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Date: 02/25/2020 03:16 PM
Subject: Re: Docket 3602

Please see the attached letter regarding the 1207-1211 Mass Ave Building Proposal.

Thank you,

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Elise Welton, Psy.D.
Clinical Neuropsychology

Attachments:

File: [Letter to Board.docx](#) Size: 15k Content Type: application/vnd.openxmlformats-officedocument.wordprocessingml.document

To: Members of the Arlington, MA Redevelopment Board

From: Elise Welton, homeowner of 30 Peirce Street (part of 26-30 Peirce Street condominium)

Re: Docket #3602, proposal for 1207-1211 Massachusetts Avenue

February 24, 2020

I am writing to support the comments made by my neighbors and to share my own serious concerns about this proposal. I will not re-hash here what has been said over the course of the Redevelopment Board meetings and letters sent by many other residents, but I fully concur with issues raised about vehicular traffic and safety, privacy, and environmental impact.

As one of the three homeowners of the property that directly abuts the area that would be used for the driveway of this proposal, I have very serious concerns, many of which were brought up in the July meeting, but were not mentioned in the January meeting. **The size of the proposed building is simply unacceptable.** I appreciate that shadow studies were done but having spent much time in my backyard in the spring, summer, and fall months, I can tell you that a building of that size would, in fact, alter the amount of sunlight my property receives. As a gardener who has invested a lot of time and money into creating a pleasant yard, I am very upset that this building is still being considered in its current state. One of the primary reasons I purchased this property was to have a yard that I could landscape. I have worked hard to choose native plants which would thrive in the current amount of daylight my yard receives, and this building would irreparably change the microclimate of my yard. Anecdotally, albeit importantly, I hosted many get-togethers with friends, family, and colleagues and shared with them all this proposal. Every single person who learned about the imposing structure proposed for the lot behind my backyard was shocked and nervous for me because they could clearly see how inappropriate it would be and how it would impact my home.

Although this has already been said many times, it absolutely bears repeating. A building this size is against current zoning laws, let alone the fact that a hotel is also against current zoning laws. I was very disappointed to see so much time and effort being spent by board members in January discussing the aesthetic qualities of the building (permeable sidewalks, signage, etc.) when it seems to me that this building is in clear violation of multiple zoning laws and that **further planning should be halted until this is resolved, preferably by a new proposal rather than changing bylaws which were put in place for a reason.** To continue discussions in the manner they have been is a tremendous waste of time for everyone involved, including Mr. Doherty and his architects, Board Members, and residents. The proposal, as it stands, is a non-starter.

Another concern, if we are to ignore the zoning laws for a moment, is the impact of sound and privacy. Hotel room windows would look out onto my backyard and easily into the windows of 26-30 Peirce St. To grow evergreen trees tall enough to block the top rooms would take many, many years. Trees that defoliate in the winter, such as maples, should not be considered as they provide privacy for only about half the year. Speaking of trees, the diagrams used in the most recent proposal, shared in January, do not accurately depict the location of two large trees that run between the residential properties and the proposed hotel site. This needs to be amended. Additionally, the largest tree to consider is on my property and, to-date, no one at 26-30 Peirce has been approached by anyone to discuss how this tree will be protected during any demolition/construction. I am also very concerned about the location of the garbage

bins. I suggest they be placed behind some fencing on Mass Ave instead. This would reduce the inevitable and significant aural and olfactory impact on the immediate neighbors of early morning garbage pickups, which will likely occur on a daily basis for a venue this size, and reduce the presence of pests (e.g., rats) in our backyards.

I am in full support of cleaning up the current lot, which is effectively a junk yard with rats who occasionally visit my yard to scavenge or, disturbingly, succumb to the effects of rat poison. I think building mixed-use properties on a smaller, more appropriate scale would be a wonderful addition to the area and is well worth consideration.

Elise Welton, PsyD