On Tuesday, November 27, 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.

EILEEN REGAN, at 6:06 p.m., called for a motion to open the Public Hearing and to 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 presented a rendering of the site and proposed development to construct a series of 2-story townhouses. She stated that following several community meetings and the public hearings for a zone change, comments were integrated into the plans. The layout included front and rear entrances and rear porches to every unit. Front entrances would be accessed through a walk-way on the Russell Terrace side and rear unit entrances were gained from the rear (west) parking lot. A portion of the parking lot would contain a car port and would be screened with landscaping.

MS GEES stated that rain gardens were proposed and roof water run-off would be directed to an infiltration system to keep the stormwater management on-site. Approval from the City Tree Warden was submitted. The Landscaping Plan for the site and rain garden was viewed; species was agreed upon in collaboration with Conservation. She stated that she was utilizing the students from Peck School to layout and design the perennials. The Lighting Plan and fixtures were viewed. JEFFREY BURKOTT requested details of the 8-foot lighting post.

MS GEES, regarding the lighting, stated that there was a 0.1-foot candle spill over into the right-of-way. After a lengthy discussion regarding the lighting intensity under the carports, MS GEES noted that the fixtures would be limited to one under each canopy.

MS GEES, regarded receiving Stormwater approval, noted that the system was designed for a 100-year storm, there would be a minimum of two catch basins that would have to be rebuilt, and the drainage on the site would be an overall improvement.

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

WALTER SYKULSKI, former owner of the property and abutting property owner, spoke in favor of the project noting that it would enhance the neighborhood, and was a good transition between the single-family area and adjacent high-rise building. He complimented the collaboration between the various agencies to produce a good development. MR SYKULSKI requested that the plan include the 11 parking spaces on Russell Terrace as there was not enough parking to serve the 5 existing businesses. He added that if visitors to the elderly high-rise used their visitor parking it would reduce some of the parking problem.

ERICA GEES addressed the special permit request for an increase in fence height noting that there would be a 6-foot temporary construction chain-link fence around the perimeter; a 4-foot white vinyl split rail fence around the rain garden (Russell Terrace); and a 6-foot white vinyl stockade fence on the South Street side shielded with vegetation.
ERICA GEES, regarding signage, identified the locations of the proposed “Russell Terrace” signs (Carlton Street and South Street entrances, and half way between South Street and Carlton Street.) noting that they were low to the ground.

JEFFREY BURKOTT asked when the “optional” parking location would become official. ERICA GEES responded that although the DPW and residents want Russell Terrace to be a one-way, there was a concern that following their expense of including additional parking spaces on the west side of Carlton, the City would remove parking on the East side to widen the road which goes against their traffic calming strategy. She believed that an order to revert the street back to a one-way, an Order would have to be filed to the City Council, unlike the process to change it to the current 2-way which just recently appeared. WALTER SYKULSKI agreed noting that this 2-way has now also created a reverse cut through for those coming from Northampton Street to South Street to avoid the light.

ERICA GEES agreed that the driveway aprons would be removed if the City changed the status of the street and a sidewalk would run the entire length of Russell Terrace. A revision list would be provided outlining all changes since the plan submittal on 11/16/18.

The Board reviewed the Planning Staff letter #2 dated 11/27/2018. It was noted that there were no waivers requested; the project will not be phased as the project is 100% privately funded; trees present in the public right of way will be removed; all plantings referenced as “from the approved in the MA Stormwater Handbook” are non-invasive and the planting number and species illustrated will be corrected; carport detail materials will be provided; “decorative wall” noted on Sheet L-1 will reflect a “fence”; air source heat pump will be located on the ground; no temporary signs will be installed; details for the chain across the Carlton Street access will be provided; no snow storage will be allowed on parking spaces; dumpsters will be emptied once a week to start; a revision list will be provided; confirmation will be obtained from the Building Commissioner regarding the fence set back (5 or 8 feet); and all outstanding information will be a condition in the Notice of Decision and addressed prior to obtaining any building permit.

Adjournment - There being no further business to come before the Board, at 7:06 p.m. a motion was made by MIMI PANITCH and seconded by GUSTAVO ACOSTA to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

John Kelley, Secretary