

LStar eyes SouthField stadium, lays out vision to Weymouth town council

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WEYMOUTH

LStar Management plans to ramp up its redevelopment of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station by constructing a 10,000 seat sports stadium, a town center with shops, restaurants, bars and a hockey rink.

The plan also includes a discovery district that would host medical or life-science firm and 1,000 housing units for people 55-years of age and older.

These proposed changes would require Weymouth, Abington and Rockland to approve zoning changes under legislation approved by lawmakers last year.

“You asked us if we have a plan that would contribute to tax growth and create jobs,” said LStar managing partner Kyle Corkum during a special town council meeting Monday. “We want to make Weymouth proud.”

Corkum said he is in discussions with some professional sports organizations about playing at SouthField, but he is not at liberty to say who the groups are.

In recent weeks a former hangar was renovated into a motion picture studio and a movie set is under construction on a tarmac to accommodate the filming of “Ghostbusters 3” a Columbia Studios production, according to Corkum.

District 5 Councilor Ed Harrington said he would like LStar to have a consultant conduct a study on how many senior housing units can be built at SouthField.

“I’d like (Weymouth) to get \$14 million in tax revenue and see how much space we have and whether it is doable.”

Corkum said after the meeting the bulk of the proposed changes to the site plan would occur in Weymouth but he intends to keep officials in Rockland and Abington informed.

“The impacts are significantly less on Abington and Rockland, but they are an important part of SouthField,” Corkum said.

Corkum said he believes the modifications to the reuse plan would make Weymouth the envy of the South Shore.

“It will maximize the economic benefit and minimize the need for town services,” Corkum said.

Corkum said LStar’s plan if approved by Weymouth, Abington and Rockland would help the town’s receive the economic benefits they were supposed to when the communities approved a reuse plan for SouthField in 2005.

The 2005 reuse plan called for upwards to 2 million square-feet of commercial amenities, 2,855 residences, recreational facilities and walking trails.

During the following years commercial development was non-existent and lawmakers overhauled the legislation to redevelop SouthField in August 2014. The adjustments to the original legislation eliminated a stipulation that required 150,000 square feet of commercial amenities be built in accordance with every 1,000 residences constructed.

The legislative changes also required Weymouth, Abington and Rockland to assume responsibility for providing public safety services and schooling for SouthField children July 1 in exchange for receiving property tax payments at each community's prevailing rate.

Corkum said LStar wants to restore the original vision for creating high paying jobs in the bio-tech or life sciences at SouthField in addition to creating more commercial development. "We would continue to with our payments of host community fees and our mitigation obligations," Corkum said. "We will make timely tax payments."

Corkum said construction of the planned commercial amenities would be done over a 10-year period if Weymouth, Abington and Rockland approve the zoning changes.

District 2 Councilor Thomas J. Lacey said he welcomes the prospect of having bio-tech jobs at SouthField for residents.

"Shortly after 2005, we were told the market was not good," Lacey said.

Corkum said the water need for increased commercial development would be great and LStar is close to reaching an agreement with the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority to receive water to supply SouthField.

The plan for getting water from the MWRA would require building a 7-mile pipeline through Braintree to link SouthField to the MWRA's water supply, according to Corkum.

"We will use the MWRA for sewer and we won't pass the pipeline cost onto Weymouth," Corkum said. "We have a private trash collection firm and we won't bother the town to collect trash."

An Aug. 19 letter from MWRA executive director Frederick Laskey stated members of the authority's staff support providing water to SouthField and the MWRA directors could be decided at a Sept. 16 meeting.

The letter further stated the MWRA could provide SouthField with a safe yield of 300 million gallons of water daily.

District 4 Councilor Arthur Mathews said he likes having SouthField connected to the MWRA to receive water.

"When we changed the legislation, we put the onus on the developer to get water and sewer," Mathews said. "The idea of the water hookup to the MWRA was the developer could sell water to other municipalities and reduce the (water) rate to SouthField residents."

Corkum said LStar is working on logistics with getting SouthField connected to the MWRA and having the ability to sell surplus water to communities.

"The plan is we would bear the cost of bring water to SouthField," Corkum said.

District 3 Councilor Kenneth DiFazio said he likes how LStar is proposing to pay for constructing the pipeline to the MWRA.

“The next time you come before us, could you update us on a water plan,” DiFazio asked.

District 6 Councilor Michael Smart whose district includes SouthField said the proposed changes for SouthField would make the site more densely populated and he would like to see fire suppression systems installed in the homes.

“This is something we will be looking at,” Smart said. “It is not a legal requirement, but it is something that needs to be looked at. When you have resident homes that will be five or six feet apart, I do have concerns.”

Smart said if LStar promotes the proximity of the South Weymouth MBTA commuter rail to potential SouthField residents there has to be enough coaches on its trains to accommodate the additional riders.

“They are limited to two (train) cars,” Smart said.

Smart said LStar should talk with State Secretary of Transportation Jeffrey Mullan about an expected increase of riders from SouthField and a need for more train cars as development of the site increases.

District 2 Councilor Thomas J. Lacey said he welcomes the recent recreation additions to SouthField by L Star that created a soccer/lacrosse field, a t-ball field with an outfield wall that resembles Fenway Park’s “Green Monster”

“I sit here frustrated but encouraged by what you have done in a short period of time,” Lacey said.

Lacey said it has been frustrating over the years to not have the much desired recreational amenities at SouthField for residents to use.

“So far you have provided some good will, but it is a comprehensive community you are looking to build,” Lacey said. “I’m excited about having bio-tech.”

Weymouth Recreation Program supervisor Steve Reilly said Corkum is enthusiastic about having recreational amenities at SouthField.

“It’s been great,” Reilly said after the meeting. “Kyle and his team are getting things setup. Kyle’s enthusiasm is contagious.”

Council President Patrick O’Connor said it is an exciting time for the town to see development occurring at SouthField but the councilors have plenty of information about the proposed changes to review during the months ahead.

“You came and delivered,” O’Connor said as the meeting drew to a close. “I look forward to working with you.”

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