# **TOWN OF MILFORD**

#### Office of Community Development

Planning • Zoning • Building Safety • Code Enforcement • Health Economic Development • Active Projects

#### **Administrative Review**

**Date:** April 28, 2022

To: Jason Plourde, Chair, Zoning Board of Adjustment From: Lincoln Daley, Community Development Director

Subject: Case #2022-06: Brookstone Manor, LLC for the property located at Tax Map 19, Lot 25-9, 135

Elm Street - Variance Application Relief from Density Requirement

Brookstone Manor, LLC is before the Board of Adjustment seeking a Variance from Article V, Sections 5.05.1.P and 5.03.4.A of the Milford Zoning Ordinance to allow the existing 92 unit multi-family development on 4.8 acres of the subject parcel in the Commercial Zoning District and allow the donation of the remaining 7.1 acres to the Town of Milford for permanent conservation/recreational use. In reviewing the files for this property, I offer the following comments:

#### 1. Existing Conditions:

- a. The subject property is approximately 11.9 total acres. The property contains a 92 unit, multifamily development (Brookstone Manor) located on approximately 4 acres of the front portion of the property The remaining northeasterly portion of the property remains undeveloped and directly borders the Souhegan River. A municipal service line and utility easement run along the northerly portion of the property.
- b. The property contains in excess of 200 linear feet of frontage on Elm Street. The property is accessed by one curb cuts located at southeast area of the property on Elm Street. The municipal utility sevice line is accessed by the Town via a gated access located on the Northeast corner of the abutting Granite Plaza property onto the subject property.
- c. The property is serviced by municipal water and waste water.
- d. The project area directly borders the Granite Town Plaza to the West and commercial and residential uses to the South. The Town owned 127 Elm Street property and Keyes Memorial Park lie to the East. To the North, the property abuts the Souhegan River and by extension across the river, recreational, commercial and residential uses.
- e. The subject property falls within the Commercial 'C' Zoning District and is subject to the density requirements stated in Residential 'B' zoning district, Section 5.03.4.A Allowable Density
- f. As stated in the application, a substantial portion of the property lies within the 100-year and 500-year floodplains (see below). Further, all activities within 250 feet of the Souhegan River are subject to the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act.



2. The applicant and Town are seeking to construct a proposed municipal dog park and passive recreation trail system on the rear portion of the 135 Elm Street property. The project will require a Lot Line Adjustment between the subject property and abutting Town of Milford parcel located at 127 Elm Street.

A Lot Line Adjustment application has been submitted with the Planning Board that proposes to reduce the 11.9-acre property to 4.8 acres. The 4.8 acre parcel will contain the existing 92-unit Brookstone Manor multifamily development and frontage on Elm Street. The remaining rear 7.1 acres would be donated to the Town and then incorporated into the Town owned 127 Elm Street property. The property would become an extension of the municipal park system (Keyes Memorial Park. A permanent conservation and recreation deed restriction will be placed on the 7.1-acre area. The Brookstone Manor multi-family development was approved in the mid-1980s and subsequently constructed.

The Brookstone Manor development will not be changed or enlarged as a result of this proposal. The only proposed change to the property will be the newly proposed lot line and parcel reduction. The undeveloped portion to be donated to the Town will continue to function as dedicated open conservation space.

3. Pursuant to Section 5.05.1.P of the Zoning Ordinance, the density for multi-family properties in the Commercial Zoning District is determined by the density requirements stated in the Residential 'B' zoning district, Section 5.03.4.A Allowable Density which states:

#### 5.03.4 ALLOWABLE DENSITY

Multi-family residences in the Residence "B" District shall adhere to the following conditions for development:

A. Multi-family dwellings shall be served by both municipal sewerage and water systems and may have a maximum of five (5) units per acre. The maximum density may be reduced by the Planning Board based on recommendations of other qualified consultants.

The original approved density for the multi-family development was calculated based on the 11.9 acres (actually 12 acres at the time of the application). At the time of approval in 1984, the permitted density per acre was 8 units (12 x 8 = 96 Units, but only 92 units were constructed. By proposing to reduce the overall acreage of parcel to 4.8 acres, the 92 units would exceed the permittable density for the property. Thus, Brookstone Manor, LLC is before the Board seeking a Variance from Sections 5.05.1.P and 5.03.4.A of the Milford Zoning Ordinance to allow the existing 92-unit multi-family development to be located on the proposed 4.8-acre lot in the Commercial Zoning District.

4. The Conservation Commission has been involved with and supportive of the development of the conceptual dog park and recreational uses on the rear 7.1 acre undeveloped area.

# Aerial Photo(s) of Subject Property:





Town Hall – 1 Union Square – Milford, NH 03055-4240 – (603) 249-0620 – FAX (603) 673-2273 website: www.milford.nh.gov



# **ZBA Application**

# MILFORD ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

#### **GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION FOR ALL APPLICATIONS**

Date Received:\_

Case Number:\_

Application Number :\_

| GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION FOR ALL APPLICATIONS   |           | Hearing Date:  | Hearing Date:                     |  |
|---|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| PROPERTY INFORMATION  |           | Decision Date:   |                                   |  |
| Street Address: 135 Elm Street, Milford, NH   |           | Decision:  |                                   |  |
| Tax Map / Parcel #:   | Lot Size: |  |                                   |  |
| PROPERTY CURRENTLY USED AS  |           | Zoning District (check one):   |                                   |  |
|   |           | ☐ Residence A  |                                   |  |
|   |           | Residence B Resi   | idence R                          |  |
|   |           | ☐ Commercial   |                                   |  |
| If the application involves multiple lots with different owners, attach additional  |           | ☐ Limited Commercial   | ☐ Limited Commercial☐ Industrial☐ |  |
| copies of this page.  |           | ☐ Integrated Commercial-Industrial   |                                   |  |
| PROPERTY OWNER  |           | ☐ Integrated Commercial-   |                                   |  |
| Name:   |           |  |                                   |  |
| Address:  |           | Overlay District (check any that apply):   |                                   |  |
| City/State/Zip:   |           | Overlay District (check dily   | that apply).                      |  |
| Phone: ( )  |           | ☐ West Elm Street Overlay  |                                   |  |
| Email:  |           | ☐ Nashua/Elm Street Ove  | rlay                              |  |
|   |           | ☐ Commerce & Communi   | ty Overlay                        |  |
|   |           | ☐ Open Space & Conserva  | ition                             |  |
| The applicant is the person who is making this proposal on behalf of themselves,  |           | ☐ Wetlands Conservation  | ☐ Wetlands Conservation           |  |
| the owner or a third party. This is usually the same as the property owner, but might be a tenant, someone who plans to purchase the property, an engineer or       |           | ☐ Groundwater Protection   |                                   |  |
| lawyer, etc. If the applicant is the same as the owner, just check "Same as owner"  |           |  | t                                 |  |
| and leave the rest of this section blank.   |           |  |                                   |  |
| APPLICANT/REPRESENTATIVE  |           | APPLICATION FEES   | APPLICATION FEES                  |  |
| ☐ SAME AS OWNER   |           | Application Fee:   | \$75.00                           |  |
| Name:   |           | Abutters Fee: \$4 x  |                                   |  |
| Address:  |           | Amount received:   |                                   |  |
| City/State/Zip:   |           | Date Received:   |                                   |  |
| Email:  |           | Check Cash   |                                   |  |
| Phone: ( )  | Cell: ( ) |  |                                   |  |
| The undersigned property owner(s) hereby authorize(s) the filing of this application and agree to comply with all code requirements applicable to this application. |           | THE FEES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS APPLICATION DO NOT APPLY TO ANY OTHER FEES REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL OF THIS PROJECT. PLANNING, IMPACT, BUILDING AND OTHER FEES MAY APPLY. |                                   |  |
| Property Owner's signature  | Date:     | _  |                                   |  |



|   | Case Number:                |
|---|-----------------------------|
| PROPERTY INFORMATION  | Application #:              |
| Street Address:   | Date Complete:              |
| Tax Map / Parcel #:   | Hearing Date:               |
| A Variance is a use which is not permitted by the Zoning Ordinance. Approval                    | Decision Date:              |
| from the Zoning Board of Adjustment is required to allow any use or deviation                   | Decision:                   |
| from the Zoning Ordinance. Please work with the Zoning Administrator to make                    |                             |
| sure your application is complete and you know what will be required of you at                  |                             |
| the hearing.  |                             |
| What section of the Zoning Ordinance are you asking to be varied?                               |                             |
| Article Section   |                             |
| Describe the variance you are requesting under the above section of the Ordinance.              |                             |
| Ordinance.  |                             |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |
| General Criteria Section 10.01  |                             |
| General Criteria Section 10.01  |                             |
| Explain how the proposal meets the following conditions per New Hampshire RSA                   | A 674:33.I                  |
| 1. Granting the Variance would not be contrary to the public interest because:                  |                             |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |
| 2. If the Variance were granted, the spirit of the ordinance would be observed becau            | ise:                        |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |
| 3. Granting the Variance would do substantial justice because:                                  |                             |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |
| 4. Granting the Variance would not diminish the value of surrounding properties bed             | ause:                       |
|   |                             |
|   |                             |
| 5. Unnecessary Hardship:  |                             |
| This section is the central portion of your argument and is the critical factor that the Zoning |                             |
| determine what is unique to your property and not generally applicable to other properties      | ווו נוופ טופט טו ווו נטשוו. |

Date Received:\_

| A. Owing to special conditions of the property that distinguish it from other properties in the area; denial of the Variance would result in unnecessary hardship because:  |
|---|
| <ul> <li>No fair and substantial relationship exists between the general public purposes of the ordinance provision and the<br/>specific application of that provision to the property because :</li> </ul>   |
|   |
|   |
| AND   |
| ii. The proposed use is a reasonable one because:   |
|   |
|   |
| (B) Explain how, if the criteria in paragraph (A) are not established, an unnecessary hardship will be deemed to exist if, and only if, owing to special conditions of the property that distinguish it from other properties in the area, the property cannot be reasonably used in strict conformance with the Ordinance, and a Variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable use of it:   |
|   |
|   |
| (C) Not withstanding paragraph (B) above, a Variance may be granted without finding a hardship arising from the terms of the Zoning Ordinance when reasonable accommodations are necessary to allow a person or persons with a recognized <b>physical disability</b> to reside in or regularly use the premises, provided that:   |
| or regularly use the premises, provided that:   |
|   |
| <ol> <li>The Variance requested under this paragraph shall be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance</li> </ol>   |
| because:  |
|   |
|   |
| In addition, Variances may have extra criteria that must be met. This includes, but is not limited to:  6.03.5 Floodplain Management: The criteria for evaluation is listed in 6.03.5:B General Conditions and the applicable conditions are listed in 6.03.5:C. If your project is covered by this regulation, include your answers to the required criteria as specified in the referenced Section of the Milford Zoning Ordinance as an attachment under Section 3 C. of this application. |
| ATTACHMENTS – additional information may be needed to help the Zoning Board of Adjustment fully understand your petition.  A. A plan of the property and all buildings, drawn to scale, is required.  B. A Building Permit Application as needed (to be determined by the building official.)   |

C. Additional explanations, justification, abutters' statements, letters, etc.



Please read the following information that is designed to help you understand the unique nature of a Variance petition.

Town of Milford Zoning Ordinance can be found at:

http://planning.milfordnh.info/DOCUMENTS/ZONING%20ORDINANCE%20MASTER%20(2011).pdf NH RSAs, Chapters 672-677 can be found at:

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/NHTOC/NHTOC-LXIV.htm

**VARIANCE**: A variance is an authorization, which may be granted under special circumstances, to use your property in a way that is not permitted under the strict terms of the zoning ordinance.

If you are applying for a variance, you must first have some form of determination that your proposed use is not permitted without a variance. Most often, this determination is a denial of a building permit. A copy of the determination must be attached to your application.

For a variance to be legally granted, you must show that your proposed use meets all five (5) of the following conditions:

a. Granting the Variance would not be contrary to the public interest.

A variance would be considered contrary to the public interest if it unduly and to a marked degree violated the basic zoning objectives of the Zoning Ordinance. Will the variance alter the essential character of the neighborhood or threaten the health, safety, or general welfare of the public?

- b. Granting the Variance would observe the spirit of the ordinance.
- This requires that the effect of the variance be evaluated in light of the goals of the zoning ordinance.
- c. Substantial justice would be done by granting the Variance. Substantial justice is done when any loss to the individual is not outweighed by a gain to the general public.
- d. Granting the Variance would not diminish the value of surrounding property. The applicant, to convince the Zoning Board must explain that granting the variance will not decrease the value of surrounding property.
  - e. Denial of the Variance would result in an unnecessary hardship.

The first requirement is that there are special conditions or characteristics applying to the property (such as, but not limited to, exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape of the property, or exceptional topographical conditions), that distinguish it from other properties in the area. Because of these special conditions, no fair and substantial relationship exists between the general public purposes of the ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property. And finally, the proposed use must be a reasonable one. You must explain what makes the property unique and why a "hardship" would be created if the terms of the ordinance were strictly applied.

In lieu of a claim of unnecessary hardship, the Variance may be granted when reasonable accommodations are necessary to allow a person or persons with a recognized physical disability to reside in or regularly use the premises, provided that any Variance sought shall be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance and the Variance shall survive only so long as the particular person or persons have a continuing need to use the premises. To meet this criterion, explain the accommodations that are necessary and identify the person or persons and provide evidence of their disability.

# **ATTACHMENT 1:**

# **Project Narrative**

Brookstone Manor LLC and the Town of Milford have partnered to construct a proposed municipal dog park and passive recreation trail system on the rear portion of the 135 Elm Street property. The project will require a Lot Line Adjustment between the subject property and abutting Town of Milford parcel located at 127 Elm Street.

A Lot Line Adjustment application has been submitted with the Planning Board that proposes to reduce the 11.9-acre property to 4.8 acres. The parcel will contain the existing 92-unit Brookstone Manor multi-family development and frontage on Elm Street. The remaining rear 7.1 acres would be donated to the Town and then incorporated into the Town owned 127 Elm Street property. The property would become an extension of the municipal park system (Keyes Memorial Park) for the benefit of the general public and tenants of Brookstone Manor. A permanent conservation and recreation deed restriction will be placed on the 7.1-acre area. The Brookstone Manor multi-family development has long since been constructed (completed in the late 1980s) and will not change as a result of this proposal. The only change to the property will be the new proposed lot line and parcel reduction.

The original approved density for the multi-family development was calculated based on the 11.9 acres. At the time of approval in 1984, the permitted density per acre was 8 units (12 x 8 = 96 Units, but only 92 units were constructed. By proposing to reduce the overall acreage of parcel to 4.8 acres, the 92 units would exceed the permittable density for the property. Thus, Brookstone Manor, LLC is before the Board seeking a Variance from Sections 5.05.1.P and 5.03.4.A of the Milford Zoning Ordinance to allow the existing 92-unit multi-family development to be located on the proposed 4.8-acre lot in the Commercial Zoning District.

#### **Variance Criteria:**

#### 1. Granting the Variance would not be contrary to the public interest because:

The Variance request is not contrary to the public interest as the proposal will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or threaten the health, safety, or general welfare of the public. The property has long since been fully constructed and will continue to function as it was originally approved for a 92-unit multi-family development. The only substantive change to the property will be the lot line adjustment and subsequent donation of the 7.1 acres to the Town.

The proposed 4.8 acres of the parent lot will remain unchanged and the permitted density will not increase. The 7.1 acres to be removed via a proposed Lot Line Adjustment Application will be donated to the Town and continue to function as dedicated open conservation and recreation areas. If the relief is granted, the donated property will be incorporated into the Town owned 127 Elm Street property and by extension the municipal park system for the benefit of the general public and tenants of Brookstone Manor. The

proposed deed to the Town will contain language ensuring that the 7.1 acres will be permanently limited to conservation and recreation purposes. Further, the donated area will continue to preserve the riparian buffers and water quality of the Souhegan River.

#### 2. If the Variance were granted, the spirit of the ordinance would be observed because:

The spirit of the Ordinance will be observed as the Variance request will continue to promote the health, safety, or general welfare of the community and not violate the Ordinance's basic zoning objectives. The purpose and intent of Section 5.03.4.A is to limit the allowable density, prevent overcrowding on a parcel, and unduly impact the character and safety of the neighborhood/community. Although the density for the 4.8-acre area would be exceeded, the overall function and use of the reduced parent lot and donated 7.1 acres will remain the same.

The permitted density was calculated based on the entire 12-acre parcel. Due the existing wetland resource areas, flood hazard zones and the property's proximity to the Souhegan River, construction/development was limited to the front portions of the property (approximately 4.8 acres) with the remainder being undeveloped land (approximately 7.1 acres) directly abutting the river, Town owned property (Keys Memorial Park), and a commercial plaza.

The proposal to reduce the size of the parent lot and donate 7.1 acres to the Town will have no impact to essential character of the neighborhood or community with regards to the existing density and/or multi-family development. The parcel and multi-family development will remain unchanged and continue to function as originally approved. Further, the 7.1 acres to be removed will continue to function as dedicated open conservation and recreation areas. If the relief is granted, the donated property will be incorporated into the Town owned 127 Elm Street property and by extension the municipal park system for the benefit of the general public and tenants of Brookstone Manor. The donated area will continue to maintain its highest and best use as a conservation and recreation area and to preserve the riparian buffers / water quality of the Souhegan River.

### 3. Granting the Variance would do substantial justice because:

Granting the Variance would greatly benefit the public interest with no negative repercussions to the Town or neighboring properties. The Variance will allow Brookstone Manor, LLC and the Town to proceed with the Lot Line Adjustment and the 7.1-acre donation. As stated previously, the donated property will be incorporated into the Town owned 127 Elm Street property and by extension the municipal park system for the benefit of the general public and tenants of Brookstone Manor. Further, the donated area will continue to preserve the riparian buffers and water quality of the Souhegan River.

4. Granting the Variance would not diminish the value of surrounding properties because:

By continuing the existing developed multi-family development and providing an opportunity to create a permanent Town owned conservation and recreational area, granting the

Variance would not dimmish the value of surrounding properties and ensure the continued preservation of the neighborhood's essential character.

The property has long since been fully constructed and will continue to function as it was originally approved for a 92-unit multi-family development. The only substantive change to the property will be lot line adjustment and subsequent donation of the property to the Town. The proposed 4.8-acre area of the parent lot will remain unaltered and the number of multi-family units will not increase. The 7.1 acres to be donated to the Town will function as dedicated permanent conservation and recreation areas. If the relief is granted, the donated property will be incorporated into the Town owned 127 Elm Street property and by extension the municipal park system for the benefit of the general public and tenants of Brookstone Manor. The proposed deed to the Town of Milford will contain language ensuring that the 7.1 acres to be donated will be permanently limited to conservation and recreation purposes.

#### 5. Unnecessary Hardship

- A. Owing to special conditions of the property that distinguish it from other properties in the area; denial of the Variance would result in unnecessary hardship because:
  - i. No fair and substantial relationship exists between the general public purposes of the ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property because:

The existing subject property is unique in several ways. The parcel is very irregular in shape; it is very narrow between the developed front 4.8-acre portion and the 7.1-acre rear portion. The development and location of the multi-family development on the front portion of the property is a direct result of the existing environmental conditions located on the rear 7.1 acres (wetland resource areas, flood hazard zones, and Souhegan River).

The proposal will have no demonstrable impact on the community and will function as same as the property currently exists today. The only substantive change to the property would be lot line adjustment and subsequent donation of the property to the Town. The 92-unit multi-family Brookstone Manor development located on the proposed 4.8-acre area of the parent lot will remain unaltered and the number of multi-family units will not increase. The 7.1 acres to be donated to the Town will continue to function as dedicated open space. If the relief is granted, the donated property will be incorporated into the Town owned 127 Elm Street property and by extension the municipal park system for the benefit of the general public and tenants of Brookstone Manor. The Town of Milford will place a conservation and recreation deed on area and will contain language ensuring that the 7.1 acres to be donated will be permanently limited to conservation and recreation purposes.

Although the density for the 4.8 acre area would be exceeded, the overall function and use of the reduced parent lot and donated 7.1 acres will remain the same. As

such, the full application of the Ordinance relative to the permittable density for the proposed 4.8-acre parcel is not necessary, will not serve any substantial public purpose, and will not advance the purposes of the ordinance provision in any "fair and substantial" way.

#### AND

# ii. The proposed use is a reasonable one because:

Although the density for the 4.8 acre area would be exceeded, the overall function and use of the reduced parent lot and donated 7.1 acres will remain the same. The proposal will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood and is a reasonable use. The parcel and multi-family development will remain unchanged and continue to function as originally approved in 1984. Further, the 7.1 acres to be removed will continue to function as dedicated open conservation and recreation areas. If the relief is granted, the donated property will be incorporated into the Town owned 127 Elm Street property and by extension the municipal park system for the benefit of the general public and tenants of Brookstone Manor. The donated area will continue to maintain its highest and best use as a conservation and recreation area and to preserve the riparian buffers / water quality of the Souhegan River.

