

To: Mayor Jen White

From: Frank Fish, FAICP, Principal, Susan Favate, AICP, PP, Principal

Subject: Review of TZ Vista Submission – former Superfund Property, Gedney Street

Date: September 11, 2015

---

We have reviewed the materials submitted by Helmer Cronin Construction in support of its petition to amend the text of the Waterfront (WF) zoning district to facilitate the TZ Vista project. We have also reviewed the memo from the Village's Planning Board dated July 9, 2015, and the comments from the Rockland County Department of Planning dated August 19, 2015, and, as you know, visited the site on September 4.

In general, we concur with the approach taken by the Village's Planning Board (with which the County Department of Planning also concurs). We have sought to limit our review to a planning perspective, deferring to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) on issues of design (e.g., building materials). We offer the following comments to assist the Board of Trustees in its deliberation on the zoning petition:

#### **Public Waterfront Access**

The WF district requires a setback of 50 feet from the Hudson River. The TZ Vista appears to provide this distance, but the proposed design of the public walkway within that setback could be improved to better provide for meaningful access to the riverfront. As currently designed, much of the area along the water has a private feel because of the configuration of the individual yards and walkways associated with the residential units. To achieve a more truly public feel, the walkway should be a minimum of 30 feet.

#### **Active Frontages and Streetscape**

The proposed development provides the opportunity to improve upon the less-than-optimal public access currently offered via the foot of Main Street/River Street at the Clermont Condominium complex. Thus, in addition to a wider public walkway as discussed above, the pathways leading to the riverfront along the north and south edges of the complex need to be activated to be more inviting to the general public. This could be achieved by reconfiguring the residential units so that they "wrap" along the northern and southern building facades, providing more than a blank wall for pedestrians to pass as they walk to the waterfront.

Another important aspect of ensuring that the public waterfront access is truly public is providing public parking that is well-marked and fully accessible to members of the public. On-street parking along Gedney Street should also be provided, both to provide parking options for waterfront visitors and to activate the streetscape.

#### **Building Height**

In our recent site visit, we noted that the existing residential buildings in the West Shore Towers and Rivercrest complexes range in height from 6-7 stories. However, these buildings are sloped

downward from the TZ Vista site, creating an approximately 20-foot slope differential. The Planning Board recommended a cap in the TZ Vista development to limit its height to that of these existing buildings. We believe the Board's intent was to ensure that the TZ Vista height and the height of the residential buildings to the north are consistent with each other, taking into account the 20-foot slope difference. In effect, we recommend that this should reduce the potential height of the TZ Vista development by one story, to five stories or 52 feet. For a point of reference, this height would be comparable to the maximum height of buildings in the Hudson Harbor development on the Tarrytown waterfront.

#### **FAR**

Concurrent with the recommended reduction in building height to ensure consistency with existing residential buildings in the vicinity, we suggest that the maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR) in the WF district be reduced to 1.5 from the applicant's requested 1.75. Without such a decrease in FAR, the applicant would be encouraged to maximize FAR by adding bulk to a lower building, with resulting negative impacts on viewsheds. We note the Planning Board's finding that an FAR of 1.5 is consistent with many comparable residential developments, including Harbor Square in Ossining, Riverside in Haverstraw and the adjacent residential properties along Gedney to the north.

C: Walter Sevastian, Village Attorney  
Bob Galvin, Village Planner