

Age Restricted Overlay District (AROD)

History

In June 2020, the Town of Mendon entered into a contract with Kellar Williams Government services to sell three (3) Town-owned properties. One of which is a two (2) parcel 21-acre property at the intersection of North Avenue and Milford Street. (See Map)

After numerous discussions with Town Officials including the Board of Selectmen; Planning Board; Land Use Committee; and the Economic Development Committee it was felt that a mixed-use development, with an over 55 residential and a small commercial component would be the most beneficial to the Town. It would place the property back on the tax rolls, provide cash at the sale of the property and have virtually no impact on the school system.

However, the current zoning on this property is single family residential with a small strip of commercial along Milford Street. This zoning would not allow for over 55 housing nor even a small commercial footprint. Interest in the property has been strong for years and has been of particular interest to the Mendon Planning Board and Board of Selectmen. One key reason for an over 55 development is the lack of available over 55 units in Town. The changing demographics and how housing needs change for older residents. Seniors do not feel the need large homes anymore and are seeking to remove the burden of home and yard maintenance. Additionally, aging in many cases makes negotiating multiple stories difficult and age-friendly design is often at the top of the list when seniors are looking for the next home.

Therefore, it was determined that a mixed-use using zoning an Age Restricted Overlay District (AROD) for the property be developed. This zoning encourages;

- Smaller housing units with first floor living (including master bedroom) for seniors who wish to stay in Mendon but no longer need a large single-family home;
- Retirement housing, where seniors with common interests can enjoy social interactions and down-size to a smaller unit with minimal yard and house maintenance responsibilities.
- Small commercial building (s) approximately 10,000 sq. ft. in area.

It also should be noted that given the constraints with no public water or sewer available to this property it is believed the project may have a maximum density capacity limited to approximately 85 to 100 bedrooms, though this number may be reduced by the size and type of proposed commercial development.

The proposed zoning

The basics for this new zoning are as follows:

- Applicant applies to Planning Board for a Special Permit for approval of a Concept Plan. Concept Plan is where the prospective developer presents basic information recognizing the type of development, it's size, density, infrastructure, access and egress, landscaping and architecture etc.
- If the Concept Plan is approved the applicant, then must apply to the Planning Board for Site Plan Approval. At this point the developer must submit detailed plans on all facets of the development including density, location, design, signage, infrastructure etc.
- Density 10 units per acre
- Small commercial component
- Frontage 100 feet
- Encourages Open Space set aside

Once approved the applicant can then apply for their building permit.

Process after Town Meeting

If this proposed By Law is approved by Town Meeting, the next step would be for the Selectmen to develop a "Request for Proposals" RFP. The Selectmen would consider items like the type of proposal offered by the developer, their experience and reputation in building similar projects, financing and the amount of money being offered to buy the property.

If approved by the Board of Selectmen they would then enter into a "Land Disposition Agreement" LDA which commits both parties to sell and buy the property and the different stages of work to be done etc. to consummate the sale.