



TOWN OF MEDFIELD
DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE AND PLANNING
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October 24, 2024

Kat Miller
Senior Planning and Programs Analyst
Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency
One Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108-3110

Re: Application for Project Eligibility Determination/Site Approval 86 Plain St
Municipal Comment Letter; Due October 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Miller:

In response to an application for Project Eligibility Determination/Site Approval (the "Application") submitted to the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency ("MassHousing") by 86 Plain St, LLC for a proposed development of twenty-four (24) units on Plain Street in Medfield pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40B, Sections 20-23 ("Chapter 40B"), the Medfield Affordable Housing Trust (the "Trust") submits the following as written comment pursuant to 760 CMR 56.04 (3). It is our understanding that the Medfield Select Board will be submitting their own comment letter, as well as some Medfield residents.

On October 17, 2024 the Trust convened to discuss the 86 Plain Street Chapter 40B development proposal. We are writing to formally present several points for your consideration as the project moves forward:

- **Wetlands and Vernal Pools:** The Trust concurs with the Medfield Conservation Commission's assessment of discrepancies in the application. The Application indicates minimal wetlands and no vernal pools on-site; however, it has been confirmed that there are significant wetlands and a large, certified vernal pool present on the property, resource areas protected by both the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town of Medfield Wetlands Bylaw. These natural features must be adequately addressed in the applicant's proposal; the Application should accurately identify these sensitive resources and consider the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development to ensure compliance with existing environmental protections.
- **Waivers and Safety Concerns:** The number of waivers requested by the applicant is substantial, notably the waiver concerning the minimum distance between roads.

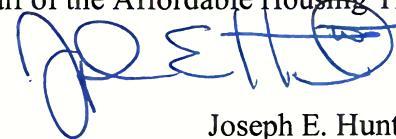
Specifically, Briar Hill Road is located too close (within 500 feet) to the proposed entryway for this development, raising significant safety concerns. In addition, certain sight distances along Plain Street are currently below desired intersection sight distance requirements. The Trust does not believe the current design meets the safety standards expected for such a development.

- **Impact on Scenic and Rural Area:** This project is located in a rural, scenic part of Medfield – Plain Street is designated as a scenic road in the Town of Medfield – with many public shade trees and an extensive stone wall that contribute to the town's character. The Trust is particularly concerned that sight lines along the road are insufficient for safe travel as noted above, especially with the anticipated increase in traffic from 24 new homes. Tree trimming and other visibility improvements will need to be undertaken to ensure safe access to the site; however, as a scenic road, any cutting of trees or removal or alterations of the existing stone wall within the public right of way will require a public hearing of the Medfield Planning Board. Any development in this area must prioritize maintaining the safety and character of this important public space.
- **Abutter Concerns:** Abutters who attended the Trust's October 17 meeting expressed serious concerns about the impact of the project on nearby vernal pools and the small pond located on-site. Due to the proximity of these natural resources, we understand that the proposed road for the development cannot be further widened, leaving a narrow driveway as the only means of access and egress. This presents a significant safety issue, especially in the event of an emergency.
- **Traffic Impact:** Abutters and the Trust are also worried about the volume of traffic that would result from the construction of 24 homes, particularly given the narrow access point and sight line concerns. The Trust believes this could lead to congestion and increased safety risks on this already challenging scenic roadway.

While the Trust fully supports the creation of affordable housing to help Medfield meet its affordability goals, there are critical issues with the current Application that need to be addressed before the applicant moves forward with a Comprehensive Permit. We urge the applicant to reconsider aspects of the design to ensure that environmental, safety, and abutter concerns are properly considered and managed.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure that any development in Medfield meets both the needs of our community and the appropriate regulatory standards.

Respectfully,
On behalf of the Affordable Housing Trust



Joseph E. Hunt IV
Affordable Housing Trust Liaison