



CROSSMAN ENGINEERING

Civil • Transportation • Environmental • Site Planning • Surveying • Permitting

Master Plan Narrative

For

Commonwealth House

Assisted Living

643 & 655 Commonwealth Avenue

Warwick RI

March 10, 2023

Introduction

Commonwealth, LLC, operates Commonwealth House Assisted Living, a 10-bed extended facility (Use Code 705) at 655 Commonwealth Avenue and the owners of Commonwealth House, Graham and Amanda Willoughby, reside in a single-family home on the adjacent lot at 643 Commonwealth Avenue. The land includes Plat 247, lots 45, 50 & 105 and has an area of approximately 1.93 acres. The site is on the west side of Commonwealth Avenue and opposite the intersection with Leon Whipple Road. The land is Zone A-40, which allows an Extended Care, Convalescent, Rest or Nursing Home Use as a Special Permit.



Aerial View of Site

Due to the aging of the Rhode Island population and the increasing need for assisted living facilities, the applicant is proposing to replace the existing single-family home with a new 8,000 +/- square foot, 14-unit facility.

Site Characteristics

The three (3) existing parcels currently contain the assisted living facility, single-family home, inground pool, tennis courts and two (2) accessory structures (sheds). The existing sheds and assisted living facility are existing non-conforming structures by dimension. For example, the assisted living facility is within the required side yard setback. One shed is within the required 15 ft side yard setback for accessory structures and one is within the required 10 ft rear yard and 15 ft side yard setback for accessory structures. Each of the structures mentioned above are within the required 40 ft setback to residential land. Specific dimensional offsets are provided on the Site Plans.

The parcel has approximately 346-ft of frontage along Commonwealth Avenue and has a depth of approximately 240-ft. The land is considered to be all upland with no wetlands on site. The land

is highest at the rear of the parcel with a gentle slope downward towards Commonwealth Avenue. The typical slope from rear to front is between 3% - 4% and as shown on the aerial image, other than the buildings, pool and tennis court, the land is predominately mowed lawn with mature trees.

Soils

The RIDEM Environmental Resources database identifies the underlying soils to be Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams (CeC) and Hinkley gravelly sandy loam (HkC). CeC soils are typically well drained but very rocky. The CeC soils are not suitable for a wetland environment due to dryness and are considered to be suitable for community development.



Soil Designation

The HkC soils are also well drained and too dry to provide wetland habitat. The HkC soils are also considered to be suitable for community development. Prior to final design, soil evaluations will be performed on site to document the depth to ledge and seasonal high water tables. Based upon the soil classifications, it is anticipated that the presence of rock below the surface may influence construction costs.

Flood Zone

Upon review of FEMA Flood Zone mapping, it was confirmed that the land is outside of the 100-year flood zone and no flood zones are present adjacent to the parcel.

Utilities

Field surveys confirmed that public water and public sewer systems service the property. Therefore, no on-site wastewater system or wells will be necessary.

Wetlands & Natural Heritage Areas

Although the soil types are not suitable for wetland habitat, a field review of the parcel, adjacent areas and the RIDEM Environmental Resource database were performed. No indication of freshwater wetlands was found.



Area Surrounding Parcel

RIDEM's database also identifies Natural Heritage Areas that serve as an aid in the conservation of state listed rare, threatened or endangered plant and animal species in Rhode Island. A review of the database confirmed that the parcel is not within a designated Natural Heritage Area.

Proposed Development



Proposed Facility

The proposed construction includes the removal of the single-family home, inground pool and tennis court and the construction of a single-level, 8,000 +/- sf 14-unit assisted living facility to supplement the existing 10-unit facility. Since the parcel is within the A-40 Residential District, in addition to the dimensional standards of the A-40 Zone, there is also a 40-ft setback requirement for any commercial activity from a Residential Zone. Existing dimensional non-conformities to the side and rear yards and the 40-ft residential setback are present and due to the parcel’s shape and facility needs, dimensional relief is being requested for a 30-ft rear yard setback and 30-ft rear yard residential setback and 20-ft setback for parking spaces from the front lot line/residential zone setback. The dimensional relief required is identified on the Master Plans.

The architectural style of the new facility reflects the residential characteristics of adjacent land and is depicted within the Master Plan Set.

Zoning

The land is within the Residence A-40 District, which allows the proposed Use as a Special Permit. In addition to a Special Permit from the Zoning Board and as noted above, dimensional relief will be necessary for the existing non-conformities, which include accessory structures within the required side and rear offsets, the existing main building within the side yard setback and the existing accessory structures and main building within the 40 ft buffer to residential. The proposed building will conform to the front 40 ft front yard and the 30 ft side yard but will require a variance to the 40 ft rear setback and 40 ft buffer to residential in the rear area. The proposed rear yard

setback is no less than 30 ft. This 30 ft setback is necessary due to the unique configuration and shape of the parcel and the dimensional needs of the facility to efficiently service residents/patients.

Traffic

Staffing for the new facility will include two (2) direct care staff in addition to the one (1) direct car staff in the existing facility on a peak shift. Ancillary staff, including an RN, facility administrator, chef and marketing, will be no more than four (4). Typical shift hours are 7 AM – 3 PM, 3 PM – 11 PM and 11 PM – 7 AM.

Access will continue to be provided from Commonwealth Avenue. The existing facility will maintain an existing one-way entrance and exit and the proposed building will have a one-way entrance and a two-way access point from Commonwealth Avenue directly opposite Leon Whipple Way.

In accordance with the Zoning Ordinance, one (1) parking space is required for every two (2) beds. Therefore, for a total of 24 beds, 12 parking spaces are required. No variance from parking count requirements is being requested.

Stormwater

As the project proceeds into the Preliminary and Final design stages, the stormwater system will be designed to conform to the City of Warwick Stormwater Standards and each aspect of the State of Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual. In addition to City of Warwick permitting, it is anticipated that Stormwater, Construction Activity and Stormwater Underground Injection Control Permits from RIDEM will be necessary.

Conclusion

Upon review of the environmental characteristics of the site and adjacent lands, the architectural style of the proposed facility, the existing and proposed landscaping and the low intensity use of the parcel, it can be concluded that the addition of a 14-unit assisted living facility will result in insignificant impacts to the neighborhood.

In regards to the requested Variances, it can be stated

- (1) That the hardship from which the applicant seeks relief is due to the unique characteristics of the subject land or structure and not the general characteristics of the surrounding area, and is not due to the physical or economic disability of the applicant;
- (2) That said hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant and does not result primarily from the desire of the applicant to realize greater financial gain;
- (3) That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general characteristic of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of this zoning ordinance or the comprehensive plan of the city;
- (4) That the relief to be granted is the least relief necessary.

In regards to the requested Special Permit, it can be stated

- (1) That the special use is specifically authorized by this ordinance in Table 1, Use Regulations for Land Use Code 705;
- (2) That the special use meets all the criteria set forth in the subsection 906 of this ordinance authorizing such special use and that the board may issue a special use in conjunction with specific dimensional variances and
- (3) That the granting of the special use permit will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of this ordinance or the comprehensive plan of the city.