

Mr. Christian Klein  
Chair, Zoning Board of Appeals  
Arlington, MA 02474

November 23, 2020

Dear Mr. Klein,

Most of my life has been spent living in a home that abuts the Mugar property. I was attending Hardy School in 1970 when Town Meeting zoned the Mugar Property for Planned Unit Development. My family's name is mentioned as one of the abutters in Warrant Article 99 that year. I write you now about the latest proposal by the Mugar family: Thorndike Place.

I stand in solidarity with my neighbors concerns regarding the future overcrowding at Hardy School, the increased vehicle traffic, the increased likelihood of neighborhood flooding, rodents, and increased strain on municipal services.

In this letter I choose to focus on the areas designated CS – 1 and AU – B9 in the BSC Group Wildlife Habitat and Vegetation Evaluation of November 2020. These are areas of proposed parking lots.

I have observed these loci from my kitchen window and backyard for decades. I witnessed the individual in his green vest doing the evaluation out behind my house approximately 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. However, a report based on one day of surveying cannot do this area justice.

As recently as Monday November 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 A.M. there were three deer in my backyard. I attached a photo of one drinking water from the bird bath I have out back on the lawn. I attached another photo from earlier in the summer of a deer eating mulberries off the ground as do many species of birds and other wildlife from the Mugar property when the berries ripen. These deer have been coming for several years now and I watch them come out from the Mugar property and disappear back into it in the areas of CS-1 and AU-B9.

There are numerous species of what might be considered garden variety birds and animals that go in and out of the property. I have attached photos of some of them. I do not have photos of owls and hawks, but I have seen them in the trees out there. Fireflies have returned in the evenings at the edge of my backyard where it meets the Mugar property.

While I have photographed a fox and seen a coyote, they have not been problems and no doubt are feeding on rodents. If there is destruction of their habitat and they are driven out the rodent problem will no doubt go from bad to worse and possibly require the use of poison and the risk that poses to raptors and other wildlife.

It is to the Mugar's credit that through their passive management of the property they have allowed the area of CS-1 and AU-B9 to become forested. The trees there are soaking up groundwater and cleaning the air of CO<sub>2</sub>. Cleaning the air of CO<sub>2</sub> is probably particularly helpful given the proximity of Route 2 and the volume of traffic on it. It would be a shame to clear cut this area for parking lots and destroy wildlife habitat decades in the making and increase the likelihood of additional neighborhood flooding.

This is an area that would seem to be of future use by students of biology and ecology in the Arlington Public Schools if conserved.

As for the parking lots, if the tenants of the development want the benefit of parking, they should shoulder the burden of it. The parking lots should be immediately adjacent to the development. To put their parking lots in the neighbors back yards requires the clear cutting of trees that consequently destroys privacy. The parking lots and the associated 24/7 noise, exhaust, and traffic in the lots will lead to permanent loss of neighbor's quiet enjoyment of their property. It also is likely that plows, sanders, dumpsters, and other maintenance equipment needed to maintain the parking lots and the development itself would be stored in these lots.

I have also attached photos from 1983, pre-forestation, to demonstrate the prevalence of water in the area. The first photo of the rear of two homes and the water in the foreground is the area of CS-1. In other photos those of us of vintage age will remember the large Faces nightclub sign across Route 2. This dry summer is an exception.

These two areas, CS-1 and AU-B9, provide habitat for wildlife, trees that soak up ground water and clean the air of CO<sub>2</sub>, and act as a buffer for the neighbors from the property. They should be preserved for such.

Thank You for your consideration.

Sincerely, Peter Fiore, 58 Mott Street, Arlington, MA 02474

