
MEMORANDUM

TO: LEBANON PLANNING BOARD
FROM: THE UPPER VALLEY HOUSING COALITION REVIEW TEAM
SUBJECT: SLEEPER VILLAGE APPLICATION FOR SUPPORT
DATE: 8/8/2003
CC: ALEX ISKANDAR, DAN NASH

**FINDINGS OF COALITION REVIEW TEAM REGARDING
SLEEPER VILLAGE**

REVIEW TEAM

Len Cadwallader (acting chair), Bill Dietrich, Greg Kennedy, Dick Jennings, Kathleen Kanz, Steve Marion, Stu Close, Gretchen Rittenhouse, and Dan French (staff).

FINDINGS

The Upper Valley Housing Coalition's Review Team met with the representatives of the proposed Sleeper Village neighborhood on June 11, 2003 to hear an application for support from the Housing Coalition. The Review Team issued an initial memo of findings outlining areas where Sleeper Village is consistent with our Project Endorsement Guidelines and also made some suggestions regarding the project. In reviewing the application as submitted to the City, we were pleased to see some of those ideas incorporated into the plans and others still being pursued. We feel this is now an even stronger project.

Therefore, we find Sleeper Village to be Highly Consistent with the Housing Coalition's Project Endorsement Guidelines in all areas except for the affordability section, which we find as being Consistent. Given the economics of building housing in the Upper Valley, we believe the applicant has made every attempt to include as many options below \$175,000 as possible. We are further encouraged by initiatives being taken by the applicant to increase the availability and range of lower priced housing options.

The strengths of this proposal are considerable. This is a model of classic New England neighborhood design. There is a wide diversity of housing types and price ranges interspersed throughout the property, and the sample rendering for the proposed style of architecture fits seamlessly into our region. We are excited to see the design feature of the garages being behind the houses, thus promoting a friendlier and more human environment. This is also a key element of New England design, which is one of the trademarks of the neighborhoods people cite as favorites in Lebanon and the Upper Valley. Because it puts the front of a house, where a porch is usually located, as the prominent feature that is viewed from the road or sidewalk, it makes the neighborhood feel much more welcoming. It is the details such as these that will make Sleeper Village an asset to the City.

We would also like to support the geographic location of this project. Land is the scarcest commodity in our region, and we believe this level of housing on Old Pine Tree is appropriate. This

property is centrally located between the major points in the City of Lebanon for both shopping and employment. The dense development of Sleeper Village is strongly supported by the Housing Coalition. This keeps the housing that is so desperately needed concentrated and does not force the building of scattered larger lot housing developments that promote sprawl. The results of development patterns over the last few decades have been to push houses into isolation on large lots, which at the same time cost the City more to service. Through a wholly appropriate use of the PUD, this is an anti-sprawl housing development that will mean we will not need to use as much of our landscape to build the housing on which our economy and quality of life depend.

Given the scenic road designation of Old Pine Tree, we feel strongly that the applicant has successfully designed a neighborhood that is in keeping with the landscape and architecture of the road. What few buildings that will be visible from Old Pine Tree are planned to match the existing farm buildings, which we do not think will impact the goals of naming Old Pine Tree a scenic road.

Regarding traffic issues, the on-site design appears very well thought-out, and the interior sidewalk separated from the road by a small median is a welcome addition. For off-site travel, vehicular or pedestrian, a bridge across the Mascoma to Mechanic Street would certainly be an asset, and one we would support, but we understand this is a costly option at this juncture. We are also hopeful that it can be arranged for Advance Transit to add a stop for Sleeper Village and possibly to set aside space for a bus stop shelter in the plans. The applicant has informed us he is proceeding with discussions with Advance Transit, which we wholly support.

One important section of our Guidelines looks at environmental impacts. While we do not pretend to address this issue to the degree that the existing regulatory process does, we feel that the applicant has not only taken the path of least impact, but that ample mitigation has been proposed and he is fully aware of other issues that may need to be addressed. Further, through the PUD, the developer has been able to gain enough units to warrant incurring the costs of hooking up to municipal water and sewer. This is a much friendlier environmental approach than individual septic systems and wells scattered throughout the property, which in turn forces the house lots to be much larger and use more land.

The proposed community facilities satisfy our Guidelines. We support an idea for using the existing house or barn as a community center, and would strongly endorse the addition of a day care center. For most working families, this is a major concern. The Review Team likes the trail system concept and sees great possibilities for how it could be linked into other trail networks the City is exploring. Access to the Mascoma River will also be an asset. We feel that a project of this size needs more than just a trail system for the homeowners and we were glad to see in the Preliminary Subdivision Application that proposed playground and picnic areas will be submitted during Final Subdivision.

Overall, the finding of Highly Consistent incorporates the larger goals for this proposal and their uniformity, as presented, with the Project Endorsement Guidelines of the Housing Coalition. This housing initiative incorporates mixed-income ownership at a range that is not readily available on the market today. It provides dense housing close to large job centers that is in keeping with its surroundings and should allow for multi-modal means of transit (biking, mass transit, etc...). It can be served by municipal infrastructure and it implements many of the principals of Smart Growth planning and design.

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: PLANNING BOARDS & COMMISSIONS, DEVELOPERS, MEDIA
FROM: THE UPPER VALLEY HOUSING COALITION
SUBJECT: INTENT OF DOCUMENTS AND MEMORANDA FROM THE UPPER VALLEY
HOUSING COALITION
DATE: 8/8/2003

USE AND PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES AND THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

The Guidelines are:

- a document created by a coalition representing a broad variety of interests from throughout the Upper Valley.
- designed as a regional guide for future housing initiatives and improvements in land use regulation.
- a guide and a lens through which the Coalition will view and make findings about new housing proposals.
- designed to help raise the bar for new housing initiatives and land use regulations.

They are not:

- meant to suggest superceding existing land use regulations.
- designed to serve as a welcome mat for any and all housing proposals.

The Guidelines are to be used:

- to direct the Coalition Review Team in evaluating housing initiatives.
- as a guide for developers reflecting the view from a broad collection of Upper Valley interests as to what type of housing would be most welcome and most likely to be approved.
- as a resource for municipalities as they continue to re-examine their land use regulations.

A statement from the Coalition Review Team:

- that finds a housing proposal to be consistent or highly consistent is not meant to suggest only a cursory review is needed by the appropriate municipal reviewing boards.
- is an objective conclusion based on an established set of criteria (the Project Endorsement Guidelines) that is meant to help provide supplementary information and data to allow a more informed and accurate discussion of the project.