

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING  
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
MARCH 21, 2016**

**ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Prause, Chairman  
Michael Stebe, Secretary  
Timothy Bergin  
Jessica Scorso

Alternate Member Sitting: Julian Stoppelman

Alternates: Patrick Kennedy  
Teresa Ike

Absent: Andy Kidd, Vice Chairman

Also Present: Mark Pellegrini, Director  
Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner  
Karen Logan, Recording Secretary

Time Convened: 7:04 P.M.

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 7:04 p.m. The Secretary read the legal notice for the application when the call was made.

CALAMAR, INC. – For a multi-family elderly housing development with 128 units at 188 Spencer Street. - EHD Zone Change and Preliminary Site Development Plan (2016-009)

Attorney Stephen Penny, attorney for the applicant, opened the presentation by reviewing the background and basics of the application. Calamar, Inc. proposed an Elderly Housing Development Zone (EHD) change for a 9.14 acre portion of a 13.57 acre General Business (GB) zoned parcel at 188 Spencer Street. The proposed site is bounded by Spencer Street, an undeveloped portion of the parcel, Hillstown Road, and I-384. There are no wetlands or watercourses on the property. The site has approximately 131 feet of frontage on Spencer Street and 277 feet of frontage on Hillstown Road.

Mr. Brent Narkawicz, Director of New England Development for Calamar, Inc. introduced himself and spoke about some of the existing properties his company has built and manages, as well as additional projects underway in other areas for the company. The plan calls for a three-story building with 128 one- and two-bedroom units. Rent for the units will include cable, water, refuse removal, heat, and hot water. He reviewed the demographics of the typical tenant in other Calamar properties: The average age is 72, 60% of the residents are female, 40% are male; 90% are retired; 10% work part time +/- or volunteer for approximately 15 hours per week; and the average number of resident trips is four times per week.

Mr. Narkawicz noted that the market studies conducted by Calamar indicate that Manchester can anticipate 15% growth in senior population over the next few years; this accounts for an additional 2,842 senior households by 2020.

Mr. Narkawicz went on to outline the anticipated benefits this apartment complex might provide for Manchester: Local economic benefits, a \$14 million investment in the community, employment creation and retention, keeping seniors in town, an increase in the tax base, no impact on schools, and according to the studies, no impact on traffic.

Attorney Penny went on to discuss the specifics of the site plan. He reviewed zoning issues concerning this application and the associated zoning change. He noted that the proposed development has been designed in concert with the zoning regulations for the Elderly Housing Zone (EHD).

Mr. Kevin Grindle, Landscape Architect, of Anchor Engineering, introduced himself and spoke about the proposed access, utility connections and landscaping for the project. The plan calls for primary access to Spencer Street, as well as secondary access to Hillstown Street via a shared driveway with the McDonalds located on the corner of Spencer Street and Hillstown Road. The proposed building will have sidewalks throughout the facility and connecting to Spencer Street.

The plan calls for 42 garaged parking spots in two areas – one on the western side of the building and one on the eastern side, with seven spaces being handicap accessible, in addition to uncovered parking in different areas.

The next presenter was Mr. Mark Zesson, P.E., of Anchor Engineering, Glastonbury, Connecticut. He described the traffic study conducted in support of this project. The posted speed limit on both Spencer Street and Hillstown Road is 35 m.p.h. Connecticut Department of Transportation data from 2012 indicates there are approximately 15,500 daily trips on both Spencer Street and Hillstown Road and the study conducted in December confirmed those statistics. The proposed EHD is expected to generate an additional 201 inbound and outbound trips each day. An analysis of traffic patterns indicates a level of service D when the Mill Store was open. Mr. Mayer, the Town of Manchester Traffic Engineer, requested another traffic study after the Mill Store closed and the level of service was raised to a letter C.

Mr. Zesson said that Mr. Mayer had also asked the applicant to conduct another traffic study after the Town finishes its proposed improvements on Hillstown Road and suggested that use of the secondary access on Hillstown Road be postponed until the completion of the improvements, when another traffic study could be conducted. Attorney Penny added that the applicant's project would most probably not be completed until after the Town's improvements were completed. He also noted that the applicant would be willing to keep the Hillstown Road secondary access point gated until the Town has completed the Hillstown Road improvements and another traffic study can be conducted.

Mr. Narkawicz then described the architectural and design elements of the proposed buildings, floor plans and building materials. He provided samples of vinyl siding, roofing materials and cultured stone. He showed a rendering of the proposed buildings using darker brown on the

bottom and lighter tan on the top. He showed the canopy entrance enhanced with cultured stone, which will complement the vinyl siding that will be selected, he said. Mr. Narkawicz then showed the first floor layout of the building. He showed the main entrance leading to a lounge area on the left and administrative offices directly across the lobby to the right of the entrance. Moving through the entryway, there is a large community room with patio doors leading out to the recreational area. There are lounge areas on all three floors. There are elevators generally located at the H intersections and stairwells on each end of the building, leading to the outside, he said.

Mr. Narkawicz went on to discuss the way that Calamar includes the residents in designing the space in the building. Based on their experience with other senior housing apartments, they are able to sign tenants before the building is completed. Calamar enlists those future tenants in assisting to design the appearance of the building and creating in-house programs focused on developing a sense of community.

Mr. Stoppelman stated that there is a great demand for a housing development for seniors in Manchester. He asked about the ratio of residents to parking and whether there were enough spaces planned. Attorney Penny replied that there are 128 units and 150 parking spaces planned. Ms. Bertotti noted that the plan exceeds the minimum requirements of the zoning regulations.

Mr. Stoppelman asked about the ratio of one-bedroom units to two-bedroom units and whether the units would provide tubs or showers in the bathroom. Mr. Narkawicz responded that there will be 42 one-bedroom and 86 two-bedroom units with showers, based on their experience at other facilities.

Mr. Stoppelman noted that the connection to Hillstown Road was a concern and that there were no sidewalks on Hillstown Road at the current time, although the Town is planning to add one during the improvement project. Mr. Narkawicz stated that if the Town is planning a sidewalk, Calamar can take providing the connection to it into consideration in the final, detailed plan.

Mr. Prause asked what the eligibility requirements would be for residents, other than age. Mr. Narkawicz responded that there are no income requirements and that the apartments are available on a first come, first serve basis.

Mr. Prause stated that this type of housing was a great option for seniors. He felt that the community experience was very important to quality of life. He was happy to see two elevators on the designs and suggested that they be clearly labeled on the detailed plan when it is presented to the Commission. He mentioned the recreational areas and asked if the patio was just an open space or if activities would be planned. Mr. Narkawicz suggested that any activities would be dictated by the residents themselves, supported by the employees.

Mr. Prause asked if there was a trail system. Mr. Narkawicz answered that they do have pedestrian walkways that are used for exercise, but that they don't have a trail system.

Mr. Prause asked if there are any other resources like a library. Mr. Narkawicz replied that their experience in other facilities is that this activity is usually something one of the active residents assumes as the facility begins to fill up. The lounge areas are often used for libraries.

Mr. Prause asked if the facility planned for any sound barriers on I-384 to the south of the building. Mr. Narkawicz stated that they did not have plans for sound barriers at this time, but they would consider adding sound attenuation barriers on that side of the building if necessary.

Ms. Scorso asked if there were any drawings of the garage structures for review. Mr. Narkawicz responded that he did not have any. He offered that the garages would be constructed in the same manner as the main building, which is wood frame with foundations. Ms. Scorso asked how the garage spaces are assigned to residents. Mr. Narkawicz replied that the use of the garage is an additional fee and they are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Mr. Stoppelman asked if the lawn of the facility was level and Mr. Narkawicz stated that it was. Mr. Stoppelman suggested establishing a community garden for the residents might be useful. Mr. Narkawicz said Calamar has found that if residents want a community garden, they get together and start one, but not every facility has one because not all residents are interested.

Mr. Bergin asked if anyone on the staff of the facility will have healthcare experience. Mr. Narkawicz said that many members of the staff have CPR training, but they do not keep anyone on staff with formal healthcare training.

Mr. Prause then called for comments from staff. Ms. Bertotti noted that there were only minor outstanding comments, which could be made a condition of approval. She went on to say that the parking formula was based on congregate housing. After further discussions with the applicant and a review of the zoning regulations, staff came to understand that this is not really congregate housing as defined by Manchester's zoning regulations. A cursory review of the zoning regulations indicates that the proposed parking will not meet the requirements. Mr. Bergin asked what the new requirements for parking would entail. Ms. Bertotti replied that under the regulations for parking for EHD, the facility would need 155 spaces and their plan now shows 150 spaces. Mr. Bergin asked if the change would alter the number of handicapped spaces and Ms. Bertotti said she was not sure, but she would check. She added that a plan modification could result in a site design with sufficient parking.

Mr. Pellegrini pointed out that the requirements for parking must be met and are not negotiable. He continued that they are very close to the requirement for independent living, multi-family homes, but the applicant must demonstrate that they meet the parking requirements.

Mr. Stoppelman stated that he was somewhat concerned about the four staircases on the end of each wing. He felt that the distance to egress in the case of emergency might be too great and he would like to see another staircase. Mr. Pellegrini stated that the requirements for emergency egress are dictated by the building code and the fire code, and the applicant will have to meet the standards in those codes for an independent living facility.

Ms. Bertotti read the memo that had been received that afternoon from Mr. Mayer. The memo indicated that Mr. Mayer had recently reviewed new accident information on Hillstown Road when exiting from the McDonald's parking lot. As a result of the new information, Mr. Mayer recommended postponing access to the facility on Hillstown Road until the Town of Manchester had completed the road improvement project and a traffic analysis might be conducted.

Mr. Prause asked Ms. Bertotti to discuss the timeline of the Town's improvement project with respect to this facility's project timeline. Ms. Bertotti indicated that the timeline would depend on when the project's detailed plan of development might receive approval. Mr. Pellegrini stated that the Town's plans are complete and awaiting state DOT approval. The hope is that the Town will be able to go out to bid on the project for a start this construction season. However, the possibility exists that both of these projects might be running concurrently. It's possible that the widening of Hillstown Road and the addition of turning lanes may ease the chances of collisions at this location. Regardless of whether the Commission closes the hearing tonight or not, the access to Hillstown Road could possibly provide an additional emergency access to the complex, which public safety staff would want to have available.

Mr. Prause added that if there was no improvement in traffic accidents, it would be preferable to keep the gate on the Hillstown Road access for emergencies.

Ms. Ike asked if the Hillstown Road access would be gated only during construction or if it would be kept gated all the time. Attorney Penny stated that the applicant had offered to keep the Hillstown Road access gated until the issue could be satisfactorily resolved. He went on to state that if the Preliminary Plan were approved, he did not anticipate being back before the Commission with a Detailed Plan of Development before June. That would push the construction phase 12 to 16 months beyond June.

Mr. Stebe thought that the access on Spencer Street would be fine if people were traveling east, but for people traveling west, having the access on Hillstown Road and being able to turn left at the light at Hillstown Road and Spencer Street would be beneficial.

Mr. Stoppelman offered that one possibility would be to put a sidewalk out to Spencer Street in green space located between the McDonald's and 168 Spencer Street. Attorney Penny responded that they need to review the Town's design for the improvement project. Once they have done that, they will take everything into consideration.

Mr. Prause asked about the traffic report and what the service level would be. Mr. Grindle responded that the level of service was amended as a result of Mr. Mayer's comments, bringing the level of service to a C for the site drive if the location across the street (the former Mill Store) remains vacant.

Mr. Prause stated that he felt the idea of keeping the Hillstown Road access gated was a good idea, depending on the timing of both construction projects. Ms. Bertotti said that the applicant has stated that they are willing to put up a gate on the Hillstown Road access and keep it gated until all questions have been answered.

Mr. Narkawicz stated that the earliest construction date for the project would be in the fall of this year and that process would take approximately 12 – 16 months. He continued by saying that Calamar is willing to work with the Town until Town staff is comfortable with granting access.

Mr. Pellegrini added that if there is an approval of the Preliminary Plan of Development tonight, there would still be a Detailed Plan of Development that would need to be approved at a later

date. At that time, Town officials and the Commission will have much more information available. This could be made a condition of approval.

Mr. Stoppelman asked if there was any reason to delay closing the hearing because of the change in status from congregate housing to elderly housing. Ms. Bertotti replied that there was no reason and the change to elderly housing would be addressed in the Detailed Plan of Development. Mr. Pellegrini clarified that the two major issues are the number of parking spaces required for the facility and the gated access to Hillstown Road.

Attorney Penny read the definition of elderly housing and noted that there is not a large meaningful difference between elderly housing and congregate housing, based on the level of service provided.

Mr. Prause noted that the traffic report mentioned Walmart traffic and asked whether this would be included in the traffic study. Attorney Penny answered that yes, the anticipated traffic from the Walmart store was taken into consideration.

Mr. Prause called for comments from the public and there were none.

Ms. Bertotti indicated that an email had been received regarding proposed zoning changes on Spencer Street. The email, which listed some concerns, was from one of the neighbors of the proposed facility that would be out of town on the night of the public hearing. Some of the concerns cited included what the structure would look like, what kind of building materials would be used, who the owners would be, how residents would be screened and whether the facility would allow pets.

Mr. Bergin asked if the parking lot and roadways would be lit and if the lighting would take neighbors into consideration. Mr. Narkawicz replied that there would be lighting and this would be detailed in the Detailed Plan of Development.

Mr. Bergin asked if the facility would allow pets and Mr. Narkawicz said yes, pets under 25 lbs. would be allowed.

Mr. Stoppelman moved to close the public hearing and Ms. Scorso seconded. All members voted in favor.

The Chairman closed the Public Hearing at 9:05 p.m.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

May 2, 2016 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eric Prause, Chairman

**NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS PUBLIC HEARING CAN  
BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.**