

ZBA FY2020-39, Valley CDC, Comprehensive Permit Application for 132 Northampton Road

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Additional Comments received from October 7, 2020 at 8:30AM until October 15, 2020 at 10:30AM

1. John Hornik, Comments Submitted via Email, Dated October 7, 2020;
2. Anonymous, Comments Submitted via Town Website, Dated October 7, 2020;
3. Steve George, Comments Submitted via Town Website, Dated October 14, 2020;

From: [John Hornik](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Subject: Comment on 132 Northampton Road
Date: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 6:58:59 PM

Hi, Maureen—

I thought that I submitted this a couple of weeks ago, but I did not see it. Can you please add this to public comments.

Thanks, John

At the ZBA meeting on September 24th, the question was raised about the possibility that at some future unknown date Federal and State funds could be withdrawn from either the project-based vouchers or the mobile vouchers, leaving tenants without the income necessary to meet their rental obligations. While it is true that both levels of governments could in theory reduce or eliminate the necessary appropriations, it is very unlikely that will happen. Such an eventuality would not only be a catastrophe for the residents of 132 Northampton Road, but for thousands of tenants living in subsidized housing everywhere. While I think that we cannot absolutely deny the potential risk, we have to consider the other risks to potential tenants if—concerned with this threat—the Board decides not to approve the comprehensive permit or to impose new, heavy financial obligations.

There is also a very significant risk that people who would reside here will not be able to find an equivalent place to live, equivalent in the quality of housing and the costs of housing. Those risks are much less hypothetical. We know that there are significant numbers of people who cannot find housing in Amherst or even elsewhere, either in the short or the long term. This project is desperately needed. There is no substitute on the horizon that will address these needs. In fact, this project alone will not meet the unmet needs presented in the Town's Housing Production Plan. And any other project developed to meet the needs of the population to be served would almost surely be subject to the same risks. I recommend strongly that this Board approve this comprehensive permit without creating a condition to address very unlikely risks.

I recognize that the ZBA must consider adding conditions that will clearly protect the interests of future tenants and the public when granting a comprehensive permit. But it must also be wary of seeking to solve all potential problems through creating conditions, particularly if those conditions will impose significant new costs on a project that already has a tight window of financial feasibility. Striving for The Perfect can become the enemy of The Good.

Thank you for your consideration.

John Hornik
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413-256-8854

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132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15967

Date Submitted: 10/7/2020

Comment Form

If the zoning board and Valley CDC are going to put a smoking area 5 feet from the property line of Amherst College, shouldn't they make sure that the College and their athletics department has seen that plan?

The ZBA is giving permission that would allow up to 28 people to smoke in this location. Just a few people smoking will definitely have an impact in the parking lot, which is just 15 ft away, the walkway around the track (50 ft), at the fieldhouse (90ft) and the track (about 130 ft away). (Look at the site on google maps and you will see this easily) Why is the ZBA setting up a situation to encourage so much smoking close to young people who have no choice in the matter?

Everyone supports helping people in need and increased housing, but the purpose of zoning boards is to prevent these types of obvious conflict in uses and public health issues. It would be better to set this up as a smoke free property, at least initially, and see if that can work out. If it doesn't, Valley can go back to the ZBA and the three immediate abutters and work it out like they said they did at Sargent House.

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Comment Form

Since I previously submitted written comments raising questions about the size and unit density of this project in the residential zone in which it will be located, I would like to say that I believe the developers have made a convincing case for granting the waiver to allow the requested 28 single-occupancy apartments. I do hope that when the ZBA is at the point of granting this particular waiver you will pause long enough to recognize how large a deviation this is from what is normally allowed, and to make clear that the waiver is justified in this case by the circumstances of the comprehensive permit, e.g. the need for this specific kind of housing and the constraints on funding. I appreciate the Valley CDC's patience in responding to all concerns, and the ZBA's dedication and meticulousness in evaluating every aspect of the project. The result will be a high-quality residence for the deserving future occupants.

- Steve George, 23 Dana St., Amherst

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Submitted On:

October 14, 2020 2:08 PM

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Answered 1 of 2 (50.0%)