

Dear Town of Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals and Conservation Commission,

For almost 13 years now, I have been a resident of the neighborhood directly impacted by the development of the Mugar Wetlands/property which the hopeful developers call "Thorndike Place."

I was very surprised at the October 1, 2020 meeting of the Conservation Commission to learn that the developers have intended to greatly decrease the size of the development, but I am still very concerned about the overall size and scope of the project.

First, I still object that this project as only a 40b project in name--as a social worker who helps many individuals with the complex task of securing truly affordable housing, I can assure you 20% of units made "affordable" or below market rate, for just 20 years, is NOT true affordable housing.

Second, is the developer really allowed to pull a "bait and switch" where the building is much smaller with less impact (on paper)? As I understand it, the flood plain study was conducted by the developer in winter during a drought, and the independent company who was supposed to verify this mapping was not given the information as of the October 1, 2020 meeting of the Conservation Commission to do so. Please assure me they are not allowed to forge ahead without this important step.

In addition, I can assure you, given the minimal plans presented at last month's Conservation Commission meeting, the building is still way too big for the area. The new October 2020 proposal is three stories along Dorothy Road, and four to five stories as it goes back into the woods? The houses in that area are MUCH smaller than that.

I invite you to come and take a walk with me along the proposed length of Dorothy Road, and see how large the proposed apartment building would look right along the road. It is still WAY too big for that area, and although I am not an engineer, I can tell you a full underground parking garage in that area, official flood plain or not, is just going to cause more flooding in the surrounding houses and streets.

And twenty to thirty units??? Once again, unless they are ALL affordable apartments (30% of someone's income, with income guidelines, to follow as well), it is really not true affordable housing, and not really helping the community out, in addition to just being too large for that part of the neighborhood. The new proposed single building is still too big for the marked area out of the flood plain delineated by the developers. I am also very concerned about the process of building a very large underground parking garage, and the damage that the process of building it will cause to the houses in the neighborhood.

If the developers really want to build multiple units, and make a lot of money, which is of course why they are developing land known as wetlands at all, why don't they just build the six to seven townhouses, with two units each, as was part of the original plan, leaving out the building behind it? Each of the twelve to fourteen units would sell for

about a million dollars each, and fine, the developers would make some money, but the houses would at least be within the scope of the existing neighborhood.

I also hope you ensure that the continued and ongoing review of the wetlands is thorough and accurate, and includes investigation of whether they have been altered or covered by dumping or filling during the site's decades of neglect. Please don't take the developers at their word that they have done their "due diligence" and continue to monitor and assess what they are telling you. From the newest proposed building, it is clear to me that money is the most important issue to the owners of this land, NOT making affordable housing NOR protecting our dwindling natural environment, let alone take care of a property that has essentially been abandoned for many years with little care or concern for prior dumping or filling.

Thank you for reading my comments, and please feel free to contact me further if you would like to discuss true affordable housing issues, or tour the neighborhood with me. I am passionate about this project, because I care deeply about the area in which I live, the environment, my neighbors, and low income housing and their residents.

Regards,

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Windows User

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