



**TOWN OF COVENTRY, RI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

STAFF REPORT

Project Name:	Mishnock Woods
Plan Type:	Comprehensive Permit / Major Land Development
Plan Review Phase:	Master Plan
Owner:	Coventry Route 3 LLC c/o Real Estate Operations #1188
Applicant:	Benson Essex LLC
Address:	1055 Tiogue Avenue
Plat / Lot / Zone:	AP 28 Lots 3 Zone PD Lot Size 27.31 Acres
Existing Use:	Vacant Land / Former Commercial Site
Proposed Use:	400 Residential Dwelling Units in Five (5) Multi-Family Buildings
Description:	Applicant proposes to develop 400 multi-family residential dwelling units across five (5) five-story buildings on the 27.31-acre subject parcel as a Comprehensive Permit. A minimum of 25% of the proposed units must be deed-restricted as affordable. The proposed development will also include three (3) one-story amenity buildings, parking, landscaping, stormwater mitigation, and other site improvements. Public water and sewer access are anticipated. Primary site access is proposed from Tiogue Avenue.

I. PROJECT INFORMATION

Background and Process

This item will be reviewed as a Master Plan Application for a proposed Comprehensive Permit / Major Land Development of an approximately 27.31-acre subject parcel at 1055 Tiogue Avenue (AP 28, Lot 3).

A Comprehensive Permit is an application where, according to RIGL §45-53-4, *“Any applicant proposing to build low- or moderate-income housing may submit to the local review board a single application for a comprehensive permit to build that housing in lieu of separate applications to the applicable local boards. This procedure is only available for proposals in which at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the housing is low- or moderate-income housing.”*

In exchange for these affordable units, the applicant is given a density bonus for the number of units they are allowed to build on the property. Relevant to this case, State Law § 45-53-4 (b)(1)(i) states *“For properties connected to public sewer and water, or eligible to be connected to public sewer and water based on written confirmation from each respective service provider, the density bonus for a project that provides at least twenty-five percent (25%) low- and moderate-income housing shall be at least five (5)*

units per acre.” The site has public water and sewer available from Tiogue Avenue and proposed connections are shown on the conceptual site plans.

In addition to the increase in density, the applicant can also seek adjustments and waivers from the local Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations to achieve their project vision. State law also provides for a single body to act on all forms of land use relief as it relates to the Comprehensive Permit. More particularly, state law provides that *“The local review board has the same power to issue permits or approvals that any local board or official who would otherwise act with respect to the application, including, but not limited to, the power to attach to the permit or approval, conditions, and requirements with respect to height, site plan, size or shape, or building materials, as are consistent with the terms of this section.* For Coventry, this is the Planning Commission. As such the Planning Commission has the authority to grant adjustments and waivers for land use relief.

Existing Conditions



The parcel is zoned PD (Planned Development) and currently consists of vacant, pre-disturbed land that contains asphalt paving, parts of a large pylon sign, and other remnants of an old shopping plaza. This site formerly hosted an Almac’s and K-Mart, with associated parking areas and access roads that covered the southern portion of the lot. These stores closed down in the late 1990s, and were demolished in 2008.

This parcel remains subject to Final Plan approval for “Brookside Center Renovation,” a mixed-use development that never came to fruition. “Brookside,” which was approved in December 2007, proposed to develop 104 residential units, with 4 deed-restricted affordable units, and 49,250 SF of commercial office, retail, and restaurant space.

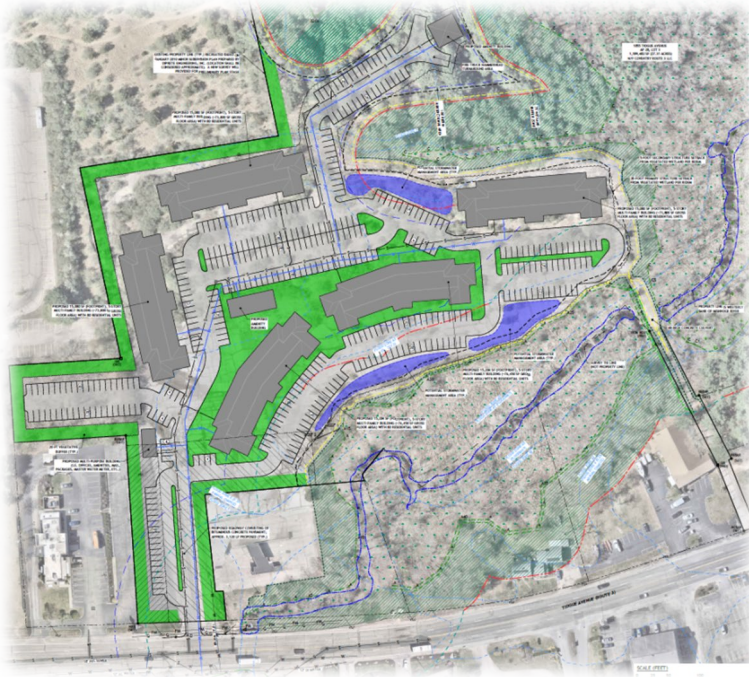
The immediate surrounding properties are zoned GB (General Business), PD (Planned Development) or R-20 (Residential) and includes a mix of various commercial uses to the south and west, large mobile home communities to the north, as well as a Catholic church to the east. The subject parcel is subject to two existing access easements, with one that enables overflow parking for the abutting Burger King to the west, and another serving the now-defunct Citizens Bank ATM to the south.

A total of 18.59 acres of the subject parcel (about 68%) is considered “land suitable for development” according the provisions of state law for a Comprehensive Permit. The Mishnock River runs through the subject parcel. In addition, the northern section of the property is dominated by wetlands, and thus undevelopable. The wetlands report flagged a potential vernal pool in the northern portion of the site, an intermittent stream in the northwestern portion of the site, and an area subject to storm flowage.

The wetlands features are subject to specific buffer zones and construction setbacks discussed in the report.

The land surrounding the Mishnock River is classified as Zone AE, and thus falls within the 1% annual-chance flood hazard area, and another portion of the site lies in Zone X with 0.2% annual-chance flood. The subject parcel is also located in a RIDEM Natural Heritage Area, which signifies that a rare, endangered, or species of concern has been sighted in the vicinity.

Proposed Conditions



The applicant has submitted a proposal to develop 400 residential dwelling units across five (5) multi-family apartment buildings as a Comprehensive Permit, with a minimum of 25% deed-restricted as Low- and Moderate-Income Housing (LMIH). Each proposed apartment building will be five stories tall with roughly 73,800 SF of gross floor area, and contain 80 residential units. The buildings will contain a mix of studio (98 units), one-bedroom (222 units), and two-bedroom units (80 units). The fiscal report estimates that 648 people, including eight school-age children, will be residents in the future.

As a Comprehensive Permit with 25% LMIH and proposed public water and sewer access, the minimum density bonus for this

project is 5 units per acre per RIGL § 45-53-4. The total land suitable for development is 18.59 acres. With a density bonus of 5 units per acre, the total minimum density bonus is 92.95 units total. The baseline density is based upon the “Brookside Center Renovation” approval for 104 units. Therefore, the minimum allowable density for this project, which is a combination of the density bonus and “Brookside,” is 196.95 units total. The applicant has provided a memorandum on the density calculation which provides further information.

Primary access is proposed from Tiogue Avenue, via one full-access drive with one-lane entrance and exit. The applicant has submitted an initial traffic assessment, which states that “the proposed development is projected to result in some increase in traffic during the weekday morning and afternoon peak periods,” but concludes that this will not “have any significant impact on traffic operations.” A comprehensive traffic study shall be submitted at the next stage of review.

The proposed development will also include three amenity buildings, parking, landscaping, stormwater mitigation, and other site improvements. The three amenity buildings will generally provide space for property management and various tenant amenities. The plan shows that the proposed one-story multi-purpose building on the southern end of the development, near Tiogue Avenue, will have offices,

amenities, mail, and a master water meter. The one-story amenity building in the center of the development will include an outdoor terrace.

The proposed development will also include parking and landscaping. 400 total off-street parking spaces (1 per each one- and/or two-bedroom unit in accordance with state law) are proposed, with eight handicap accessible spaces in compliance with ADA law, and one space accessible for vans. The applicant proposes a 20' vegetative buffer around the perimeter of the development. No formal landscape plan has been submitted yet. The applicant has requested adjustments and waivers related to parking areas and loading spaces.



Zoning

The applicant has provided Planning staff with an itemization of all requested adjustments from the Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations:

Zoning Ordinance: The applicant requests the following adjustments:

1. To allow parking in front of buildings, where Zoning Code § 255-1200 requires that parking be located in the rear or side of buildings.
2. To allow parking and loading area to have 4" of pavement atop 8" compacted gravel, where Zoning Code § 255-1200 stipulates that parking and loading areas shall be paved with asphalt, a minimum of 2" over not less than 10" compacted gravel.
3. The location of off-street loading spaces will be determined at Preliminary Plan – relief is sought from the following standards within Zoning Code § 255-1210:
 - a. Off-street loading spaces must be located must be located in the rear of the structure.
 - b. At least one off-street loading space shall be provided and maintained on the same lot for every use having a gross floor area of up to 5,000 SF – and one additional loading space shall be provided for each additional 10,000 SF of gross floor area.

Subdivision and Land Development Regulations: The applicant requests the following waivers:

1. Article XIII, E.4 – Communication Lines (Electric, Telephone, and Cable TV) – The applicant requests relief from the requirement to install all electric, communication, and street lighting lines underground.
2. Article XIII, J.1 – General standards for development – The applicant seeks relief from the maximum height requirement of 35' (or three stories) for multi-family buildings.
3. Article XIII, J.2(b) – Distance between multi-family buildings on the same lot – The applicant requests relief from the 40' minimum distance between two abutting ends of buildings of the same general plane or row.
4. Article XIII, J.2(c) – Distance between multi-family buildings and the property line – The applicant requests relief from the 40' minimum distance from the side or rear property line for any multi-family building or accessory building.

Interdepartmental Review and Comments

Please see the attached report from the Technical Review Committee (dated June 15, 2025) for interdepartmental comments on this application.

Public Comments

One (1) public comment was received on this application on July 15, 2026 as follows:

"Mishnock Woods"

Dear Mr McLean,

Our family is deeply concerned regarding the proposed over development of Western Coventry. Consideration for the residents of the community seems to be perpetually ignored in favor of large developers who want commitment to large scale changes to our rural areal. We hope you will consider the residents of the community you represent.

Thankyou,

Cheryl Connor

II. COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT

Findings of Fact

The Planning Commission shall review this Comprehensive Permit Application for conformance with required standards set forth in RIGL § 45-53-4:

RIGL § 45-53-4. Whether the proposed development is consistent with local needs as identified in the community's affordable housing plan and/or has satisfactorily addressed the issues where there may be

inconsistencies. If the local board finds that the proposed development is inconsistent with the community's affordable housing plan, it must also find that the municipality has made significant progress in implementing its housing plan.

RIGL § 45-53-4. Whether the proposed development is in compliance with the standards and provisions of the municipality's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, and/or where adjustments are requested by the applicant, that whether local concerns that have been affected by the relief granted do not outweigh the state and local need for low- and moderate-income housing.

RIGL § 45-53-4. Whether the low- and moderate-income housing units proposed are integrated throughout the development; are compatible in scale, meaning that: (1) The size of the low- and moderate-income units shall not be less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the size of the market rate units, unless otherwise allowed by the local board; (2) The affordable units are of similar architectural style to the market rate units within the project so that the exterior of the units look like an integrated neighborhood with similar rooflines, window patterns, materials and colors; and (3) The affordable units will be built and occupied in a proportional manner with the construction and occupancy of the market rate units. Except that for housing units that are intended to be occupied by persons fifty-five (55) years of age or older, or sixty-two (62) years of age or older, as permitted by the federal Fair Housing Act pursuant to 42 U.S.C.A. § 3607(b) and 24 CFR § 100.300-308 and the Rhode Island fair housing practices act pursuant to § 34-37-4.1, such units need not be integrated in any building or phase within the development that contains housing units that are not age-restricted, and neither age-restricted housing units nor any building or phase containing age-restricted housing units must be compatible in scale and architectural style to other housing unit types to the extent the age-restricted housing units are designed to meet the physical or social needs of older persons or necessary to provide housing opportunities for older persons.

RIGL § 45-53-4. Whether there will be significant negative impacts on the health and safety of current or future residents of the community, in areas including, but not limited to, safe circulation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, provision of emergency services, sewerage disposal, availability of potable water, adequate surface water run-off, and the preservation of natural, historical, or cultural features.

RIGL § 45-53-4. Whether the proposed land developments or subdivisions lots will have adequate and permanent physical access to a public street in accordance with the requirements of § 45-23-60(a)(5), or the local review board has approved other access, such as a private road.

RIGL § 45-53-4. Whether the proposed development will result in the creation of individual lots with any physical constraints to development that building on those lots according to pertinent regulations and building standards would be impracticable, unless created only as permanent open space or permanently reserved for a public purpose on the approved, recorded plans.

Recommendation

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Commission continue the Comprehensive Permit Application and Public Hearing to their next regular meeting on August 26, 2026. Staff advise the Commission utilize the July 22, 2026 meeting to consider the details of the proposal, hear public comments, ask questions, and provide general direction to Planning Staff prior to Staff developing a specific recommendation on this application. 400 residential units in five multi-family buildings are proposed, where the minimum allowable density is 196.95 units per state law. Additional units above the state-mandated minimum density bonus may be permitted at the discretion of the Planning Commission.



TOWN OF COVENTRY

Department of Planning & Development

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TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: July 15, 2026
PROJECT NAME: "Mishnock Woods"
PROPERTIES: AP 28, Lot 3
ADDRESS: 1055 Tiogue Ave
ZONE: PD (Planned Development)
OWNER: Coventry Route 3 LLC c/o Real Estate Operations #1188
APPLICANT: Benson Essex LLC

This matter came before the Coventry Technical Review Committee at its July 15, 2026 meeting as a Master Plan for a Major Land Development/Comprehensive Permit in accordance with Article V, § D.4. of the Coventry Subdivision & Land Development Regulations.

An application and plan set were submitted for review on June 4, 2026, and revised materials were submitted on June 9, 2026. The applicant proposes to develop 400 multi-family residential dwelling units across five (5) five-story buildings on the 27.31-acre subject parcel as a Comprehensive Permit. A minimum of 25% of the proposed units must be deed-restricted as affordable. The proposed development will also include three (3) one-story amenity buildings, parking, landscaping, stormwater mitigation, and other site improvements. Public water and sewer access are anticipated. Primary site access is proposed from Tiogue Avenue.

The members of the Technical Review Committee reviewed the following documents related to this application when preparing the comments below:

Mishnock Woods - Planning Report.pdf
Mishnock Woods - Density Memo.pdf
Mishnock Woods - Fiscal Impact Study.pdf
Mishnock Woods - Master Plan Set.pdf
Mishnock Woods - Project Narrative.pdf
Mishnock Woods - Renderings.pdf
Mishnock Woods - Traffic Assessment.pdf

PRINCIPAL PLANNER DESIGNEE

1. As a Comprehensive Permit application with 25% of the units designated as LMIH and proposed public water and sewer access, the minimum density bonus for this project is 5 units per acre per RIGL § 45-53-4. The total land suitable for development is 18.59 acres. With a density bonus of 5 units per acre, the minimum density bonus is 92.95 units total.
2. The baseline density for this project is based on a previous Final Plan and Planned Development approval for "Brookside Center Renovation," a mixed-use development that never came to

fruition. "Brookside," which was approved in December 2007, proposed to develop 104 residential units, with 4 deed-restricted affordable units, and 49,250 SF of commercial space.

3. Therefore, the minimum allowable density for this project, which is a combination of the density bonus of 92.95 units and "Brookside" approval of 104 units, is 196.95 units total. The applicant proposes to develop 400 multi-family residential units, which represents a 203-unit increase above the minimum per state law. Those additional units may be permitted at the discretion of the Planning Commission.
4. The initial traffic assessment states that "After further analysis under the preliminary design stage of the development, it may be desirable to provide two lanes on the exit to allow right turning vehicles to get around left turning vehicles." Planning staff concurs with this approach and requests that this roadway design change be made at Preliminary Plan.
5. The applicant shall submit a full traffic study at Preliminary Plan, which may be subject to peer review at the Town's discretion. Planning staff recommends that the applicant provide additional details on the potential to re-install the traffic signal that used to exist on Tiogue Avenue at the entry point of the project site.
6. The applicant shall provide a secondary means of access for fire apparatus and emergency responders at Preliminary Plan.
7. The narrow strip of land abutting 1049 Tiogue Avenue (AP 28, Lot 5) that connects to Tiogue Avenue historically served as a one-way exit for shoppers at the former Almac's/K-Mart plaza. Planning staff encourages the applicant to explore the feasibility of this strip as an alternative means of access either for emergency responders or for everyday traffic.
8. The primary access drive (from the public right-of-way to the multi-purpose building) shall be subject to the following:
 1. the standards set forth in Article XIV, Section B of the Subdivision Regulations for street construction in the R-20 zone, and
 2. the property access standards for residential complexes of four or more families in Zoning Code § 255-1230.
9. The applicant should identify and request waivers for the primary access drive from all appropriate roadway standards discussed in comment #8.
10. For the proposed parking drive aisles and parking spaces, the applicant shall clarify the dimensions, setbacks from the adjacent property line, and drive access spacing per Zoning Code § 255-1230. Planning staff notes that the applicant has requested adjustments from the requirements in Zoning Code § 255-1200 for parking location, paving, and loading spaces.
11. The applicant shall provide internal pedestrian walkways and/or sidewalks throughout the proposed development to ensure safe pedestrian circulation to all five apartment buildings, the three amenity buildings, and the public right-of-way.
12. The applicant shall install streetlights within the proposed development to provide sufficient illumination to all buildings and parking areas, pursuant to the review and approval of Central Coventry Fire District. Planning staff requests that a lighting plan with photometric analysis be provided at Preliminary Plan.
13. The applicant shall provide clarity on the specific uses within the three amenity buildings within the development. The conceptual plans note that the multi-purpose building on the southern end of the development, near Tiogue Avenue, will be used for offices, amenities, and mail. No such details are provided for the other two amenity buildings, though outdoor seating is shown.
14. The applicant shall provide a full Landscape Plan prepared by a registered landscape architect at the Preliminary Plan stage, which identifies the existing trees to remain and shows proposed new tree plantings.

15. Planning staff recommends that the applicant provide additional landscaping in the green space areas along the public right-of-way for aesthetic enhancement.
16. The applicant shall clarify the height of the proposed five-story buildings and provide building elevations with the Preliminary Plan submission.
17. The applicant shall provide a breakdown of the number of bedrooms per unit.
18. The applicant shall identify the location of the cluster mailbox(es) to serve this development pursuant to USPS guidelines at Preliminary Plan.
19. The applicant shall provide a stormwater management plan and stormwater system operation and maintenance plan at Preliminary Plan.
20. Planning staff requests conceptual information on the proportionality, integration, and construction of LMI units before the Planning Commission meeting on 7/22. The following information relative to the developer's approach shall be required with the Final Plan submission:
 1. A document that demonstrates how the proposed LMI units shall be "integrated throughout the development" and "of similar architectural style to the market-rate units" per RIGL § 45-53-4.
 2. A document that demonstrates that the LMI units "be built and occupied in a proportional manner with the construction and occupancy of the market-rate units" per RIGL § 45-53-4.
21. The applicant shall provide the name of its affordable housing monitoring agent if one has been selected at this time. The applicant shall provide a draft monitoring agreement and sample deed restrictions at the Final Plan stage.
22. Planning staff requests a breakdown of the affordability levels for the LMI units across all five apartment buildings, specifically whether all of the LMI units will be deed-restricted at 80% AMI, or contain a mix with some 60% or lower (e.g. 50% or 30%) AMI units.
23. Planning staff recommends that the applicant designate the northern, undevelopable half of the property as protected open space. Final copies of all legal documents, including restrictive and protective covenants and/or conservation easements, will be required at Final Plan.

TOWN ENGINEER

General

1. A Town of Coventry Sewer Connection Permit and a RIDEM Order of Approval shall be required for the project.
2. A town Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Permit will be required from the Town Engineering Office prior to any ground disturbing activities.
3. Upon project completion, a Certificate of Conformance (COC) from the Engineer of Record (EOR) shall be required. The COC shall certify that the constructed project meets all required standards, regulations and specifications in the permitting and construction documents. A certificate of occupancy will not be issued until COC is received and accepted by the town.
4. A RIDEM Wetlands and RIPDES Permit will be required for the project.
5. The proposed entrance to the site will require a RIDOT PAP.
6. Stormwater management will be reviewed at the Preliminary Plan Phase.
7. Pedestrian walkways are preferred throughout the development.

Narrative

1. Section 3.2, Parking – Please address how the site will accommodate guest parking.

Traffic Study

1. Engineering recommends that a comprehensive traffic study be performed with a peer review.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

1. Secondary access/egress that is abandoned should be reopened as an emergency access that can also be used by the fire department for additional access.

FIRE REPRESENTATIVE

1. The water flow would need to be calculated for the fire flow of each building to accommodate manual fire suppression as well as automatic sprinkler systems.
2. Fire hydrants shall be sized according to the water flow required and their locations marked on the site plans.
3. FDC- Fire Department Connections, shall be marked for location at each building on the site plans.
4. Fire apparatus access roads shall meet minimum standards for aerial apparatus placement and set-up for each building.
5. Fire apparatus access road dimensions are not shown, and also the layout does not appear to provide aerial apparatus access to every building.
6. Fire apparatus roads shall provide a turnaround such as the hammerhead style proposed that meet minimal sizing for aerial apparatus.
7. The proposed site shall meet the requirements for the number of access roads to the complex. The proposed 400 units with multiple five story buildings shall require two separate access roads spaced according to required separation spacing. NFPA 1, Ch. 18.
8. The total height of the proposed buildings is not specified.

PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIR

The Planning Commission Chair recused as this item will be heard before the Planning Commission.