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May 31, 2023

Peter Matchak
Town Planner
Town of Ashland
101 Main Street
Ashland, MA 01721



Re: Ashland Properties, LLC ("Applicant") 10-60 Main Street ("Project") /Request to Continue Public Hearing to August 10, 2023
Via email pmatchak@ashlandmass.com

Dear Mr. Matchak:

I am writing to you on behalf of the above-named Applicant to formally request the Ashland Planning Board continue the present public hearing to August 10, 2023. To the extent that the Planning Board is willing to grant the continuance, you may also accept this letter as confirmation that the Applicant voluntarily extends the timelines for the filing of all decisions.

As you may recall, I recently informed you the Applicant would like to spend additional time analyzing the best way to bring the Project to fruition. Over the past two years, the Town, acting by and through your office (and with the assistance of Town Administrator, Michael Herbert) has made a significant effort to facilitate a collaborative approach to the redevelopment of this critical part of Ashland's downtown district. While I am certain that the Planning Board has been intimately involved in the approval of other projects of significance in the Town, I believe their work on this application displays their commitment to Ashland's Downtown District. To the extent that the Project receives final approval, the Town will benefit from a properly designed, pedestrian and public friendly mixed-use development.

Presently, the Applicant has embraced the design changes suggested by the Planning Board, and I believe the most recent architectural drawings demonstrate that the Applicant has carefully listened to the Planning Board. In my opinion the present design demonstrates that the collaborative approach mentioned above is working.

Recently, we completed our 9th formal presentation to the Planning Board. At this time, we are confident we have demonstrated that the Project as presented can be approved for a Special Permit

and Site Plan approval under the specific criteria established in the Zoning By-Laws. It is not my intention to provide a complete analysis of the By-Laws at this time, as we recognize there is work to be done. However, starting with unit count and allocation of mixed-use space, I would like to provide a summary of what has been accomplished to date.

Unit Count/Affordable Units

At the present time, the Applicant is requesting approval of 195 apartments with 15% being designated as affordable. The Applicant's original presentation made prior to filing of the application showed a plan for 225 units with 20-25% designated as affordable. At the time the application was submitted the unit count was reduced to 200. Thereafter, the unit count was again decreased to accommodate the Planning Board's requests for design changes, specifically for the purpose of reducing massing and at the same time to provide a more "historic look" to the buildings. The reduction in the percentage of affordable units was necessitated due to projected construction costs including but not limited to interest rates and supply chain issues.

The Applicant intends to use the two-month continuance period requested above to make a concerted effort to finalize its cost projections, explore alternative financing and provide a more detailed analysis as to why having a minimum of 195 units is essential to the Project's viability.

Mixed-Use /Commercial Development

Presently, the Project will include approximately 28,000 square feet of commercial space. While there were public comments made regarding the fact that the present use of the properties provides 127,000 square feet of commercial space. Actually, the large percentage of this space is not "consumer friendly" but rather industrial/warehouse in nature. Included among the present tenants are a 20,000 square foot gym area, three churches, automotive uses and other uses typically defined as "light industry". Many of the present uses would be more compatible with an industrial park. It is important to note for the record that many of the present uses are pre-existing non-conforming uses that are otherwise not allowed in the Downtown District.

From a design standpoint, the proposed redevelopment will feature the commercial uses along Main Street, at street level with full visibility to and access from the street. It is the Applicant's position that the addition of 28,000 square feet of new, modern, energy efficient commercial space will add significant opportunities for local businesses.

Parking Requirements

The Project as presently configured will provide 373 parking spaces which is 85 spaces more than required by the By-Laws. The Applicant is confident that during the Site Plan Approval stage of the permitting process that the Planning Board will be able to determine that the parking spaces as presented are sufficient to handle the Project's needs and in fact provide additional public parking in the Project's immediate area.

Traffic Considerations

Detailed traffic reports and analysis were provided with the application. An initial review by the Town's consultant found the report to be properly detailed. Additional information was requested by the peer reviewer, and that information has been submitted. The Applicant understands that the Planning Board may request additional streets ("cut thru streets") to be examined, and the Applicant is willing to engage in conversations regarding the scope and breadth of an amended

traffic analysis.

Overlay District Compliance

The Project as presently configured will meet or exceed all the dimensional/intensity regulations set forth in the Downtown Overlay District (ADD-A)

Environmental Issues

As previously stated at the recent public hearing, the Applicant will supplement its presentation regarding the installation of a vapor barrier, the closure of the open filings with the DEP and all other information necessary for the Planning Board to incorporate terms and conditions in the Special Permit and Site Plan Approval.

Conservation Commission

Based on the Planning Board's stated position that the Projects' footprint is now relatively defined, the Applicant will make a formal filing with the Conservation Commission. Based on preliminary analysis conducted by the Applicant's consultants, we believe the Project can be approved by the Conservation Commission.

Flood Overlay District

The Project will require a Special Permit because a portion of the parking area is within the 100-year flood plain. The Applicant is prepared to demonstrate to the Planning Board that due consideration has been given to flood plain issues and that the post construction improvements will have a positive impact on the Flood Overlay District.

While I understand this correspondence does not cover all of the topic areas the Planning Board wishes to review with the Applicant, it is my hope that this brief summary demonstrates the Applicant's commitment to continue the collaborative approach to permitting this complex and important redevelopment of 10-60 Main Street.

Your anticipated cooperation in continuing the public hearing is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashland Properties, LLC by its Attorney

Joseph M. Antonellis

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Cc: Richard Gordon