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MEMORANDUM

To: Michael Macht-Greenberg, COO, Mass General Brigham-McLean Hospital
Stephen W. Kidder, Partner, Hemenway & Barnes

Cc: DRC Distribution List

From: Christopher J. Ryan, AICP; Director of Planning and Building

RE: Summary of Comments by Belmont Development Review Working Group in Regard to Proposed Zone 4 Development Project

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2025

This memo memorializes a summary of the comments received and some Applicant comments in the January 15, 2025 Development Review meeting. Additional comments have been received via email from attendees and these have been incorporated as well. If the Applicant wishes to respond to these comments in writing, they should use the format provided below. Regarding Design and Site Plan Review, the Applicant is advised to focus on the specific objectives provided in Section 6A.4 of the Belmont Zoning By-Law as these will be the criteria used by the Board for their review.

Meeting Attendees

Town

- Christopher J. Ryan, AICP; Director of Planning and Building
- Ara Yogurtian, Inspector of Buildings
- David DeStefano, Fire Chief
- James MacIsaac, Police Chief
- Jay Marcotte, DPW Director
- Wesley Chin, Health Director
- Mark Piccarini, BMLD
- Mike Bourgeois, BMLD
- Craig Spinale, BMLD
- Andrew Tobio, Assistant Fire Chief
- Yatin Thakral, BMLD

Applicant

- Michael Macht-Greenberg, COO McLean

- Steve Kidder, H & B
- Chris Walters, McLean
- John Messervy, McLean
- William Russell, NBBJ
- Justin Mosca, VHB
- Howard Moshier, VHB
- Andrew Cridlin, OJB
- Deanna Champagne, Arup

Planning Division

In response to the submittal of the full application, the Director of Planning and Building provided four comments in regard to the packet:

1. The construction management program is pictorial and needs narrative to describe the actions and limitations in written form.

The Applicant responded that they will be providing a construction management narrative prior to the opening of the Public Hearing.

2. There is no written narrative regarding the Zone 4 objectives as required in 6A.4(XI) and beyond the basics provided on sheet plan C101.

The Applicant will be providing a written response in regard to the objectives prior to the opening of the Public Hearing.

3. There isn't an overall landscaping plan and noting depicted on any plan showing specific specimen trees (if applicable).

The Applicant noted that they note a few specimen trees that they are looking to preserve and that the plan shows these trees. The plan set is not excessively clear regarding the specimen or saved trees. There is a symbol in the details sheets that show existing trees but there is no connection between the existing conditions plan and the development plan that shows retainance of original tree specimens. The Applicant stated that they will tag the trees with different ribbons to clearly mark those for removal versus those for protection. The protection areas will be maintained during construction, and the construction management plan will ensure this is adhered to.

NOTE: Specimen trees and trees to be removed should be marked on site. Specimen trees or trees to be saved should be marked with a pink ribbon and trees to be cut should be marked with an orange or yellow ribbon.

4. Ideally have a McLean site plan showing location of Zone 4 with a little detail on the project within this. The typical McLean site plan is fine if the Board is comfortable with this.

The typical McLean illustrated site plan should be sufficient. It does not include the new buildings and connectivity to Zone 5, but hopefully the Planning Board will be satisfied.

The Director of Planning had a few additional questions:

1. Stormwater may require a peer review. Engineering's opinion on this would be important.

The DPW Director indicated that stormwater peer review for this project could be handled in-house.

2. Can applicant, using ITE Parking Generation 4th Edition or similar source, explain how the parking needs were determined based on specific use types? Are there case studies?

This request was acknowledged.

3. Will trash be removed via the loading dock?

The short answer is yes. Trash will be collected internal in the buildings and loaded on collector vehicles at the loading dock.

4. Will the applicant be providing a photometric plan?

Yes.

5. The Planning representative asked about snow removal and snow storage.

Snow removal and storage were discussed with McLean. For smaller storms, we'll store snow along the roadside or in parking lot areas. For larger storms, if the capacity isn't enough to store it onsite, snow will be trucked off. This was included in the narrative as well as the stormwater report. In short, for smaller storms, the snow will be stored on the property and for larger storms, it will likely be trucked off.

The Applicant is planning to keep walkways, roadways, and pedestrian areas clear during the winter, so snow removal will be an ongoing part of operations. If they have more extreme snow events, they will need to truck snow offsite, but we're hopeful that the storage areas on the property will suffice for most storms.

Planning Department Representative: *Regarding the trucked snow removal, do you anticipate using the roadways discussed in the narrative for this?*

- **Project Manager:** *Yes, the trucked snow removal would likely use the **access road** that's discussed in the narrative. This road is less developed, but it's in a location that's ideal for snow removal access.*

Fire Department

1. The applicant should provide a written response to the initial set of questions from the Fire Department.
2. Fire department representatives have met with the McLean Hospital Zone 4 Group on several occasions regarding the future McLean Academic Complex. Concerns listed are as follows:
 - a) *Of the concerns that have not been successfully addressed, the primary concern is the lack of access to the exterior of the two buildings. The plans depict that Fire would only have reasonable access to two sides of the residential building. In regards to the school building, we are even more limited. It is understood that a drivable sidewalk to*

the main entrance of the school and a side entrance of the dorm has been proposed. There is protected land on two sides of the school, towards the Pleasant Street side. With numbers provided by the McLean Hospital Zone 4 Group, the rear corner of the building is 210 feet from one access road and 182 feet from another access road. Additionally, there is courtyard between the two buildings. The school side of the courtyard is 164 feet to the furthest distance, and the courtyard side of the residential building could be as long as 185 feet. Although Fire was told that the parking around is live, and will not be restrictive, there are still some reservations that this could impede access even further, something seen in similar occupancies. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, 527 CMR 1.00, 18.2.3.2.2 states that “fire apparatus access roads shall be provided such that any portion of the facility or any portion of an exterior wall of the first story of the building is located not more than 150 feet from fire apparatus access roads as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the building or facility”. Current designs of the buildings fall short of the fire code. What we believe to be a simple solution would be adding paved paths on strategic sides of both buildings, resulting in much shorter distances for access.

- b) Also, within Chapter 18 of the Fire Code, 18.2.3.5.3.3, “fire apparatus roads connecting...shall be provided with curb cuts extending at least 2 feet beyond the edge of each fire department access road”. Fire wants to ensure that they make the decision of what is acceptable in these scenarios. For example, mountable curbs are unacceptable.*
 - c) The final request is for McLean Hospital to have their final plans for the fire alarm system and the fire protection system reviewed by a third party. The safety of the occupants is paramount in these complex buildings, making this review advantageous. Chapter 1 of the fire code does allow for this to be required by the fire department. Further 1.15.1.1. states “as permitted by other sections of this code, the AHJ shall be permitted to require a review by an approved independent third party with expertise in the matter, to be reviewed at the submitter’s expense”. McLean Hospital followed a similar route for an upgrade to a fire alarm system at the current Arlington School.*
3. The Applicant noted in this meeting that the Fire Department also indicated concerns about the roof design and how equipment can be moved across the buildings. They offered additional detail showing a pathway for accessing the roofs of both buildings, that the mechanical space does not block this pathway, and there is enough room to move across with equipment.
 4. The Applicant also noted in this meeting Fire Department concerns related to providing adequate storage space for fire department equipment. They are working on providing adequate storage space for fire department equipment. They had initially thought there would be enough space in the stairways, but after further review, it was realized they need all the available space for other uses. However, on floors two, three, and four, they have provided additional space outside the stairwells where we can place cabinets for storage. These locations will be right next to the stairs, ensuring easy access to equipment. For the school building, they created storage spaces on the first floor near the pathway side, and there are a few more locations upstairs. For the other areas of the

building, they identified several locations to place cabinets for quick access. These arrangements should allow the fire department to store equipment in strategic locations throughout the building.

5. In the meeting and following up on their written comments to OPB, the Fire Department noted that the code states that the maximum allowable distance from the exterior of a building to fire access roads is 150 feet. When they measured the distances to the buildings, they found that the school building, for example, is 270 feet from the fire access road on one side, and 182 feet on the other side. These distances exceed the 150-foot maximum outlined in the fire code.
6. The Applicant responded that they are aware of this issue and have been discussing potential solutions. One of the options could be to adjust the access roads so that they get closer to the buildings, but they have been trying to maintain the program as planned. They are open to exploring these adjustments and working with Fire to ensure that all fire access requirements are met. They fully understand that the access distances are a concern, and we are willing to work through the fire code to find a solution that ensures proper access without compromising the project's design.
7. Next, Fire Department officials noted that they have been discussing fire hydrant locations and coverage. They believe that the spread of the hydrants is sufficient, but want assurance that they are appropriately located to meet code requirements. The discussion about fire hydrants and access is ongoing. Additionally, they may want to bring in a third-party review of the plans. This could help them better understand the fire access distances and ensure the project complies with all fire safety requirements.
8. The Applicant responded that they made sure to address the hydrant locations as best as possible, but are open to further conversations to ensure that everything is compliant with fire code. They also expressed being open to a third-party reviewer and stated that it might be helpful for this project as well. They can provide more information about this process and work with the Fire Department to select an appropriate third-party reviewer.
9. In summary, the Applicant said they will revisit code interpretation based on today's discussion, particularly regarding fire access and discuss potential adjustments to the access roads. They will also move forward with engaging a third-party reviewer.

Historic District Commission

Applicant noted discussions with the Historic District Commission, particularly about how the design fits within the historical context of the area. The Applicant stated that they outlined some goals in the design. The Applicant stated that the Plan is incorporating a variety of building types, trying to match the style and materials that reflect the campus's history. The design incorporates brick, pitched roofs, and shingles, as well as open spaces between buildings that allow for therapeutic areas—these spaces are key to some of the programmatic needs of the project. The intention is to create a balance between indoor and outdoor spaces. This outdoor aspect is crucial to the program, allowing for a flow between the different areas and ensuring that the buildings fit within the landscape. It was stated that they carefully considered the positioning and orientation of the buildings to create a harmonious campus environment, working to blend the buildings with the landscape. While Zone 4 is not as historically defined as Zones 1, 2, and 3,

they are aiming to integrate the new construction in a way that respects the surroundings. In summary, the Applicant asserts that the design addresses the historical context while meeting the modern needs of the project. We are submitting further narratives to clarify these aspects in our application.

Carl Solander (Historic District Commission Chair) responded that since the initial comments, lot more materials have been provided, and he is generally satisfied with how the new buildings work within the campus. Solander mentioned the use of masonry, a differentiated base color that distinguishes it from the upper portions, pitched roofs look good, and also appreciated is the effort to conceal the mechanical equipment on the roofs. On the landscaping side, the incorporation of different types of walls and fences is a positive, appropriate for the campus. There are still some concerns about the garage. It seems less developed compared to the other buildings. The potential appearance of the garage is as a large, brutalist concrete structure, which could be jarring next to the more refined buildings. Solander suggests softening the appearance of the garage, perhaps by introducing green walls or some other design elements to make it blend better with the rest of the campus. Overall, the compatibility with the campus is good, but this is one area where more design attention could help. Otherwise, the general layout and integration with the landscape is solid.

The Applicant stated that they would provide further consideration to the garage design.

HDC Chair also asked about the archeological site and whether it would have a sign or interpretive signage.

The applicant stated that no signage is proposed to keep the site as anonymous as possible.

Inspector of Buildings

The Applicant should check with the Building Division related to compliance with the new energy code requirements.

Health Dept

1. The Health Department asked about whether there will be a residential-style kitchen in the facility?
2. The Applicant asserted that there will be no residential-style kitchen.
3. Health provides a reminder about maintaining pest control throughout the project in a way to minimize impact to residents and unintended wildlife (e.g. hawks, owls, eagles, etc.).

Belmont Light Department

1. Wanted to confirm there would be coordination regarding plans for development in Zone 3 and Zone 4.
2. Planning Director suggested that the applicant provide some site delineation of a possible future connection.

Police

No comments.

Town Engineer/DPW

General

1. The applicant should provide a written response to the initial set of questions from the Town Engineer and DPW.

Traffic

2. In the interim between the prior DRC meeting and this meeting, the Planning Board has retained a peer review traffic consultant, Howard Stein Hudson, to conduct that review of the Applicants consultant.
3. The Applicant noted that they have been coordinating with the Planning Department on the scope of the study and that has been worked out. Applicant states that they did traffic counts before the holidays, so they got the data before traffic volumes were impacted by the holiday rush. The study is underway and should be ready for submission by the end of this month. It will incorporate the proposed project's traffic impacts, including new traffic volumes and how they relate to the existing conditions. This study will also take into account ongoing commitments, such as funding for improvements on the Mill Street side, and addressing a potential signal at the intersection of Pleasant and Olmstead if traffic volumes reach the necessary threshold in the future. There will be ongoing discussions around this, just like in previous meetings. Additionally, there will be post-construction monitoring to ensure that actual traffic impacts match what was anticipated during the planning phase.
4. It was agreed that the Applicant would submit the traffic study to the Office of Planning and Building and that they would forward on to Howard Stein Hudson.
5. Applicant commented about the signalization at the intersection. There's a section of the project that wasn't fully addressed in the traffic study, particularly regarding the signal synchronization at certain intersections. Wanted to highlight that the section in question is a single-phase crossing, and the signal configuration might need attention. Not certain about how much that could be altered, as it's a MassDOT (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) decision, but it's something to be aware of as part of the review process. There are likely some synchronization adjustments that need to be made as the project progresses. Typically, signal systems adjust based on traffic conditions, but if the changes are significant, they may need to look at further adjustments to ensure smoother traffic flow. This will be factored into the study and the follow-up monitoring. The signals will adjust as needed to meet changing traffic conditions. The study will capture these concerns and make recommendations based on the anticipated traffic volumes. Once they have the completed traffic study, it will be reviewed and the necessary departments will be looped in, including MassDOT if required for any changes to signalization or infrastructure. It's important that they ensure the signals and roadways are optimized for

the projected traffic flow.

Stormwater

1. Applicant provided a high-level summary, noting that they have submitted a stormwater report. It is anticipated that the report will undergo further review. The development area was previously developed, so they state that the overall increase in impervious area is minimal—about an acre in a 12-acre zone. They designed a comprehensive stormwater management system for the site. This system is targeted at mitigating peak rates and improving water quality, adhering to both **Massachusetts** standards and **Belmont** standards. We've also incorporated additional measures for phosphorus removal in line with the **MS4** (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) regulations. Additionally, it is anticipated that new regulations will emanate from the **EPA** later this year, which would require further phosphorus removal. The plan proactively incorporates this into our design, even though it is not yet a mandate.

The site is underlain by bedrock and shallow glacial till, so infiltration is difficult. As a result, the program uses sand filters, which are large structures that will mitigate peak stormwater runoff rates and treat the stormwater to improve water quality. The water will flow through these sand filters before it is discharged, essentially acting as an infiltration system. The sand filters have been designed to handle the stormwater runoff. These are not proprietary systems; it is essentially a concrete box filled with sand. Over time, the sand may need to be scraped or replaced, but it's a relatively simple system to maintain. The sand acts as a filtration medium, treating the stormwater before it's released into the stormwater management system.

The Applicant noted some maintenance issues—there is a maintenance section in the stormwater report. Typically, there will be a need to periodically clean the sand and make sure it's functioning correctly. It is a system that will require maintenance, but is fairly low maintenance in the sense that it doesn't require complex technology or proprietary systems. Just periodic upkeep of the sand filters, like scraping off the top layer of sand every so often. So, the sand filter setup is pretty straightforward. Water is filtered through the sand before reaching the storage system. It's a tried-and-true method for treating stormwater, though it does require some space.

2. Mr. Marcotte indicated that the stormwater peer review could be conducted internally.
3. Mr. Chouinard (Assistant Town Engineer) provided additional comments via email:

Upon completing a preliminary review of the Application and Stormwater Report for the Mclean Project there is some clarification needed to ascertain if additional design requirements are required for stormwater treatment at the parking structure/parking lot.

The Stormwater Report (p. 3) specifically states that the Project is not considered a **Land Use with Higher Potential Pollutant Loads (LUHPPL)**. Please note that one specific use to qualify as a LUHPPL includes a “**parking lots with high-intensity use**”. The only information provided relates to the number of parking spaces. It is difficult to confirm if the proposed parking lot can be excluded as a LUHPPL, since the criteria is based on Vehicle Trips per Day (threshold is 1000 vehicle trips per day). In order to determine the

trip generation per day it is necessary to understand the use characteristics, # students and staff etc. This information was not provided as part of the application.

Although the difference between LUHPPL or Non-LUHPLL is not significant it does affect the design requirements and stormwater treatment processes. Requesting a trip generation summary, or the anticipated use, staff, student breakdown for the parking lot/parking structure would clarify whether the proposed project use qualifies as a LUHPPL and determine if the Stormwater Report and Site Plans require adapting accordingly.

4. Finallym the Conservation Agent had additional thoughts on stormwater, as follows:

While there are no jurisdictional wetland or buffer zone areas regulated by the Conservation Commission within the project locus, the Stormwater Management Regulations promulgated by the Mass DEP are often the purview of the Belmont Conservation Commission. As this project will likely NOT be reviewed by the Conservation Commission, I do recommend obtaining a third-party review of the assumptions and conclusions found in the Stormwater Report. In particular, the applicant is requesting relief from Stormwater Management Standard (3). This standard requires the use of infiltration as a storm water management technique. While the applicant has outlined their reasoning behind the request for relief of stormwater infiltration on this site, I think it is an important enough issue that a third-party review is warranted. While the proposed sand filtration system likely replicates some of the values associated with infiltration, I would be more comfortable with a second opinion, such as a third-party engineering review, that could provide a second analysis of the site potential for infiltration.

As noted in the Stormwater Report, this project will be required to submit a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), as part of the EPA's NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination) permit process. Typically, this document is prepared by the site operator, or contractor, who will be responsible for the conditions on site during construction. As such, the document has not been prepared, and will likely not be prepared until such time as a site operator is obtained. I would, however, like the opportunity for the Town of Belmont to retain the opportunity to review this document. This review could be a condition of the Planning Board permit, enabling the Conservation Commission to ensure that local performance standards are being met. In particular, the Conservation Commission has distinct preferences for specific erosion and sedimentation control products and practices. These practices and products are integral to the SWPPP document, and I think the project would benefit from a cursory review of the SWPPP prior to the submission to the EPA.

If you have any questions, please contact Christopher Ryan, AICP at cryan@belmont-ma.gov or 617-993-2658.