

Michaela Shoemaker

From: Richard Kearney <richard@kearneyacdonald.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 28, 2018 10:55 AM
To: Michaela Shoemaker
Cc: 'Richard Kearney'
Subject: Application of Prep Hanover Real Estate LLC, Town of Hanover Zoning Bylaws, Variance Requests, etc.

I was going to write a letter but the Thanksgiving Holiday and "life" intervened and as such I am resorting to a last minute email.

When considering a letter I found that I was getting embroiled in too many intersections, competing thoughts and failing to focus on the specifics. That said I moved into Hanover in 1974. I lived across from the Mall on Spruce Way. I chose to reside there because gas prices had "exploded" to the "unimaginable" cost of 40 cents for a gallon of gas if I recall. I also recall with great pain getting in line at 4 AM at the local gas station(s) on even numbered days in January of 1974 to purchase perhaps 3 to 4 gallons of gas. I chose to live across from the Mall because I could always resort to taking the Plymouth and Brockton Bus to my job in Boston.

I also clearly recall that at that time the present area populated by Wendy's et al was the site of a huge pile of used tires....piles that stretched a great distance under the power lines; piles that were at least 15 to 20 feet in height.....in an effort to be kind I will merely state that the sight was at best ugly and at worst hideous make that absolutely hideous.

However, that was a time when the Mall was a thriving location. It was a destination. It was a place where a great deal could be accomplished and one could do a food shop at the nearby Purity Supreme which is now Petco, if I recall. The latter provides me with a platform for an easy metaphor. If the Town of Hanover fails to approve the subject project is the Town of Hanover embarking on a mission that can be defined as a death spiral ending in an empty Mall, an empty parking lot and a dismal gateway to Hanover from the nearby intersection of Routes 53 and 3? If the Town elects to reject the relief sought by the developer the Town will be complicit, indeed expressly so, in sentencing the Town to a period of dissonance, discord and dismay that will resonate with thousands of people each day as they journey along Route 53 to other locations to attend to and complete their purchasing needs.

I have glanced at the architects renderings of the finished project. What I see is a visual that is attractive, up to date, provides for entertainment, walking areas, reduced parking intelligently designed, recreation areas, beautiful buffer zones, provisions for the local stream, etc. When I attended the evening at JC Penny's historical location at the Mall in August I was impressed by the polished presentation. I was impressed by the fact that the developer shared an anecdote in which he rode his bicycle to the Hanover Mall as an adolescent in the distant past. An image which was further buttressed by the fact that his parents still reside in nearby Marshfield. A man, a developer a successful professional who has a substantive connection to the local area. Such connections have merit they are meaningful and should not be casually ignored. I was impressed by the fact that every question asked of the panel of presenters was answered in a direct non-obtuse fashion. I witnessed no obfuscation and indeed saw no effort to mislead those residents of Hanover in attendance.

It was clear that the object of concern was the developers need to provide for housing units as an element of the development process. It was readily obvious that the linkage between the development of the mall area and the development of the nearby housing constituted a necessary and symbiotic financial relationship. The proposed housing units appear to be quite well designed and indeed they are planned to be situated in the area presently occupied by the Hanover Cinema Complex. Interestingly a number of people attending the presentation were concerned about the height of the housing/buildings but the reality is that the elevation drop from Route 53 down to the Hanover Cinema

Complex is significant indeed and as such if one focuses upon the height issue they are dismissing the reality of the elevation drop from Route 53. This is not a sleight of hand performed by a magician. It is a reality and one that benefits all concerned for obvious reasons. In a sense it arguably renders the issue as moot because the claims of those not in favor of the development advancing arguments that the Town of Hanover is being irrevocably changed by this sudden deluge of “skyscrapers”, the “skyline problems”, the ruining of a pastoral “village atmosphere”, etc. are arguments which can and should be dismissed as they are arguments in search of a problem.

I would add that we reside in a capitalist society. Clearly companies that are prepared to invest some \$250,000,000 in the “re-gifting” of the Hanover Mall are entitled to be able to reward their investors. There is a legitimate and reciprocal rationale to what the developers are planning for the Hanover Mall. I mean to think otherwise is to merely confirm a pre-textual distancing from reality. The Town of Hanover taxes its residents to accomplish its goals and objectives. The Hanover Mall developers take significant risks and as such they reward their investors for taking the risk of capitalizing the build out and refurbishing of the Hanover Mall to the tune of \$250,000,000. And while we are plodding through this tangled administrative thicket I suspect that there will be many jobs made available for local residents during the buildout and of course thereafter when the various businesses, housing accommodations and day to day infrastructure maintenance require employees.

With regard to the alleged “water problem” again it is nothing more than an engineered angst in search of comfort. If the Town of Hanover has a “water problem” then perhaps it is time that all watering of sacred iconic territory i.e. our lawns be halted....because let’s not kid ourselves....the sign “Private Well” is an oxymoron. Yet another illustration of an utter distancing from reality. The water comes from the aquifer and if anything when played upon our lawns, often during rain storms, it gets returned to the aquifer in an altered state compromised by lawn treatments, weed control, fertilizer, etc. but I digress. There is in reality a “water problem” but it is not a problem that has been visited upon us by the Hanover Mall or the prospect of the re-development of the Hanover Mall. The problem is extant has existed for decades and continues again a problem of “mirage like” construction. The mythical “water boogey man resides with the Town of Hanover not the Hanover Mall developers.

I would close by simply stating that the Town of Hanover can elect to proceed into the 21st Century or it can elect to regress into the 20th Century. I would add that those seeking to re-develop “malls” must be careful. The old rules no longer apply. There is an internet. People have choices.

Developers must come up with new ideas. New ways to attract people to these existing shopping locations. Developers such as those interested in developing the Hanover Mall must be prepared to blend the needs of the local people, address the tenant mix, be familiar with the current and future state of technology and of course be able to address basic commercial concerns. Of course in such a renewed environment new options must be examined such as creating a marriage between mall development, residential development and beautification of the nearby and surrounding area. The latter three objectives were clearly addressed at the August presentation and I certainly came away feeling elevated with respect to the future. What does the Town of Hanover want? An empty mall? A mall in which plywood sheets are laid over existing windows? Should we be investing in plywood? A security patrol overseeing empty space? A mall surrounded by a border of asphalt that has no vehicles parked in the spaces? A town that becomes incrementally distressed and diseased by the failure to develop the gateway to the community from the Route 3 and Route 53 intersection, which constitute main local thoroughfares? If we choose to secede to fear, fallacious reasoning and a fickle attitude we will have created nothing more than a new series of problems created by deliberately missing and mismanaging a wonderful opportunity.

Accordingly I see the problem as being quite easy to resolve. There are the Hanover Mall owners/developers who are creating a plan of action which constitutes some measure of risk which they are obliged to evaluate. They have been explicit with respect to their development needs and the related goals and objectives which frankly make good sense. They mean no harm to the community indeed the community will potentially and most likely thrive more so as a result of this project proceeding in the immediate future.

My only concern is that the Town of Hanover's leaders will stumble and fall prey to the naysayers, the doomsday advocates and those devoted to the role of being Devils Advocates. They have no plan none but when those who have a plan come forward they then move into high gear with all sorts of manufactured concerns and negativity which concerns reside upon a foundation constructed of fear, anxiety and an implied distrust in "developers"we must have a level of trust in these people, we must move ahead with confidence, we must have transparency for both the developers and the Town of Hanover leaders, we must embrace the future and not the past and this project must be approved for the benefit of the current and future residents of Hanover.

Richard W. Kearney

PS: Please forward this email to Mr. Matthew Perkins Chairman of the ZBA

Richard W. Kearney, Esquire
KEARNEY & MACDONALD
The Cornerstone Building
800 Hingham Street, Suite 201S
Rockland, MA 02370
Telephone: (781) 871-4333
Facsimile: (781) 871-5228

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