On Tuesday, November 13, 2018, the Holyoke Planning Board held a Public Hearing regarding the above referenced Site Plan Review for the property located at 34 Westfield Road (118-00-005). The hearings were held in the 4th Floor Conference Room, City Hall Annex, 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Holyoke, Massachusetts at 5:30 p.m.

Attendance:
Planning Board
Eileen Regan ............... Vice-Chairman
Mimi Panitch ............... Member
Gustavo Acosta ............... Member
Harry Montalvo ............... Associate

Others Present
Erica Rioux Gees.............. Stiebel Propeties
Brian Ramoth ............... 72 Carlton St
Heidi Salmela Ramoth... 72 Carlton St

Planning Staff
Jeffrey Burkott ............... Principal Planner
Curtis Wiemann ............... Planner I
Sharon Konstantinidis ..... Administrative Clerk

Others Present
Chris Erchull.............. Assistant City Solicitor
William J. Sieruta, PE..... Sieruta Engineering
Jonathan J. Sieruta, EIT... Sieruta Engineering
Mary Jane Kisiel ............... 71 Carlton St

EILEEN REGAN, at 6:04 p.m., called for a motion to open the Public Hearing and waive the reading of the Public Hearing Notice. A motion was made by MIMI PANITCH and seconded by HARRY MONTALVO. The motion carried 4-0.

ERICA GEES displayed the renderings of the site and introduced her team. She stated that there had been no change in the architectural style since what was submitted for the zone change with only the addition of two single handicap units on each end. Each residential unit would have a front stoop for personal space and safety. The main residential access(es) was proposed from the rear.

JONATHAN SIERUTA stated that the proposed development has a total square footage of 35,800 square feet, 20 proposed parking spaces including two ADA parking spaces, an infiltration system under the parking area, two rain gardens on each side of the site and 3 landscaped areas. Regarding utilities, a 10-foot separation would be maintained between the water line and drainage system; the water line connects on South Street and the sewer line is on Carlton Street. Two drainage structures on Russell Terrace will need to be rebuilt as they are in bad shape. MR SIERUTA added that 10 additional parking spaces are currently proposed within the Russell Terrace right-of-way but plans may change as maintaining a 24-foot buffer has not been accomplished.

It was noted that obtaining a Stormwater permit was in process, the hearing was scheduled for October 29th.

JEFFREY BURKOTT noted that revised plans were received as late as today and a review at this time was not possible.

JONATHAN SIERUTA noted that the main outstanding comments received were relative to maintaining the curb line and avoiding trees in the right-of-way. JEFFREY BURKOTT noted that landscape plans were just received. ERICA GEES responded that there were no trees in the right-of-way and reviewed the proposed species of trees suitable for rain gardens. She added that the site is in a recharge area for the main aquifer and felt that the inclusion of a rain garden posed an educational opportunity for students at Peck to design and layout the perennials.

The landscaping plan was reviewed. JEFFREY BURKOTT requested that planting symbology on the site layout plan as well as within the raingardens not used, be removed from the plan.

JEFFREY BURKOTT asked how the 2 bollards on both sides of the Carlton Street access contributed to traffic circulation control. ERICA GEES responded that a chain will go across and will be added to the plan.

EILEEN REGAN asked for detail regarding the proposed fence. ERICA GEES responded that a 3-foot split rail fence was proposed around the rain garden and perennials in 3 sections along Russell Terrace. A 6-foot high white privacy fence (requiring a special permit), screened with landscaping, is proposed on South Street as the development faces a commercial area.
ERICA GEES, regarding signage, stated that proposed was a non-illuminated 5x3 foot “Russell Terrace” sign at the Carlton Street and South Street entrances, and a non-illuminated 7x3 foot sign within the front yard along Russell Terrace, half way between South Street and Carlton Street.

JONATHAN SIERUTA stated that 6-foot wide bituminous sidewalks were proposed on the site close to the building and the sidewalks within the right-of-way are concrete.

EILEEN REGAN asked if there was parking on Russell Terrace. JONATHAN SIERUTA responded that ten, 8 x 22 feet, parallel parking spaces were proposed. A 4-foot wide concrete sidewalk runs along the parallel parking. ERICA GEES added that these spaces are not required but were included as a traffic calming method and would also provide an opportunity for City revenue through metered parking. Currently the site is used by those visiting the adjacent businesses and the elderly complex so additional parking would be beneficial.

HARRY MONTALVO asked if the design included solar panels. ERICA GEES responded that solar panels were not included due to potential damage from the abutting high-rise apartment. All energy efficient measures have been employed.

JEFFREY BURKOTT, understanding that a complete set of plans has been submitted, questioned if the project is a phased development. ERICA GEES responded that the project was 100% privately funded. The development consists of modular construction. The units are panelized and could be up in a month; only the digging may be phased due to the weather. Each of the 2-story units, except for the ADA end units, will have a basement; fire suppression system; laundry on the ground floor and bedrooms on the second floor. The exterior may be brick-colored horizontal clapboard with white trim and cedar shakes.

The lighting plan and LED fixtures were viewed. ERICA GEES noted that the intent was to create low lighting, each porch and entrance would have a light.

The trash enclosure was viewed. Proposed are 3 rollaway dumpsters; two for recycling and one for trash and enclosed with an 8-foot fence having two gates; one for truck access and one for the residents.

It was noted that residential mailboxes would be housed on a concrete pad located to the south along South Street. The address would become 10 Russell Terrace.

EILEEN REGAN asked for those that wished to speak for or against, or to ask questions to come forward.

BRIAN RAMOTH asked for clarification on the parking plan for Russell Terrace. Carlton Street is narrow for parking on both sides especially since it was changed to a 2-way by Councilor Bartley without any public notification. ERICA GEES stated that the preference of returning Russell Terrace to a one-way street was a different conversation. She agreed that the street was narrow and clarified that the parallel parking was within the 50-foot right-of-way and not the roadway. The road bed was extended into the 50-foot right-of-way to account for this parking.

BRIAN RAMOTH asked for clarification on the intent of the carport. ERICA GEES responded that the carport provided a covering for 10 rear parking spaces as there are no garages. Additionally, it provided a way to remove less snow off-site. The structure was open on all four sides and screened by 41 arborvitaes. She added that the chain across the one-way Carlton Street access will be open for sanitation vehicles which is anticipated to occur once a week.

The Board reviewed Carlton Street noting that the standard width was 22 or 24 feet with a 50-foot right-of-way even with 2-way travel. The Applicant and abutters noted their preference for one-way travel. The proposed parallel parking plan was viewed. ERICA GEES stated that the site design implemented traffic calming measures for a 2-way street. If the street returned to a one-way it would become a “raceway” and be counterintuitive to their strategy and she would remove the proposed renovations to the city parking spaces on Carlton Street.

MARY JANE KISIEL stated that the 3-way stop sign (corner of Carlton Street & Russell Terrace) was never observed and remained concerned for pedestrian safety for those walking to Blessed Sacrament from Elmwood Towers. ERICA GEES concurred noting that it was a multi-generational neighborhood. The design plans, landscaping, and plantings were part of the holistic strategy to create a walkable neighborhood and it would backfire if the street were changed to a one-way at this stage.

The Board noted that they too were in favor of a one-way street.
Adjournment - There being no further business to come before the Board, at 6:55 p.m. a motion was made by MIMI PANITCH and seconded by GUSTAVO ACOSTA to continue to the Public Hearing until November 27, 2018 to allow time to review the plans. The motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

John Kelley, Secretary