

SHL spoke via telephone with Alexandra Ananth from the Newton Planning Department on Wednesday, April 1.

Alexandra reported to me about the Monday, March 30 DRT meeting of Planning with Michael Argiros, owner of the St. Philip Neri property, his attorney, Steve Buchbinder, a “young man,” Steven Allen (an architect from PCA –different from an earlier architect, Mr. Chilinski, of the same firm, from an earlier meeting), and the Englers (40B Consultants who also run the Lottery for Affordable Housing).

Although they did discuss a Special Permit, the developer is going to pursue a 40B. Planning said that they suggested to the developer that, even though the 1-1/2% satisfaction level for 40B’s in Newton is still in litigation, the project must be able to stand on its own.

Alexandra said that the developer said they would carry out a traffic study, but to Planning’s knowledge, they have not yet engaged anyone.

As to the timing of the project: The developer said that the Site Eligibility letter will be filed in April.

They are planning 48 units, with 3 townhouse structures that total 12 units with 3 bedrooms apiece, plus 36 studio, one and two bedroom units in a residential building.

They presented conceptual elevations, better than pen and ink drawings, but showing sq. foot estimates and parking places, but no height and no full zoning analysis. Not an engineered site plan.

I asked what Planning thought of the presentation. Alexandra said that she felt the plan was a lot more contextual, with the tallest part of the residential building being over the center, appearing 2-3 stories from Beacon Street, with parking under the building.

I asked where the entry and exit to the site were located. The plan shows one driveway, located on the right side of the property, when viewing from Karen Road, close to where Montclair and Karen Roads meet.

Planning suggested that:

1. They reduce the height of the townhouse units, which are now at 47 feet.
2. They add a lot more evergreen landscaping.

Planning made no other suggestions at this meeting.

Sallee Lipshutz, President  
Waban Area Council