



Historic Town of Hyde Park

JUL 27 2015

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Aileen Rohr, Town Supervisor

"Working with you for a better Hyde Park"

July 17, 2015

Supervisor Todd Tancredi
Councilmembers Jon Jay Baisley, Bill Carlos,
Joseph Conte, Michael Cifone, Joseph Lepore
and Ann Shershin
1 Overocker Road
Poughkeepsie, New York 12603

Re: Town of Poughkeepsie – Hudson Heritage Project, NOI SEQRA Lead Agency

Dear Supervisor Tancredi and distinguished Councilmembers,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project. We referred a copy of proposed amendments to the Town of Poughkeepsie's Zoning Code, relating to a proposal for a Master Development Plan, site plan approval and subdivision approval for the above-referenced project to our Planning Board for comment.

The Town of Poughkeepsie has declared itself lead agency under SEQRA, for the purposes of enacting text changes as well as entering into a "Development Agreement" with the applicants EFG/DRA Heritage, LLC.

In composing this response, our Planning Board took a careful study of the following facts:

1. The site, formerly the Hudson Valley Psychiatric Center, sits along the southern boundary of the Town of Hyde Park, and the entirety of the parcel is served by Hyde Park Central School District.
2. The site contains numerous buildings, some of which are listed on various historic registers, and once employed a significant amount of the local workforce. However, the condition of many of the structures is described as "deteriorated" and "can no longer be viably redeveloped for other uses." The Applicant is "considering the re-use of the Library, Amusement Hall and the Chapel as community serving amenities" but the latter are not yet defined, and the claim could be considered vague.
3. The proposal includes "up to approximately 430,000 sq ft of commercial space" with one "165,000 sq ft retail building" the latter to be developed in the first phase of construction. 80,000 sq ft of the former Administration Building is planned for re-use, "potentially as a hotel." The commercial area would occupy, at full build out, approximately 40 acres of the 156+ acre site.

cc: Neil Wilson ✓

4. The proposal includes construction of “approximately 750 residential units (500 multifamily units, 225 townhouse units, and a potential site for 25 single family homes.”
5. The proposal includes 1,750 parking spaces for commercial uses, with a minimum of 1,715 spaces (a specific amount could not be found) associated with the residential uses.
6. 46% of the site would remain as open space, including an 18-acre “great lawn” located in the northwest section of the site. The Great Lawn “will include publicly accessible recreation opportunities” with the latter not yet defined (a later section states that its use for “concerts” is under evaluation).
7. The preliminary development plan appears to retain the area of green space along the east side of Route 9, to the entry into Hyde Park, which would probably screen the view of proposed housing once erected. The same plan illustrates the commercial area as similar to the commercial center due south, in that the largest building footprint is located to the rear or east of that section of the property, with smaller buildings paralleling Route 9 and parking in between. There is a series of larger buildings lining the southern boundary, which rear or southern exteriors would face the Home Depot.
8. The Applicant no doubt rightfully assumes that the lead agency will issue a positive declaration regarding likely environmental impacts, requiring the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).
9. Architecture will be “compatible with the overall historic character of the Site” but no elevations are included, and it is anticipated that the “architectural design will be articulated in the DEIS.”
10. The Applicants states that “Internal vehicular circulation will be via private roads.”
11. New sanitary sewer and water service lines will be supplied. Sewerage discharge will be to the “Tri Municipal Sewage Treatment Plant in Poughkeepsie,” though there is no mention of an inquiry/study to determine whether capacity exists.
12. Residential and commercial uses in the project “will incorporate ‘green’ building components” but there is no particular detail other than “certain aspects of the Project (may be) eligible for certification under the applicable LEED Green Building Rating System Standards.”
13. “Some portion of the commercial component in the southern portion of the Site will be the first principal project phase” and be completed within two years of issuance of building permits. The Applicant projects “the residential component will be constructed over a period of ten (10) years following commencement, subject to market demand.” There is no information regarding whether the residential component will be started simultaneously in the first phase as the commercial, nor a reference to any market studies used to determine potential demand or how the 10 year time frame was established.

14. §1.3.13 "Ownership and Maintenance" states that "Some infrastructure, including internal roads... may be offered for conveyance to the Town," which may conflict with an earlier statement and a later request that internal roads not be built to Town standards.
15. The site "was surveyed in 2008 to evaluate the potential presence for listed endangered and threatened species."
16. Under a section entitled "Project Benefits" it states that "based on preliminary fiscal analyses, the tax revenues of the Project are expected to exceed governmental service costs." No econometric analyses are provided.
17. The Applicant projects 339 direct temporary jobs to be created and 417 direct permanent jobs on full build-out.
18. A "minimum of 10% of all dwelling units will be designated as for-sale" with a mix of the 750 units being rentals and sales. There is no mention of any percent set for affordable housing.
19. Much of the Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) contains "TBD" (to be determined), including the number of project phases, or has answers referring to a later review, making it less useful in evaluating actual potential impacts. For example, question D.2.b.i. asks whether a possible alteration of an existing wetland could occur by answering "Potential filling of portions of USACOE regulate wetlands" but on the succeeding question, notes "Potential impacts to wetlands will be evaluated during the EIS process." Similarly, question D.2.j.v. regarding traffic impacts is answered "Improvements to Route 9 are proposed" but other than a changed entry along the west side of 9 to the site, no other improvements are shown. The ITE Trip Generation Manual, 2012 edition is later cited to demonstrate a PM peak hour of traffic as 1,799 vehicles.

Accordingly, we offer the following:

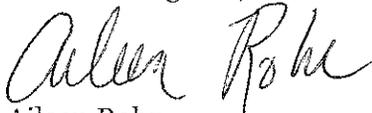
1. The Town of Hyde Park takes no position on the Town of Poughkeepsie's intent to serve as Lead Agency.
2. Given the lack of specificity within the project description as well as the FEAF, it is our hope that the Town of Poughkeepsie does issue a positive declaration.
3. We recommend the Town of Hyde Park and Hyde Park Central School District ask to be invited to participate in a Scoping session in order to ensure potential area impacts, especially those associated with traffic and schools, are thoroughly evaluated.
4. We agree with the Applicant that the overall design appears to be site sensitive, with proposed residential uses nicely clustered and the commercial center does not allow the large parking areas to dominate the site when viewed from Route 9.
5. Given that much of the site is considered historic in nature, it is our hope that the Town ensures that any new structures proposed retain a sense of the original architectural styles, especially use of brick and ornamentation.

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6. Since the Applicant states that internal roads are meant to be private, but then later states that some may be offered for conveyance to the Town, we recommend the Town ensure at the outset that all roads are constructed to the Town's standards.
7. Since this is a large site and is in effect, a planned mixed-use community as proposed, we hope the Town will work with the Applicant on increasing the use of greener technologies than what is so briefly mentioned. Similarly, we hope the Town will consider requiring some percentage of the proposed housing to be "workforce" or "affordable" in pricing. This project could easily become a paradigm for the region and set the Town of Poughkeepsie as a leader in development.
8. The first phase contains a 'big box' retail component, estimated to be ready to open within two years of approvals. This could offer a substantial expansion in shopping opportunities to area residents, including in Hyde Park. It is hoped that the DEIS will evaluate any potential negative impacts to smaller retail establishments.
9. Since the purpose of SEQR is to evaluate potential impacts based on the most current information, we suggest the Town request new or supplemental studies regarding endangered, threatened or rare species.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me should you require additional information.

With best regards,



Aileen Rohr
Supervisor, Town of Hyde Park

cc: Mr. Michael Dupree
Hyde Park Town Board