to the community and along the southern property line	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Incorporate smaller structures into the project design to further integrate project into neighborhood2) Aid in screening site lines from Franklin Street to larger residential buildings3) Create a more defined entry roadway
Reorientation of larger buildings	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Creates central usable open green space2) Improves views from homes as they now look down on new green space or look out on existing vegetation buffer3) Improves pedestrian sidewalk network
Reduction in length of buildings	The two front buildings are now ~220' long, a reduction of greater than 25%. The rear building is a "u-shaped" building, reducing the visual scale of the building.
Inclusion of parking within larger building	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Reduces amount of impervious area on site2) Frees up space to create central open space

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Please note that the total unit count and overall unit mix has not changed, and the revised site plan still includes no work within 25' of any wetlands.

Enclosed please find a revised site plan as well as two aerial renderings of the proposed project. We appreciate the feedback that we have received to date. We believe that this process has produced a better project and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this exciting community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. J. High', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard J. High
President

RJH:vao
Enclosures

Cc: Mr. Robert Sweeney, Chairman, Stoneham Board of Selectmen

The proposed project, The Commons at Weiss Farm (“The Commons”), is located at 170 Franklin Street in Stoneham. Access to The Commons is proposed through a double wide entry from Franklin Street, just west of the existing Weiss Farm entrance. The entrance area will be heavily landscaped and bordered by townhouse buildings on either side. The two story townhouse buildings will face Franklin Street complementing the scale of the adjacent neighborhood fabric. The main entrance invites residents and visitors down a gently sloped access drive into the community, which is approximately 8’ below the elevation of Franklin Street. A series of three story townhouses create a well defined streetscape edge while also allowing for a densely planted buffer from Franklin Street. Moving further north into the site, three 5-story multifamily buildings are organized around a central open green space, which is also proposed to include the clubhouse building and exterior amenities including a pool area, meandering paths, bbq areas, patios and open lawn areas for active recreation. Native shade and ornamental trees will accentuate the architecture, provide year round interest, and define the open space as attractive and useable. The two larger apartment buildings located closest to Franklin Street have been oriented to minimize their visual impact to Franklin Street. The largest “u-shaped” multifamily residential building will sit at the rear of the site and will house ground level garage parking in addition to the residences within the building. The first level will be thoughtfully treated with attractive and functionally appealing architectural accents to soften the garage and integrate with the overall site character.

Vehicular and emergency access, along with parking, is provided around the perimeter of the site, with a looped circulation system. The majority of parking is provided through surface parking, with additional parking located within the townhouse buildings, in detached garages interspersed throughout the site, and within the larger “u-shaped” apartment building at the northern end of the site. The project includes a network of pedestrian friendly sidewalks and a nature trail around the exterior of the built area connecting a series of larger open spaces within the site to promote an active lifestyle.

The apartments will be built on land significantly lower in elevation to the majority of the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Therefore, many of the neighboring homes will sit at a higher elevation than the apartment buildings. There is also an existing wide, lush, vegetative buffer that will provide additional visual screening from these neighboring homes. These buffers range from 100’ to 400’ wide. Building setbacks from adjacent homes range from 300’ to 700’, except at the Weiss family properties where a dense buffer with a mix of native vegetation is proposed

The Clubhouse has been oriented and designed to be welcoming and accessible from both the main access drive and all residences within the community. The fitness area and lounge will be carefully sited for convenient use by residents, overlooking a pool and recreation area. An attractive exterior design of the Clubhouse combined with a complementary landscape design and state-of-the-art interior design will encourage the residents to gather in a central location reinforcing a sense of community while also

reinforcing the pedestrian connections throughout the site. Additionally, bio-infiltration swales will be integrated into landscape islands within large parking fields and grass strips along parking lot edges where practical.

The residential buildings are designed with the suburban feel of the Town of Stoneham in mind. The architecture of each residential building is articulated with changes in the exterior wall plane, a mix of materials, bays, and projecting and recessed balconies to reduce the mass and scale of the larger buildings. The exterior material palette includes stone at the first floor, and fiber-cement lap-siding and paneling at the upper floors to introduce different textures and rhythms to the residential elevations, topped by a sloped, asphalt-shingled roof with multiple gables.

Within each of the larger buildings the typical floor plan provides access to homes off of a central double-loaded corridor with egress stairs at each end and an elevator lobby in the center. Typical studio, one, two, and three bedroom homes are designed with open kitchen/living areas and comfortable bedroom and bathrooms with large walk-in closets. Large windows provide abundant natural light at each home. Ground level patios with views to open spaces will be integrated into the architectural design where feasible. The townhouse buildings will each contain three 3-bedroom homes. They will have a one-car garage and master bedroom/bathroom on the ground level, a kitchen and living area on the 2nd floor and two additional bedrooms with bathrooms on the third floor.

The Commons will seek a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification from the United States Green Building Council. In addition to maintaining approximately 80% of the site as permeable, and incorporating high quality low VOC finishes and individual environmental control, each unit will contain modern energy efficient appliances, heating and cooling, in-unit laundry, and Energy Star lighting fixtures to add to an overall sense of luxury and quality at The Commons.