

OceanView

AT • FALMOUTH

A 21st century retirement community

December 4, 2014

Falmouth Town Council
c/o Nathan Poore
Town Manager
271 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

Re: OceanView Retirement Community: Plummer-Motz School

Dear Council Members:

On behalf of OceanView at Falmouth, I am writing to you regarding the redevelopment of the Plummer School located on campus of the former Falmouth elementary schools. Over the last two years, OceanView has made considerable progress on the redevelopment of the overall school site. More recently, the Town of Falmouth kicked off its effort to renovate the former Mason-Motz School into a community center. After ongoing discussions with both Town staff and councilors, we feel the time is right to move ahead with our plans for the Plummer School. And by working in close cooperation with the Town of Falmouth, we believe that we can produce a superior community-focused development on the Plummer-Motz site.

The following letter contains a brief description of OceanView's vision for the Plummer School and how it can integrate with and enhance the entire Plummer-Motz complex. We would like to redevelop the Plummer School into moderately priced senior rental housing. In addition, we would like to locate a public senior community center within the Plummer School. We are pursuing this project because we believe a community-oriented project is the appropriate reuse for the Plummer School and an excellent neighbor for the Mason-Motz Community Center.

While our general vision for the project is well-established, the specifics of the design and development program are not. We are approaching the town council at this time to seek your full and unequivocal support for this vision before we begin the next stage of the development project. Moreover, we are requesting that town staff be available to work in partnership with OceanView staff on developing an integrated master plan for the Plummer-Motz complex. The expertise of the planning and community services staff – combined with our development team – can quickly and cost-effectively produce a plan that meets both of our interests – from building design to utility coordination to parking.

Redevelopment of the Plummer School into Affordable Senior Housing

During the initial RFP process by which OceanView acquired the property from the Town of Falmouth, the two consistent ideas we heard from the town for the Plummer School were a library or some type of affordable housing. After the decision by the library board not to pursue the library, we turned our focus to affordable

20 Blueberry Lane
Falmouth, ME 04105
(207) 781-4460

housing. Over the intervening months, we've had several conversations with town staff and councilors that reaffirmed this interest in affordable senior housing. The following is the vision that has emerged from these conversations.

- 1) Affordable / Moderate Income Senior Housing. The proposed project is 35 senior rental apartments. We are calling it affordable with a little "a" or moderate senior housing. This is because it is not formally subsidized by the Maine State Housing Authority or similar program. Based on our review, we simply do not think this project in this location would ever score high enough to qualify for a formal subsidy. However, by pursuing historic tax credits and other applicable programs, we believe that we can achieve rents that fall within the affordability guidelines of MSHA. The ideal size of this type of project is approximately 35 apartments and that is why we are pursuing that number. In order to achieve this density, we will need to construct an addition to the rear of the Plummer School.
- 2) Distinct from OceaView. The project will not be a formal part of the OceanView Retirement Community. It will be an independent, stand-alone apartment complex. In order to achieve affordability, it must be straight rental apartments without the comprehensive and costly service programs associated with a full-service retirement community. However, the physical location on the campus will undoubtedly result in informal integration and support from the larger OceanView community. Additionally, some services could be offered on an a la carte basis to the new residents.
- 3) Historic Tax Credits and the Senior Center. We will most likely pursue historic tax credits in order to support the project. This offers two important challenges. First, a preliminary review by the Maine Historic Commission and National Park Service indicates that they will want to see the original gym space restored in order to qualify for tax credits. The original gym started in the basement and extended up thru the first floor to the bottom of the second floor. The restoration of this space is both an obstacle and an opportunity. It is an obstacle because it will create a large space with no rental income in the center of the building. The opportunity is the idea of creating a public senior center within this large space. The senior center could complement both the surrounding housing and the neighboring community center. It will be open to the public and operated in partnership with the Town of Falmouth.
- 4) Historic Tax Credits and Building Design. The historic tax credits will also require a detailed review from the Maine Preservation Commission and the National Park Service. This review will help ensure an attractive and appropriate renovation and addition to the Plummer School. It also directly impacts the location of the proposed addition behind the Plummer School. Generally, they want the addition to be behind and secondary to the main historic building.
- 5) The Addition and the Property Line. In addition to its relation to the primary historic structure, the expansion also needs to contain a large number of cost-effective apartments. This dictates that the addition be a long, narrow, double loaded hallway which in turn creates a linear design extending away from the main building. The preliminary design that you see in the enclosed site plan needs major improvement. However, it does demonstrate that we will need the support of the Town Council to shift at least one of the property lines behind the Plummer School. This is one of the critical reasons we need to work in cooperation with town staff on the master plan. We want to ensure that we have an excellent design that works today and in the long run as the community center evolves.

With this background, we look forward to meeting with the Town Council on Monday night, December 8th. We are excited about this project. From restoring and repurposing a historic local building to providing housing and services to local seniors, we think it is an important project worthy of your support. Therefore, we are respectfully requesting your support for the project and the concept of working with town staff and select councilors in an expeditious and cost-effective manner to produce a final proposal for your review and approval.

On behalf of the OceanView Community, we thank you for the opportunity to present and discuss this proposal with the Council.

Very truly yours,



John B. Wasileski, Owner
OceanView at Falmouth

Enclosures:

- (1) Preliminary Site Plan
- (2) Preliminary Architectural Drawings