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Date: April 27, 2020 at 11:52:43 AM EDT
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Subject: The Atwood House Hearing

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Dear Chairman Bunnell and members of the Arlington Redevelopment Board,

Regarding the hearing concerning the Atwood House at 821 Massachusetts Avenue scheduled for this evening I hope the Board will continue the hearing to a more appropriate time after the shelter-in-place emergency is over. Your agenda contains the lengthy presentation of unfortunate suggestions of the Noyes/CVS & Attorney Annese for their ideas to exploit the historic Atwood House situation avoiding any preservation. Their plan seems to want to demolish the Atwood house and replace it with a building similar to John Carney's monstrosity at the other side of the Arlington High School at 887 Massachusetts Ave. That building is thought by many to be the ugliest building in Arlington.

The building proposed would obscure the view of the First Baptist Church from westerly Massachusetts Avenue and create a strip strip-mall effect as one moves westerly from the Jason Russell House

To approve a plan such as this would add insult to injury in the saga of the neglect of the conditions under which the Atwood House was to be protected as a condition of the CVS permit. As you know the owner, Noyes, prevented attempts by a non-profit, to add to the rear of the house and renovate it for use as affordable housing, by refusing to agree to lease terms long enough to make the project financially sound. Irresponsibly the house was then neglected and left with openings enabling entrance and vandalizing as has frequently been noticed –

“plants are growing in the gutters, a side porch column has fallen, and there's an open window to the basement, an invitation for the homeless and others.. It almost looks like someone is waiting for it to be torched and reduce the expense of demolition...” (an Arlington List item).”

The house has suffered from Demolition by Decay while the permit conditions for its protections were being ignored. But at last we have the opportunity (arising from the re-opening of the permit) to correct the damage that Noyes has done rather than reward the attempted exploitation of this important region of Massachusetts Avenue. However, we need your help and skill as our redevelopment board to achieve this. It would be appropriate to continue this hearing to a time when the emergency requirements for sheltering in place are ended giving the public more opportunity to be aware of and involved in the situation.

Yours very truly,

Patricia Barron Worden
Town Meeting member, Precinct 8

Please include this letter with materials for the ARB meeting of April 27, 2020

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