



## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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October 31, 2019

7:30 pm

Juliani Meeting Room

Town Hall

Zoning Board of Appeals Members Present: J. Randolph Becker  
Richard L. Seegel  
David G. Sheffield

ZBA 2019-82, JOHN HANCOCK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY (U.S.A), a MICHIGAN COMPANY,  
40 WILLIAM STREET

Present at the public hearing were David Hall, Hanover Company, Peter Mr. Tamm, Esq., Goulston & Storrs, Doug Carr, Architect, Cube3, standing in tonight for Brian O'Connor, who is the lead architect, George Ryan, Civil Engineer, Stantec, and Jeffrey Dirk, Traffic Consultant, Vanasse and Associates. He said that Lauren Hillebrand has been added to the team to consult on green building resiliency and sustainability measures for the project. He asked that the green building discussion be deferred until the next hearing.

Mr. Hall said that Hanover Wellesley is a 350 residential unit, mixed use project at Wellesley Office Park. He thanked town departments, officials, boards and commissions for their collaborative approach to the project. He said that he gave a brief overview summary of the project in August.

Mr. Becker said that some of the documents are from John Hancock Life Insurance, some are from Hanover Company and some are from John Hancock Real Estate. Mr. Hall said that the owner of the property is John Hancock Life Insurance Company, which is owned by Manulife of Toronto. He said that the Hanover Company is a national developer of multifamily properties which are available for viewing on their website.

Mr. Hall said that Mr. Tamm will discuss the regulatory framework behind the project, Mr. Carr will discuss the design, Mr. Ryan will discuss utilities and Mr. Dirk will discuss traffic and circulation.

Mr. Hall said that Wellesley Office Park is an eight building 650,000 square foot office campus that was built between 1967 and 1981. He said that it is a very successful office park that John Hancock plans to revitalize and bring in mixed use. He said that the property is adjacent to the Charles River and DCR land, which they can use as amenity space for the residents and office workers. He said that the property is somewhat of an island, so there should be no discernible impacts to any Wellesley neighborhoods. He said that the property is a little tricky to get to. He said that the location of the project at 40 William Street was selected because it will replace a building where the tenant was most amenable to moving quickly.

Mr. Tamm said that the project has been in the works for over a year, during which time it was reviewed, improved and enhanced. He said that a new overlay district was adopted. He said that the bylaw regulating the new district is new to them and they want to make sure that the filing is complete and meets the standards. He said that they met with the Design Review Board (DRB) last night and the Board should be receiving a comment letter from them.

Mr. Tamm said that this is a standard as of right Site Plan Approval (SPA) under Section 14J of the Zoning Bylaw. He said that the Applicant needs to demonstrate to the Board that all extraordinary adverse potential impacts have been adequately mitigated. He said that the project benefited from considerable review by the town. He said that a requirement was to get approval by DHCD. He said that they provided certification that all sewer, water, and electrical demands have been met or may be upgraded and will not be overburdened by this project. He said that additional residential development could be built in the district.

Mr. Tamm said that they entered into a development agreement with the Board of Selectmen (BOS). He said that the Applicant has an obligation to make certain infrastructure upgrades that are set forth in the development agreement. He said that they will run new water and sewer lines under Route 95 to the Wellesley Gateway project. He said that they will be responsible for a new pump station upgrade. He said that there will be improvements on William Street and some planning for the future. He said that they will submit 25 percent design drawings to further improve traffic infrastructure in the area. He said that smaller commitments were made for communications equipment for public safety. He said that everything was reviewed in the context of overall impacts to the town.

Mr. Becker said that one of the features of the 25 percent design submission for traffic infrastructure is that it does not have to be done until the Certificate of Occupancy (CO). He asked what needs to be included in the SPA with respect to those plans. Mr. Tamm said that the 25 percent design drawings are not associated with the impacts of this project. He said that they are important to address for any future development. He said that they will not build a slip ramp for this project but it was important to show the town that they are going in the right direction because the overlay district could include new hotels, new office space, additional residential and multifamily space. He said that this project involves replacement of an existing office building with a multifamily building, for which the traffic impacts are modest.

Mr. Tamm said that development agreement discussions included energy efficiency, sustainability and resiliency. He said that Ms. Hillebrand will be present at the next public hearing to further discuss those issues.

Mr. Tamm said that there will be site environmental enhancements. He said that the Applicant is currently before the Wetlands Protection Committee (WPC) for a Notice of Intent (NOI). He said that they expect to have the process concluded with a permit this month. He said that the project meets State stormwater standards and impacts within the flood plain are being adequately addressed.

Mr. Carr said that Cube3 built over 10,000 units similar to this project over the last 16 years. He said that this is their sixth building with the Hanover Company. He said that they worked to comply with the design guidelines that Wellesley developed over the last year, which affected the design of the site, the street design, the building architecture and the signage. He said that 40 William Street is an existing office building with parking lots on either side. He said that the new structure will be 350 units, 11 percent studios, 49 percent one bedrooms, 33 percent two bedrooms and 7 percent three bedrooms. He said that 25 percent of the units will be affordable, proportional to those percentages.

Mr. Carr said that the 425,238 square feet project will include 450 square feet of amenity area and 4,000 square feet of retail. He said that the building height will be 68 feet one inch. He said that it will be five stories of wood frame and noncombustible construction six stories. The open parking garage to the right will have 591 parking spaces.

Mr. Carr said that a big part of the project was to improve connectivity of the site to the surrounding community to improve walkability, create usable outdoor space and be more pedestrian focused rather than car focused. He displayed diagrams of vehicular circulation around the building and along William Street. He displayed the fire lane and the dog run. He said that pedestrians can circulate around the project. He displayed bike circulation and storage. He said that they set the standards high to separate pedestrians and bikes from vehicular traffic. He displayed connection to current and future potential trails within the office park and beyond it to the larger community. He said that the Hanover Company is working with DCR to improve the connectivity. He discussed potential kayak storage to enhance the recreational component of the project. He said that they heard from the DRB about creating outdoor seating, a continuous green buffer between pedestrian and vehicles, locating retail at a prominent corner, amenity space and entrance space with a lot of glass. He said that the arrival plaza will be a major feature of the building with retail on one side and the leasing office and the entrance on the other side. He said that the public space will have outdoor seating and raised planters.

Mr. Becker asked how the retail space and the arrival plaza will work. Mr. Hall said that they will put up signage for future resident parking at the front. He said that there will be more parking for retail on the left side. He said that retail will be locally oriented, not a destination, for use by office workers and residents.

Mr. Carr discussed the interior courtyard. He said that it will be a lush green space with a mix of trees, bushes, raised planters and hardscape. He displayed proposed exterior lighting that will be LED and dark sky compliant. He described a continuous landscape buffer around the building. He said that they worked with the steep grade change in the building design. He said that they tried to save healthy trees along the street.

Mr. Seegel asked if widening William Street had been considered. He said that there may be guest parking on William Street at night. Mr. Dirk said that they are creating a parking lane. He said that there will be two moving lanes of traffic. He said that they will cut into the curb to create a separate parking lane outside of the traveled way.

Mr. Carr discussed the architecture of the building. He said that they got feedback from DRB to break up the building with various masses, textures and iterations so that it is not one big wall that is broken up into smaller pieces. He said that they will use 10 different materials, including a mix of white panels and fiber cement with strong corner pieces at the top. He said that it is broken up into multiple volumes with the top floor stepped back from the corner. He said that the building goes from five stories in the corner to six stories as you approach the entrance courtyard, which gives depth to the design. He said that there will be deep recessed balconies at the corners where the larger units will be located. He said that there will be some Juliet balconies scattered around and some architectural panels. He said that they worked to meet the design guidelines that were set by the town. He said that the rear of the building facing Route 128 will use the same palette of materials as the front, setback at the top, color and texture. He said that they will discuss signage opportunities there later. He said that the parking garage will have a different language to it but will have a lot of features to keep it aesthetically pleasing. He said that building materials will be durable and low maintenance.

Mr. Sheffield asked about the change in plane for the panels on the upper elevation. Mr. Carr described an inset design of metal panels.

Mr. Carr discussed height and massing. He said that the mechanicals will be located in the middle of the roof and will not be visible.

Mr. Carr discussed residential amenities.

Mr. Carr discussed signage at the arrival plaza and on the building facing the highway. He said that signage lighting will be halo. Mr. Tamm said that the signs will meet the specific standards under the bylaw for the overlay district. He said that the Applicant is under obligation to submit a comprehensive signage package that contemplates existing and any future signage.

Mr. Seegel asked if any analysis of the parking needed for Building 20 had been done. Mr. Hall said that it had been and they can provide the data. He said that there will be 591 garage spaces shared with office space, for 525 spaces or 1.5 spaces per unit. He said that during peak demand hours there will be sufficient parking. Mr. Becker said that because this is the largest building reviewed by ZBA, it is important to see how the real world applies to the numbers in the ULI and ITE data for traffic generation and parking demand.

Mr. Sheffield asked for further description of the amenity space. Mr. Hall said that they anticipate lunch and coffee service and a small convenience store so that residents do not have to leave the park. He discussed amenities for a fitness center and demonstration kitchen with a dining room, a business center, conference rooms, dog wash, biking, pool, barbecue pits and game tables.

Mr. Seegel asked about storage. Mr. Hall said that there will be 40 to 50 spaces scattered around the building.

Mr. Sheffield asked about opportunities for jogging trails. Mr. Hall said that there is an existing trail network. He discussed potential for kayak storage and a kayak launch. He said that they will speak to DCR about a tot lot.

Mr. Ryan discussed utilities. He said that it is a completely developed, impervious area with some landscaped islands. He said that in addition to the Charles River, there is a manmade pond across from William Street with an associated buffer area. He said that the site and the office park drain to the Charles River. He said that the property is located in an existing flood zone for which FEMA has done a study. He discussed proposed compensatory flood storage as a result of the building impact in that area. He said that existing drainage outfalls in the pond will continue to be used. He said that there will be several improvements to the stormwater management systems for infiltration and water quality. He said that there will be a significant decrease in surface parking area. He said that they are proposing a subsurface system for flood storage in the arrival plaza area. He said that it is a shallow floodplain. He said that the buffer zone, the connection to the Charles River and the flood zone are jurisdictional areas that are being reviewed under the NOI.

Mr. Ryan said that they did an evaluation of the infrastructure serving the site in collaboration with the Department of Public Works (DPW). He said that questions came up about the pump station and utilities crossing Route 95. He said that introducing a residential use incrementally increased demand for water and sewer, so the Applicant has agreed to replace the lines. He said that the sanitary line runs down William Street and heads towards the rear of 80 William Street, where the pump station is located and is pumped across Route 9 to connect to the town's gravity feed system. He said that the water system follows a similar pattern with the exception of the existing infrastructure in Route 9 which creates a loop. He said that because of the age of the infrastructure, they decided that the best course of action would be to install a redundant water line crossing Route 95. He said that they will install a new six inch sewer line and a new pump station. He said that the existing pump station will be decommissioned, the water line will be replaced and the existing one will be left there. He said that there will be two pumps, one station and three water lines.

Mr. Becker said that the Stormwater Report talked about porous pavement. Mr. Ryan said that it will be located on the north side of the building as pervious pavers along the tree strip.

Mr. Becker asked about the bio infiltration system. Mr. Ryan said that it will be for treatment rather than storage.

Mr. Dirk discussed the traffic study. He said that it was prepared in accordance with MassDOT standards as well as the town's PSI standards. He said that they looked at traffic volumes, pedestrian and bicycle safety, public transportation in the area, existing and added demands from the increased residential use. He said that they looked at ways that they may be able to enhance those services. He said that the overall findings of the study are that this project will not result in significant motorist delays or vehicle queuing. He said that the existing office building is not currently fully occupied but that use at full occupancy will be removed from the site, creating a difference in traffic volume and directionality. He said that changes to the interchange has created some capacity and traffic flows better. He said that accessing the site from Route 9 from the interchange is difficult, with most of the traffic having to do a U turn maneuver. He said that traffic management will be important to keep things moving and make it safer. He said that safety data was from 2017 and pre-dates the new interchange. He said that the number of crashes has gone down. He said that they looked at the lines of sight and found that traffic exceeds the speed limit in the area, so they adjusted for that in the study. He displayed a Google Earth image of the interchange. He described the study area. He said that there will be about 17 new morning trips and 53 in the evening, mostly onto Route 95.

Mr. Seegel said that it can difficult to exit the park because of traffic coming downhill on Route 9 moving fast. Mr. Dirk said that currently there is a detail officer and they are not proposing to change that. He said that cruiser lights help to slow traffic down. He said that they discussed introducing signalization to create gaps in traffic to allow people to get out of the office park. He said that there was some hesitancy from the town and MassDOT for signalization but that issue can be revisited. He discussed allowing a left turn into the office park.

Mr. Dirk discussed pedestrian connectivity. He said that with the recent reconstruction of the interchange, MassDOT created a continuous sidewalk along the north side of Route 9 but it is not conducive to pedestrian activity because there are 40,000 to 50,000 vehicles a day on the roadway. He said that the important thing here is connection from William Street to Quinobequin Road. He said that the trees have overgrown the sidewalk on the frontage road, so it is not currently full width. He said that they are looking at cutting the brush back to get the connection to existing and future trail systems on the Newton side and allow access for pedestrians from Newton to get to the site to use some of the amenities and access the trails on the Wellesley side. He said that there is a crosswalk at William Street that they would like to improve. He said that there are crosswalks under signal control that have been committed to as part of the project.

Mr. Dirk said that they included Saturday numbers in the traffic study. He said that Saturday and weekday traffic volumes are consistent at about 40,000 vehicles. He said that the frontage road gets about 7,500 vehicles on a weekday and 3,700 on a weekend. He said that William Street traffic volumes are nonexistent on Saturday. He said that the volumes were measured in October of 2018, when there was 150,000 square feet of unoccupied space. He described the process for calculating data for the traffic study. He said that they also accounted for the 350 units and looked at the net differences. He said that the estimate is for 17 vehicle trips during the morning peak hours and 53 vehicle trips during the evening peak hours. He discussed the trip distribution patterns and levels of service at the intersections. He said that a slip ramp should improve the way that traffic functions but there will still be problems getting onto Route 9. He said that some sort of traffic control is needed there. He discussed sightlines, signs and pavement markings, stop control, police details and clearing vegetation. He discussed shuttle services to Riverside Station and possible expansion of the service. He discussed bicycle amenities and transportation displays in the lobby areas, parking for zip cars or car sharing services.

Mr. Seegel asked about police details in the morning. Mr. Dirk said that they would not be using them then because cars are going onto the site.

Mr. Becker discussed two projects at Cedar Street and Route 9 that involved MassDOT – Mr. Tamm said that they have been working with MassDOT. He said that the owners of the office park are looking to protect their investment and will continue to work with MassDOT and the town to ensure viability for existing tenants and for future projects.

Mr. Dirk discussed vehicle circulation, accesses, delivery at the back and loading area access to the elevator. He discussed fire truck, pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

Mr. Becker asked about documentation of the 600 residents permitted, hotel and other uses. He said that there was no treatment of potential uses. Mr. Tamm said that the town adopted a mixed use overlay district. He said that they needed to demonstrate to the boards and staff that the mix of use within the park could be supported with infrastructure that can be practically implemented

Mr. Becker said that the traffic report should say something about the stuff that is in the development agreement. Mr. Tamm said that the traffic assessment reflects the commitments to plan for the slip ramp. He said that they can put together a supplement that describes the district, touches on the uses and the constraints. He said that a future project will be a use and impact driven. He said that plans for the slip ramp are for the future.

Mr. Tamm said that the Applicant would like to discuss energy savings and sustainability at the next hearing. He said that they will follow up with some supplements for the elevation drawings since they have the benefit of input from the DRB. He said that although the time has passed for other boards to comment, the Applicant can be solicitous of those boards. He said that they expect to finalize the permit for stormwater management in the next two weeks.

Mr. Seegel confirmed that there was no correspondence from the DPW. Mr. Tamm said that DPW was authorized by the WPC to review stormwater.

Mr. Becker said that as the Board gets an understanding of the physical facilities, its view will shift to how they are used, getting people in and out, mail delivery, fire trucks and use of things. He said that there will be a lot of impacts during construction. He said that the Construction Management Plan (CMP) will need to be coordinated with the Building Inspector. Mr. Tamm said that they can have the CMP ready for the next meeting. He said that they have had four meetings with town departments.

Mr. Seegel said that an important part of the CMP will be the number of construction vehicles, and impacts on traffic and employee parking.

Mr. Tamm discussed the timeline for project approval. The Board discussed continuing the public hearing to Thursday, November 21, 2019.

The Board discussed peer reviews. Mr. Seegel said that there is no need for most of them. He said that a short letter from BETA would be sufficient. He said that DPW has to be involved in stormwater management.

Mr. Tamm said that the intent under the 40R bylaw was to be as collaborative as they could be. He said that they shared the development agreement and municipal certification early, as well as early traffic assessment that Mr. Dirk prepared and BETA reviewed at the time and was reviewed extensively by the town. He said that the municipal certification is supported by the Stantec infrastructure assessment.

Move Mr. Seegel moved, Mr. Sheffield seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to continue the hearing to November 21, 2019.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the hearing was adjourned at 9:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lenore R. Mahoney  
Executive Secretary

DRAFT