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Board and Committee members, Town Staff and Residents of Middleton,

Our office has been made aware of a potential 200-unit 40B project at 35 Village Road. The group, Sovereign Partners, has owned the property since 2014. As expressed during many conversations throughout the MBTA Communities process, a property owner could build a large 40B development by right with or without the MBTA overlay at any time. While I would prefer to not link the two issues, the geographic location of the proposed development relative to recent zoning conversations in our community is undeniable. Given the recent sensitivity surrounding this area, extra care will be given to ensure a clear and public process for this proposed project above and beyond the transparency we already provide.

It is our understanding that two buildings are proposed to the east and north of the existing parking garage with a primary access to Village Road. (70% 1 bedrooms, 10% 3 bedrooms as required by 40B, with the remaining 20% to be an undetermined mix). Sovereign Partners has stated that this project would put Middleton into safe harbor for the 10% SHI (Subsidized Housing Index) threshold – protecting Middleton from future 40B projects anywhere in town for the foreseeable future. We have crunched these numbers internally and have verified that this analysis is accurate.

My office was approached for an introductory meeting held on Friday, July 11th. This included the Town Administrator (me), Town Planner, Building Commissioner, the owners of the property, an architect, an engineer, and their attorney. Based on the details provided we determined this is a viable project and they intend to move forward. We immediately scheduled a briefing with the Chairs of the Select Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals to make them aware of these details. That gathering was held this morning, with this memo being released immediately upon the conclusion of that briefing. The trio of chairs has not yet met with the developer or their team, as we would like to ensure this first meeting takes place in an open public forum with all Board members present in full view of the community we serve.

While this is an unexpected challenge, I encourage the community to approach this process through the lens of partnership and opportunity. What are the issues, and how can we work together to resolve them? How can we come together to get the best outcome for the people of Middleton? As always, our team will work alongside our Boards and Committees to ensure the interests of Middleton and the people that call this town home are rigorously defended.

Thank you,

Justin Sultzbach
Town Administrator