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March 22, 2024

Medfield Select Board
Medfield Town House
459 Main Street
Medfield, MA 02052

Dear Members of the Medfield Select Board,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to bring to your attention the critical importance of the Town of Medfield's compliance with the MBTA Communities Act and the impact that this has on the Medfield State Hospital (MSH) campus redevelopment project. As you are aware, the MSH project represents a culmination of 25 years of comprehensive town planning efforts, which could be undermined if the Town falls out of compliance with the Act.

As you know, Trinity Financial's proposed development project achieved near-unanimous approval at Town Meeting, evidencing widespread community support. Subsequently, the development team has advanced design, engaged in permitting at the state and local level, and supported the Town in the 2023 funding application in the OneStop for Growth program for public infrastructure and hazardous materials remediation. To date, the Town has received two grant awards of nearly $5 million from the MassWorks (renamed HousingWorks) and Underutilized Properties Programs. As such, the project has the support of the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the most momentum since the Town started the development process over two decades ago.

Our team is optimistic about the project and is looking forward to 2024. This year we intend to further our local and state permitting, submit additional applications for infrastructure and remediation funding, and receive Part II approval from the National Park Service and the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Finally, we will hopefully (fingers crossed!) receive our first allocation of state historic tax credits – a critical financial milestone for the project.

However, this momentum will be undermined if the Town of Medfield falls out of compliance with the MBTA Communities Act. I would like to emphasize several key points regarding the previous efforts and the current status of the project:

- Community Efforts: The Town of Medfield has devoted 25+ years and considerable resources towards planning the redevelopment of the MSH campus, recognizing its importance to the community. Trinity's vision is to execute on this plan to save the historic buildings and reinvigorate the campus.

- Funding Sources: At the time of its RFP submission, Trinity identified the MassWorks Infrastructure Program as a critical source of funding for the necessary public infrastructure, including the upgrading and replacement of roadways and utilities.

- Community Impact: The successful redevelopment of the MSH site will remediate an underutilized site and provide benefits to the new and current residents of Medfield. Notably, the 334 mixed-income units proposed in the Project will bring Medfield above the 10% threshold of the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), thereby placing the town in Safe Harbor from potential future 40B projects.

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- Tax Revenue: The project is projected to contribute to the local tax base for the first time and generate up to $675,000 in net new annual tax revenue for the Town of Medfield.

If the MBTA Communities Zoning does not pass on May 6th, Trinity's project will no longer be financially viable due to the exclusion of state resources for public infrastructure and hazardous materials remediation.

- Financial Viability: Failure to meet compliance jeopardizes the project's financial viability. The Town would be ineligible for the remaining $25.5 million needed for public roadways and subsurface utilities financing, as well as $19.5 million in hazardous material remediation financing. This would impede progress and leave the Town with a $20 million liability for hazardous materials, while the buildings continue to degrade – posing health and safety risks to the greater community.

- Additional Housing Development: Non-compliance would also subject the Town to potential future 40B developments, as Medfield is currently under the 10% SHI threshold, further exacerbating housing concerns and community planning efforts.

- Revenue Loss: In addition to the aforementioned financial implications, the Town would forfeit up to $675,000 in annual tax revenue from the MSH project. Furthermore, the Town would become ineligible for $10 million in annual operating subsidies from Commonwealth grants.

Given these implications, it is imperative that the Town prioritizes compliance with the state housing law requirements and continues to work diligently towards the successful redevelopment of the MSH campus. I urge the Medfield Select Board to remain steadfast in its commitment to this endeavor and to leverage all available resources to ensure its success.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We remain steadfast in our work and commitment to the success of the MSH redevelopment and its positive impact on the community.

Sincerely,

Abby Goldenfarb

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