

111 Sunnyside Avenue
Arlington, MA 02474
August 29, 2020

Arlington Select Board

730 Massachusetts Ave
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear members of the Arlington Select Board,

I'm writing in regard to the Board's Letter of support to Mass Housing re: 1165R Mass Ave, which appears among the Board's agenda materials for August 30, 2020. I'm submitting these comments as an individual, and not on behalf of any board, committee, or group.

I'm very happy to see the Board's expression of support. The greater Boston area has a shortage of housing in general, and a shortage of affordable housing in particular. While I recognize that Arlington cannot solve the region's housing shortage by itself, I do believe we have a responsibility to contribute. This is true of many other regional challenges – climate change, stormwater management, transportation, and the like. Based on materials presented to the board on June 29th, I believe this proposal will help.

I understand that the prospect of having an industrial parcel converted to residential use has come with some feelings of disappointment. I recognize the general reasons for such disappointment, but I must disagree.

Approximately 5.6% of Arlington's zoned acreage lies in the business and industrial districts. If one considers Arlington's zoning map as a policy document, then it is our policy to support only a rudimentary amount of commercial activity, such as supermarkets, pharmacies, restaurants, and small shops. Our zoning map and limited transportation infrastructure generally work against hopes of having the town become a commercial or job center.¹ That isn't to

¹See <https://arlington.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/CoverSheet.aspx?ItemID=9578&MeetingID=1105> which is a memo from Town Counsel to the Arlington Redevelopment Board. Page 40 of the PDF contains the ARB's decision on the redevelopment of the former Brigham site, noting that "Lack of highway and subway access make [the Brigham site] undesirable for office use or big box retail". Also note page

say Arlington can't change it's policies towards commercial development in the future; such changes would simply warrant different policies than the ones which have guided us for the last half-century or so.

In closing, I am grateful for the Board's letter of support.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Revilak

29, which contains an excerpt of the town's 1975 annual report, showing the proposed location for a red line station in Arlington center.