

Expanded daycare plan for Shipyard

By Carol Britton Meyer — Thu Aug 07, 2008, 04:03 PM EDT

Hingham - The need for day care on the South Shore is growing.

Accordingly, developer Samuels & Associates is seeking a major modification to the current Launch at Hingham Shipyard plans in order to increase in the size of the building that will house a KinderCare daycare facility.

The amendment to the Mixed-Use Special Permit, if approved, would allow Samuels to expand the size of the daycare center from 4,000 to 9,500 square feet, with an associated increase in student population from 53 to 145. The facility is located west of the Rte. 3A Building 19.

"We're requesting an increase in the size due to the market demand for daycare," said Samuels Vice President of Development Leslie Cohen in a telephone interview. "KinderCare will serve residents of Hingham Shipyard and surrounding towns."

To accommodate the expanded plan, the layout of two of the buildings would be shifted and modified to provide 14 more parking spots, or a total of 83 spaces. One space per every five students and one for each employee is required under town regulations.

The planning board and ZBA held a joint hearing Monday to discuss this proposed changes in plans.

"It seems as though everyone likes this use and wants to see it happen," Cohen said.

The hearing was continued until Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. At the boards' request, Samuels will provide additional parking data to the town's traffic consultants to ensure there is adequate parking, particularly during the peak pick-up period.

The peak morning drop-off time is not an issue, Cohen said, because the adjacent bank is not open at that time. It's the evening peak period of between 5 and 5:15 p.m. on Friday afternoons when the biggest surge in picking up children is expected.

"Kindercare says 83 spaces is double the amount of parking they need," Cohen said, "so we feel comfortable that we will be providing enough parking."

Traffic flow suggestions made by the boards geared toward pedestrian accommodation and safety will be implemented, she further stated. "I think this is a great use for the development and community at a transit-oriented site. It's a complementary use and amenity for both Shipyard residents and the surrounding community."

The Launch includes 240,000 square feet of retail and commercial space. The Moorings features 92 condominiums.

Bed, Bath & Beyond, The Fresh Market, Old Navy, and Bodyscapes Fitness will open stores at the Shipyard. Discussions with several restaurant operators are underway.

Construction of three Launch retail buildings has begun, including the sites for the future Patriot Cinema and the fitness center.

Construction on the entire Samuels project is expected to wrap up by next Spring.

Avalon Shipyard, LLC, 51 Sleeper St., Boston, is constructing 91 rental units, 25 percent of which will be rented as affordable housing. This development is referred to as "Avalon at Hingham Shipyard."

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