



**PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT**

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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Board of Selectmen, Town of Grafton  
Timothy McInerney, Town Administrator  
FROM: Christopher McGoldrick, Town Planner  
DATE: June 2, 2020  
SUBJECT: RFP Recommendation – 8 Pine Street

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*This memo has been prepared in response to a request for recommendation on the received proposals regarding 8 Pine Street, North Grafton. The request is specifically in regard to the submitted proposal's performance on the associated evaluation criteria, various Board and Committee reviews and recommendations and municipal staff discussion:*

**BACKGROUND**

On December 18, 2019, the Town of Grafton published a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) for potential projects regarding the 8 Pine Street parcel. The RFP detailed a set of evaluation criteria and recommended project considerations to be included. On March 16, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline for responses was extended from the original date of March 18, 2020 to April 2, 2020.

On April 2, 2020, the Town of Grafton closed the deadline for response, having received four (4) separate proposals. One (1) proposal was deemed incomplete and subsequently rejected. The other three (3) proposals have been reviewed by a number of Local Boards and Committees. Additionally, a review committee composed of municipal staff utilized the provided evaluation criteria to review the proposals and score their performance in regards to the RFP criteria.

Below is a summary of the submitted proposals comparison details, our office's evaluation, and recommendation to the Board.

	<b>GSX</b>	<b>NOAH</b>	<b>WOOD</b>
<b>Number of Units</b>	306 (77 Affordable)	177 (150 Affordable)	222 (56 Affordable)
<b>Estimated SHI<sup>1</sup></b>	9.4% (+4.3%)	7.2% (+2.1%)	8.2% (+3.1%)
<b>Retail Component</b>	11,340 sf	10,500 sf	None
<b>Offer Price</b>	\$1,725,000	\$2,000,000	\$1,200,000
<b>Estimated Annual Tax Revenue</b>	\$922,000	\$200,000	N/A
<b>Other Contingencies</b>	<i>Does not rely on tax credits or other public financing incentives or contributions</i>	<i>Does involve financial assistance from the Town’s AHT fund</i>	<i>Involves TIF financing</i>

**GSX**

The GSX proposal cites the following project goals and community benefits for consideration:

**Project Goals:**

1. Density and Early Stages of “Place Making”;
2. Provide Affordable Housing;
3. Connectivity (expanded Pedestrian and Bicycle Walkways);
4. Active and Passive Recreational Space for Residents:
  - a. Create a system of walking paths around the site for exercise that continue down into the forest behind the retail;
  - b. Potential for: dog park, children’s play park, fitness center, large exterior activities courtyard including swimming pool, fire pits and sand lot volleyball;
5. Retail/Commercial use to Activate Pine Street Frontage;
6. Expanded Commuter Parking;
7. Incorporate Architectural Features from Former State Hospital buildings;
8. Explore Opportunities for Solar Energy;
9. Provide at least 90 additional parking spaces for metro, increasing the ability for additional riders and use for the metro;

**QUICK NOTES**

**GSX:**

**Number of Units:**

*306 Units (77 Affordable)*

*Estimated SHI: 9.4%*

**Retail Component:**

*11,340 sf*

**Funding:**

*\$1,725,000 offer price*

*\$922,000 estimated annual tax revenue*

**Other Contingencies:**

*Does not rely on tax credits or other public financing incentives or contributions*

<sup>1</sup> Current estimate based on most recent SHI calculations, does not account for 2020 Year Round Housing Units as these numbers are not currently available. Actual SHI percentage will likely be less

10. Develop a plan that minimizes the amount of surface parking, thus storm
11. water runoff;
12. Create a commercial component that can accommodate professional and service office uses, as well as food and beverage establishments, without impairing the parking of the residential component;
13. Provide housing design vocabulary that reflects the materials and massing and courtyards of the original buildings;

Community Benefits:

- Revitalizing a site that is no longer in use and turning it into a tax ratable community asset;
- The creation of a retail village that not only serves the surrounding residential community, but also reinvigorates the retail market to the residents of the larger Grafton community;
- Alignment of the intersection at Centennial road to create a safe and potentially signalized intersection for traffic;
- Potential use of discreet solar panels on the roof which are screened by parapet walls that provide energy for the site and reduces carbon footprint of the project;
- Ring road around the site ensures access for emergency vehicles;
- Additional parking for the metro, as well as additional separate an additional parking for both retail and residential tenants with a minimal footprint;
- Site impervious coverage is approximately only 36% of the site (including parking). Without parking, the site coverage is less than 23%;
- The combination of the retail and the residential space –as well as their separation—ensures future growth opportunities for both and should allow for more harmony, since parking for each will not be shared.

NOAH

The NOAH proposal cites the following considerations:

- Rebuild and preserve two of the dilapidated but still handsome, historic brick buildings and reconfigure them into 84 units around an attractive new courtyard.
- In three New England style buildings, construct 93 more units, totaling 177 total units, of which 150 residential units will count towards the Town of Grafton’s Subsidized Housing [Inventory], which we understand to be a major priority of this RFP.
- Create an accessible community plaza open to the town on the remarkable, old, cobblestone foundation of building #4.
- Create 10,500 sf of retail space with a striking and open veranda of Pine St. next to a restaurant or food mart directly across from the commuter rail.

**QUICK NOTES**

**NOAH:**

**Number of Units:**

*177 Units (150 Affordable)*

*Estimated SHI: 7.2%*

**Retail Component:**

*10,500 sf*

**Funding:**

*\$2,000,000 offer price*

*\$200,000 estimated annual tax revenue*

**Other Contingencies:**

*Does involve financial assistance from the Town’s AHT fund*

- There will be plenty of on-site parking plus an acre of open/wooded space and a walking trail.

On the financial side:

- Provide an acquisition price of \$2,000,000 for the parcel, plus taxes, estimated to be \$200,000+ yearly which will accrue strictly to the town.
- Provide closing on the parcel within 6 months from the execution of a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Town. The Town of Grafton can be assured of receiving 50% of the \$2mm acquisition price in advance of your three year threshold with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- NOAH’s development plan does involve financial assistance from the Town’s AHT fund in order to help create affordability.
- NOAH pledges and states our offer/proposal will remain in effect 365 days from April 2, 2020, or until it is formally withdrawn, a sale is executed, or this RFP is cancelled.

### WOOD

The Wood proposal cites the following considerations:

- Building #3 preserved as 7,000sf “amenity building”
- 4 and 5 story residential structures with New England architecture
- Stretch Code Compliance and energy efficient utilities

### RECOMMENDATION

We respectfully recommend the Board’s acceptance of the GSX proposal and authorization to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement. The GSX proposal features the strongest financial model with the highest net fiscal benefit to the Town. Although not preserving physical structures, the proposal does include architectural elements which align with the existing structure as well as extensive placemaking features and monuments. We find that this proposal strikes the most feasible balance of preservation, development quality and fiscal benefit.

We trust this memo clarifies the Planning Department’s analysis and recommendations regarding the above referenced RFP responses. We are happy to discuss any portion of this memo which may be unclear.

Thank you.

### **QUICK NOTES**

**WOOD:**

**Number of Units:**

*222 Units (56 Affordable)*

*Estimated SHI: 8.2%*

**Retail Component:**

*None*

**Funding:**

*\$1,200,000 offer price*

**Other Contingencies:**

*Involves TIF financing*