



RE: PH#3040MA
1297 Enfield St
Zone Change
July 14, 2022

The Special Development District (SDD) has been around for over 25 years. This zone was established with the **sole purpose** of enabling the rehab/reuse of **VACANT, DETORiated, or UNDERUTILIZED** buildings and their sites. Since its inception it was only used three times.

The first two times, for Enfield St (formerly Bernies Warehouse) and Thompsonville (formally the Bigelow Carpet Mills). Both were located in a Business District. Both fell under the “sole purpose” of the SDD zone, that being VACANT, DETORiated and with both being vacant, they were NOT being utilized.

I was glad to see those buildings rehabbed and reused.

The third time it was used was for Blair Manor. Although Blair Manor is in a residential district, and (probably SHOULD NOT have been designated SDD) its abutters and the area surrounding is a mixed use area. It was vacant, detoriated, and not being utilized.

Zoning Regs Article 5 – Business, Section 560.1 specifies that the Commission may “establish a Special Development District, **IF** the Commission finds the proposal meets **ALL 8** of the following criteria:

- A. Meets. They do a gross floor area over 10,000 square feet.
- B. Meets. They do have a land area over 5 acres.
- C. DO they have a vacancy rate of 80% or more? I do not believe it does.

According to the narrative submitted:

- “the dormitory (Novitiate House/St Felix Center) has been vacant for over two years.
- “the covent is underutilized, with only 50% of the space being occupied by the Sisters living on campus.”
- “there are currently approximately 140 dwelling units on the campus, however only 45 are occupied (between the Convent, St Francis Residence, and the Novitiate House)” Surprise, I guess the Novitiate House is no longer vacant as the narrative also said.
- I am sure the Chapel is being used.

Submitted by Ellen K Martin

- I am not sure which building is housing the Montessori School, thus another building that is being used.
- I was unable to find out about the other buildings on site and their useage.
- One question I have.....buildings may or may not be used as living space, but they COULD be used as storage space, for furniture, records, etc etc. which would than not count the space as “vacant”, as it is used to store “stuff”.

Bottom line is we do not know how much space is actually VACANT????
Until actual numbers are produced, we really do not know. Therefore I do NOT believe you can really say that Criteria C is met or not.

The only reference to this criteria is in the Staff notes – stating under Criteria C: MEETS, with no further explanation or calculations submitted.

- D. I do not believe they can develop that “project” under the “provisions” of any other zone district that could “fall under the Historic District”.
- E. As far as a substantial benefit to the town. In last meeting (6/30), their attorney mentioned the need for more affordable housing in Enfield. And by doing their proposed “project” they can begin to meet that need. Maybe we should look at what has already been approved by this Commission.
 1. #153 South Road, an Elderly Residential complex with 96 units.
 2. #359 Hazard Ave, (the old Y) 10 apartments with medical offices on 1st floor.
 3. Enfield Gardens – 19 units (will be starting, I do believe in December)
 4. Blair Manor – 40 units
 5. George Washington Rd zone change approval for Multi Family Housing, (not sure of numbers) adding more units to the total.
 6. Thompsonville (the Strand and Angelo Lamana Center) – I do believe it is 40 units.

These (over 200 units, not including George Washington Rd.) are already approved, without the necessity of CHANGING the Historic District Zone of Enfield.

Please keep in mind..... Currently, Enfield has at least 12% Affordable Housing, which does NOT include the "already approved" apartments. The State is looking at town to have at least 10%. We are there and we are still planning to add more to our total with things that are already approved, in areas that would not effect our small Historic District.

And as far as "benefiting the immediate neighborhood," judging by the increasing number of "VOTE NO ZONE CHANGE" signs I have seen, the neighboring residents do NOT see a benefit!

- F. No, I do not believe it would be compatible with the character and density of the abutting areas HR-33 with maximum density of 1.25 units per acre.
- G. No, I do not believe it would be compatible with the zoning districts adjacent to the site. (zoned HR-33)
- H. No, I do not believe it is compatible with the Town PC&D.
Their Attorney presented a few points where the project could be considered to be compatible with the Town PC&D. However, one area in the PC&D he did not reference concerned the Historic District.

Let's not forget..... this is a little part of the bigger picture in OUR TOWN..... it's history. And the Town PC&D reminds us of that, when you look at the section on the Historic District.

1. Enfield Street - ".....accomplishments include REDUCTION of residential zoning densities to MAINTAIN character of the neighborhood and limit traffic, and creation of a local historic district to ENSURE that modification to historic properties are consistent with preservation standards."

2. The project that is being proposed will INCREASE residential density to 9.3 units per acre AND it WILL increase traffic.

Prior to "establishing" the Town of Enfield's FOURTH Special Development District I hope the P&Z Commission would FIRST do their due diligence and REMEMBER:

- The Historic District is not JUST a "small part of our town" but it is part of our Town's History. Please take a pause and reflect on the fact that those commissioners who came before you, had enough sense to want to preserve and protect that History by creating our Historic District.
- There are other options available to the Sisters, by Special Permit which would NOT require a zone change.
- Ensure the criteria of this special district is met.
 - Does the property meet the vacancy "requirement"? Where are the numbers?
 - There are many of the criteria that this project does not meet.
 - There is only two criteria that are definitely met, one you need more data to determine, and the rest are questionable.
- Look around you here tonite and see there are MANY residents who oppose this zone change.
- Look on roads near the proposed project, signs tell you there are MANY residents who oppose this zone change.
- PLEASE ----- protect our Historic District!!!

THANK YOU!