

**Notes from Waterfront West meeting****May 15, 2018****Newburyport City Council Planning & Development Sub-Committee and  
Newburyport Planning Board Waterfront West Sub-Committee**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Index</b>	<b>What we see in the plans</b>
<b>Height</b>	The group agreed that three-four stories is an appropriate height limit throughout the site. This limit is driven by the view scape as seen from across the river and by the idea of keeping the pedestrian experience similar to that of the downtown. NED would have to present a compelling case for a 5-story structure. It is imaginable that a partial 5-story building could be proposed as an architectural feature, especially if complimented by a one or 2-story building on the site, for the purpose of adding variety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the limitation to 3-4 stories is generally maintained</li><li>• if a 5-story buildings is proposed, it works in it's proposed location and it contributes to design and massing variety</li><li>• the existing skyline still dominates the view from across the river and the development is not prominent.</li></ul>	
<b>Density</b>	Density should be consistent with the density downtown. The development should not overwhelm our roads and our schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• vehicular traffic impact demonstrated to be less than significant or mitigated to that level</li><li>• impact on schools demonstrated to be less than significant or mitigated to that level</li></ul>	
<b>Public Open Space</b>	Public space should be of high quality, and should have courtyard-like qualities. The size of these "courtyards" (one along Brown Wharf and the other public "arrival" spot for WW at the water) should be carefully considered such that they do not compete with the adjacent open space of the park. They will be differentiated in that they will have some vehicular activity and will be mostly hard-scape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• high quality materials are proposed in the courtyards (limited or no asphalt), there's attention to detail and appropriate amenities considered (e.g. benches, water features, landscaping, etc.)</li><li>• the courtyards are appropriately sized</li><li>• vehicular access does not overwhelm the spaces or conflict with public accessibility.</li></ul>	

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<b>Design Style</b>	Buildings should be of high quality. The various buildings should not read as monolithic. Rather they should have inherent variety, such that when viewed from across the river they blend with the view scape and do not stand out. The development should not draw your eye away from or block views of the steeples and the rest of the City. A 3D model could demonstrate the effectiveness of NED's design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high quality materials are proposed, there's attention to detail and amenities considered</li> <li>• there is variability in building massing and style</li> <li>• roof forms are broken and diverse</li> <li>• entries are welcoming and the interface of public and private space is well defined and compelling</li> <li>• the existing skyline still dominates the view scape from across the river</li> </ul>	
<b>Pedestrian Experience</b>	A positive pedestrian experience must remain central to the design. Ways to the water (along north/south) should be preserved with no private streets. The work of NED began to address this issue architecturally and our expectation is that their design continues to focus on and enrich the pedestrian experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• see indexes for public space</li> <li>• the pedestrian areas along the water are supported by commercial/retail/office activities</li> <li>• areas along the water appear vibrant, with public amenities with transparency along building fronts</li> <li>• the pedestrian ways perpendicular to the water are "alive" spaces, particularly along the "fronts" of the residential buildings; entries to units are personalized and of an intimate scale, nurturing public and private interaction</li> </ul>	
<b>Parking</b>	NED will need to provide a fully vetted parking count and plan. In particular, the group wanted explanation regarding where boaters with dockage at the existing marina would park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the number of parking spaces are demonstrated to meet market demands</li> <li>• all parking has been accounted for on site</li> <li>• boat dockage parking is accounted for</li> </ul>	

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<b>Streets</b>	While interior building courtyards would be fine, private streets are not. Even though some streets will be designed more for pedestrians (helping to clarify the fronts/back of buildings), all ways should allow public access. There should be clarity about how streets are used by both pedestrians and vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are no private streets</li> <li>• streets have hierarchies and help define the fronts and backs of buildings thru use of trees, sidewalks and appropriate dimensions</li> <li>• there is a demonstrated plan for vehicular flow thru the site</li> <li>• streets are hierarchical, with the appropriate related widths</li> <li>• sidewalks are in appropriate locations</li> <li>• street materials contribute to clarity of use</li> </ul>	
<b>Hotel</b>	The hotel should be a priority early in the buildout of the site. In the zoning agreement NED should commit to a building order that works for the City. We also agreed that locating it on the waterfront is better than along Merrimac St. In fact, the location of building #8 seems perfect for a hotel, both from an economic viability perspective and for the purposes of promoting public activity along the water's edge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a hotel is proposed for along the water's edge, preferably building #8</li> <li>• NED has committed to the hotel</li> <li>• if there is no commitment to the hotel, or it's location on the water, clear evidence demonstrating a lack of viability has been presented</li> </ul>	
<b>Mixed Use/ Commercial Activity</b>	Short of a convincing economic analysis demonstrating otherwise, the waterfront should have more commercial activity than currently planned. Encouraging lateral public activity between Michael's and the Black Cow would be a significant benefit to the project and to the City. Small retail (not large like a CVS) should be encouraged along the water as well as along Merrimac Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are an appropriate number of commercial/retail/ office spaces along the water between Michaels and the Black Cow to ensure a vibrant public experience</li> <li>• the ends of the buildings at the water's edge are configured to accommodate commercial use and are visually differentiated</li> <li>• the shops are small scale</li> <li>• building #2 on Merrimac Street is mixed use, with some retail component on the ground floor</li> </ul>	

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<b>Marina Uses</b>	The marina piece of this plan has not been thoroughly addressed and many questions need answering. Where will the large whale-watch boats be hauled and stored? Where will boaters using the boat slips park? Will there be reduced boat usage as a result of the development? The Harbor Master should be engaged to better understand potential impacts on the City's marine activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Hogg, the Harbor Master, is confident that the marina activity will not be negatively impacted.</li> <li>• that parking solutions for boaters are accounted for</li> <li>• that the large whale-watch boats have a home for launching and storage that keeps them in Newburyport</li> <li>• that users of the boat slips have appropriate amenities and have incentive to keep their boats in Newburyport</li> <li>• there is an accounting of all boat use currently and post-development</li> <li>• there is an accounting of how boaters will be accommodated through construction</li> </ul>	
<b>Zoning</b>	The design and impact issues above must be resolved before we negotiate the WMPOD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we have deferred the discussion of the proposed WMPOD and are resolving the issues above</li> </ul>	