

40 RIVER STREET PROJECT – RFP QUESTIONS

December 7, 2015

1) Q. Use of 40B as zoning tool- is there any reason to believe that there will be difficulties with the ZBA? Is this a friendly 40B?

A. This NCHT expects that the development will be a friendly 40B. The Town Meeting Vote supporting the use of the property and funding for mixed income housing was well more than the 2/3rds vote required. One million dollars in CPA funds have been approved for this project as well. Many potential site development issues related to the property have already been analyzed and vetted. There are seemingly no health and safety issues of note. Wetland delineation has been approved by the Conservation Commission through the ANRAD process, a 21e site assessment has been completed, and a preliminary design of a Title 5-compliant septic system has been completed. All documents and plans (including CAD files) are available on the RFP website.

A Comprehensive Permit will be required under the 40B regulations. The Norwell Community Housing Trust (NCHT) and the Board of Selectmen will support the application of the designated developer. Norwell has an approved Housing Production Plan (available on NCHT web site) and the proposed plan is consistent with the that Plan.

A preliminary investigation and advanced concept septic design was completed by Merrill Associates, Inc of Hanover, MA. A Phase I Site Assessment has been done by Green Environmental, Inc. of Norwell, MA.. The assessment described response actions completed by the Town to close an issue of a gasoline tank to the satisfaction of MassDEP and the property meets residential standards without restrictions. The police station history also includes a shooting range in the basement of the building, but the lead and sand have been cleaned up to ready the building for demolition.

2) Q. In discussions with DHCD, was there willingness to work with NCHT on site approval letter?

A. Not discussed specifically, but DHCD, MHP and other lenders as well could provide the site approval letter.

3) Q. In the competitive scoring for funding, extremely low income housing is preferable. Did DHCD comment on that?

A. Yes, DHCD will be looking for at least 10% of the units to be very low income and possibly more. As such, NCHT recognizes the need for these very low income units and that some form of rental assistance may be needed. The expectation is that no project based-Section 8 would be used as it would create program and development complexity for just a few units. The goal of this development effort is to create housing for seniors up to 80% AMI and 100% AMI.

4) Q. Is there a preference for senior versus family housing?

A.) Yes, at this in town location senior housing is preferred. The town has already approved a sizeable amount of low income and family housing. The NCHT wanted to support the need for senior rental housing so residents could downsize and stay in Norwell and be near the conveniences of the town center.

5) Q. Has the Trust addressed Rental vs. Ownership?

A. The greater need in Norwell is for rental units and that is what NCHT is targeting. The Bonz market study, which is available on the RFP website, documented very strong demand for senior rental housing per the proposed income ranges.

6) Q. Is DHCD looking for a quick funding turnaround?

A. They are looking for a great development. This one really needs to be done right! The hope is to select a developer by early March of 2016, go before the ZBA in May, and with ZBA approval then apply for DHCD funding. It is assumed this will not be a Low Income Tax Credit project given the projected income range served of 80% AMI and less than 100% AMI.

7) Q. Why 60 and older?

A. CPA statute requires this minimum age of 60 versus 55 for elderly housing.

8) Q. Is there an engineering reason for 18 units? Has preliminary septic indicated this limit?

A. Not that we are aware of. The Advanced Concept Plan was completed assuming 16 units which resulted in a preliminary design to meet Title 5. The NCHT decided that up to 18 units may be possible as long as septic and civil constraints and the need for the development to fit appropriately in the historic context of the site and the community can be satisfied.

9) Q. Does the NHA have any interest in a management role? Are there any other agencies who have expressed interest in management?

A. The Norwell Housing Authority has not yet expressed an interest in managing the property but is willing to explore that function with a developer. There may be other local agencies who would be interested in this project.

10) Q. Developers might be reluctant to spend much on design since the requirements are so specific. How will the proposals be scored?

A. Developer proposals should reflect strong design and experience among other factors. Existing site plans (including CAD files) are available on the website as well as potential building images which should make it easier to pull together the requested design information.

11) Q. For the developer who is selected, would the next step be a designation agreement? And would that be open-ended based on the state funding cycle?

A. First there will be a developer designation agreement followed by a Purchase and Sale Agreement. The Purchase and Sale Agreement would establish the legal basis for the submission of a comprehensive permit before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

12) Q. Is a successful development plan more important than the purchase price for the land in terms of being selected as the preferred developer?

A. Yes. The land will be transferred at nominal cost. It is an additional contribution the town is making towards the affordable program. Please note the designated developer will still have to demolish the existing building.

NOTE: Peter Morin, Norwell Town Administrator and Chief Procurement Officer, is the primary contact for this RFP. Please follow up with him. Make sure that you record your contact information with him in order to receive all communications.