

SouthField developer eyes more housing, denser development

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WEYMOUTH – The SouthField project’s master developer plans to seek zoning changes to allow more housing and denser construction as part of an updated vision for the redevelopment of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station.

LStar Management plans to ask the Weymouth Town Council to approve adding 1,000 houses for buyers 55 and older and building high-end condominiums and apartments instead of single-family homes elsewhere on the 1,400-acre property, LStar managing partner Kyle Corkum said.

LStar will detail the plan at the council’s meeting Monday night and seek feedback before making a final application for the zoning changes.

Corkum said the changes would simplify SouthField’s planned layout and help spur new construction. Shifting to apartments, condos and age-restricted homes would minimize the number of children who would move into SouthField and reduce the burden on local schools, Corkum said.

“We’re very proud of this plan but we don’t expect that everybody’s going to universally love it,” he said. “There are going to be a lot of people who love the economic benefits and the creation of a destination that will be a tremendous source of pride in years to come.”

SouthField includes land in Weymouth, Rockland and Abington. A legislative overhaul signed into law last year rewrote the project’s timelines and gave each town control over taxing and zoning changes in its portion.

The legislation kept intact previous plans for at least 900,000 square feet of commercial space and 2,855 homes and apartments, but it left option the potential for more age-restricted housing. LStar’s proposed changes would increase the number of housing units to 3,855, and company officials have suggested increasing commercial development beyond the current maximum of 2 million square feet.

SouthField has seen a flurry of new land deals and some residential construction in recent months following years of setbacks and delays that have put the project years behind its original schedule. Columbia Pictures plans to begin filming part of the new “Ghostbusters” reboot in a converted aircraft hangar this summer.

LStar took over the project in May.

Council President Patrick O’Connor said he’s looking forward to seeing LStar’s proposed changes and that they could have a positive impact on the project.

“I think what they’re trying to do is definitely on the right track,” he said. “We need to review this and get the figures and facts behind it but I think it’s definitely a step in the right direction.”

LStar's proposed changes also include swapping the location of 80 acres of land zoned for office buildings on Shea Memorial Drive and 80 acres of residentially zoned land on the Delahunt Parkway.

The new configuration would create three new districts – a neighborhood district with the 1,000 age-restricted homes, a town center district with larger residential and retail buildings and a “discovery district” for office buildings and research and development operations.