
From:
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2019 3:42 PM
To: Michael Antonellis
Cc: Michael Hanson - FPD
Subject: Fire Safety and Protection Engineering Review for Goodridge Brook Estates

Dear Mr. Antonellis,

With just one schedule meeting remaining for the Goodridge Brook Estates permit hearings, we have yet to see a comprehensive and complete fire safety report from Chief Hanson and/or MA Department of Fire Safety.

As I have previously noted, the fire safety review for the proposed GBE project should consider the density and scale of the project as well as the potential for obstructed primary access. In addition, the site's proximity to industrial operations on its western boundary with Bestway, presents known hazards that should also be taken into account.

The facilities at Bestway include a diesel-fired kiln, multiple diesel storage tanks, hazardous chemical storage tanks, and extremely high-pressure treatment vessels (125,000 PSI). Trucks and trains deliver materials to and from the property on a daily basis, while forklifts move them within the property throughout the day.

The potential for toxic spills, explosions, or fires at Bestway that require evacuation of nearby property should be taken into account when evaluating the GBE plans. On a good day, future residents will only have to deal with noise, dust, exhaust, and truck traffic. On a bad day, secondary access might prove essential for the preservation of life and/or property.

While we all appreciate the preparation and training that the fire department undertakes to deal with worst-case scenarios, the fact that some neighborhoods in town have challenging situations (ie: close spacing), does not justify accepting lower standards for fire safety in new developments. Fire codes and zoning rules have evolved in recent decades.

Likewise, the fact that the town's newest ladder truck can reach 109 feet is of limited consolation, since it can not access the entire rear of the apartment buildings. When fully extended horizontally, that ladder would only reach 109 feet. Raising it 30 to 40 feet to reach upper floors, that distance would be less. The proposed building is over 470 feet long along the back, so over half of its upper floors remain beyond the reach of this single ladder.

In reviewing the GBE plans, the fire authorities should be looking at best practices such as the national fire code, particularly when the MA code falls short. While it is understood that they only have to meet the minimum MA code, we should strive for greater protection, wherever possible, particularly for new construction.

Please refer to my earlier comments from 4/19 appended below. Please share these concerns with the members of the Zoning Board. The Board should also consider the impact that zoning rules have upon public safety when granting any waivers or variances for this project.

Thank You,

Greg Jackson
Lancaster, MA

Subject: Re: GBE Comments from Fire Chief Hanson
Date: 4/19/2019 10:49:50 AM Eastern Standard Time
From:
To: MAntonellis@lancasterma.net

Hi Mike,

Thank you for your reply. Please let me know if the ZBA has requested Chief Hanson's presence at the next GBE hearing to address fire safety concerns.

Several major issues warrant further discussion:

- Providing secondary emergency access to both parcels
- Maintaining unobstructed fire road access widths (lack of off-street/overflow parking)
- Improving emergency access to the rear of the apartments
- Increasing side setbacks for houses (or requesting sprinklers for those that don't meet zoning rules)

The fire safety review for the proposed GBE project should comprehensively consider the density and scale of the project as well as the potential for obstructed primary access.

Please let me know when residents can expect to see a comprehensive fire safety review from Chief Hanson and/or from the MA Department of Fire Safety engineer.

Thank You,

Greg Jackson