

December 21, 2006

Shannon Purcell
Purcell Communities
21 School Street
Lebanon, NH 03766

Re: Upper Valley Housing Coalition Endorsement of Nature Walk Project

Dear Shannon,

An Upper Valley Housing Coalition Design Review Team consisting of Steve Marion (Chair), Don Derrick, and Tom Truman has reviewed the Application for Support for the construction of 32 units of housing at the proposed Nature Walk project on Old Pinetree Cemetery Road in Lebanon. Based on the materials presented, the presentations of Kevin and Shannon Purcell and further discussions, the Committee has concluded that the **Nature Walk project is worthy of the Coalition's highest rating and is "Highly Consistent" with the Coalition's Project Endorsement Guidelines.** A summary of the Findings of the Design Review Team is as follows:

Background

As outlined to the Design Review Team, the Nature Walk proposal is to construct 34 two bedroom condominium units in a single three story building on a 2.5 acre lot on Old Pinetree Road in Lebanon. The apartments will be approximately 1000 square feet, and have one bathroom. There will be a storage area for each apartment in the basement. The site is served by public water and sewer. The number of units meets the maximum density allowed at the site. The building will be of modular construction and designed to be as energy efficient as economically feasible. Each apartment will be heated by individual propane heaters, while there will be central air conditioning for the building. There is no covered parking, and no wetlands will be disturbed by the project. A trail network is accessible from the site, and there is a recreation area planned.

The site is approximately ½ mile from public transportation, and close to downtown Lebanon and major employers, such as Alice Peck Day Hospital and Timken Aerospace. The units will be priced between \$159,000 and \$180,000. The condominium fee has not yet been determined. The developer is interested in exploring options to place long term affordability covenants on a portion of the units, and will look into ways to accomplish this goal.

Affordability

The Project Endorsement Guidelines provide that projects qualify for a “highly consistent” rating if 10% of units are to be priced between \$160,000 and \$170,000. The project, as proposed, aims to price units between \$159,000 and \$180,000. Further, the developer has shown interest in working with Twin Pines Housing Trust to ensure that a significant number of units will be permanently affordable. The Design Review Team was impressed by the developer’s willingness to consider permanent affordability, and strongly encourages the developer to pursue this option. The project as proposed will include units within the Coalition’s affordability guidelines; the Nature Walk project is rated “highly consistent” with the affordability guidelines.

Site Selection

The site is located on public sewer, and is close to the employment centers of the Upper Valley. While there is no public transportation to the site, the site is a short drive to Timken Aerospace, Alice Peck Day Hospital and other Lebanon employers. There are no wetlands on the site, and no other significant environmental impacts. The Design Review Team therefore concludes that the Nature Walk project is highly consistent with the Project Endorsement Guidelines.

Site Use

As described, the Nature Walk project will provide 34 units of modestly sized housing at within or near the Coalition’s target pricing for workforce housing. Preserving some of these units as permanently affordable is under discussion. As proposed, the Nature Walk project is rated highly consistent with the site use criteria of the Project Endorsement Guidelines.

Project Design

The project will consist of one building of 34 units, which is the maximum density allowed at the site and in line with the Project Endorsement Guidelines’ target of 10-20 units per acre for multi-family housing. At 954 square feet per unit, the unit size falls within the Guidelines’ goal of 800-1000 square feet for a two bedroom unit. Although the site is small, an area has been set aside for project amenities, to be determined by the condominium association. The units will have individually controlled heating, and the building will also have air conditioning. Solar options were explored but were not found to be economically feasible at this time. Energy efficiency has been incorporated into the design. The project design is therefore highly consistent with the Endorsement Guidelines.

Conclusion

The Nature Walk project, as proposed, will provide much needed moderately priced workforce housing, on public sewer and near local employment centers. The project will provide ownership condominium units in a price range where very few options currently exist. The Coalition is also encouraged by the developer's willingness to explore options to permanently preserve the affordability of a number of the units. Based on these conclusions, the Design Review Team determined that the Nature Walk proposal is highly consistent with all aspects of the Upper Valley Housing Coalition's Project Endorsement Guidelines.

Sincerely,

Anne Duncan Cooley
Executive Director
Upper Valley Housing Coalition

cc: Kevin Purcell