

January 20, 2021

Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of Arlington
51 Grove Street
Arlington, MA 02476

RE: Mugar Property - Thorndike Place Development – Additional Issues

Dear Zoning Board of Appeals Members:

I am writing to add to the concerns I've expressed in separate letters specific to traffic and water topics. The concerns I want to express in this letter focus on:

- Size of the project, including noise and light pollution
- Foundation pile driving
- Stormwater and sewage management

The massive size of this project and its' associated noise and light pollution are not remotely in character with the surrounding neighborhood. The neighborhood bounded by the Minuteman Bikeway and Lake Street is made up of two-family homes (including townhouses) along with some single-family homes. The amount of traffic, noise and lighting associated with these homes is not great. It is very quiet at night. The portion of Dorothy Road and Little John Street where the project is proposed currently has a total of approximately 35 units. The giant apartment building has almost five times the number of units as its surrounding area. It is also much taller and **will create a significant shadow** negatively impacting neighboring homes and the wetland habitat. The project **will create significant light pollution** at night, again negatively impacting neighboring homes and the wetland habitat. Utilities installed to service massive buildings **create a significant amount of noise**, again negatively impacting surrounding homes and the wetland habitat. An additional factor you should consider is the total height of the building above the current ground level, including all the utility structures on the roof. **The proposed building is not "four stories" – it is MUCH taller**, but should not be allowed to be. Keep the maximum total height to 40 feet above the current ground surface INCLUDING the above ground height of the parking level and all the rooftop utilities.

When the apartment and office buildings and hotel were built across Route 2, a large number of piles were driven. In addition to the infuriating noise, **the foundation of my house and others in the neighborhood shook terribly**. This proposed project is MUCH closer and driving piles for the foundation will cause damage to the homes in the surrounding neighborhood. The developer should be required to undertake inspections of all basements in the neighborhood to document the baseline condition before any construction starts and be required to pay for remediation of any and all damage that occurs.

To reiterate and add to previous comments on stormwater and sewage management. As everyone should be aware, the neighborhood where this proposed project is located has major issues with water, particularly with a high groundwater level and subsequent basement flooding, and

developing this project will only make them worse. When it rains a lot, the water table rises and impacts basements in the area. In many areas, the groundwater rises to the surface and ponds. Therefore, stormwater management is of great concern. All retention ponds and outlets from stormwater management structures **must be located far away from nearby homes** because the groundwater level will be raised locally around them. All grading of the property **must direct overland flow AWAY from all nearby homes**. Any below ground level areas of the proposed building will be in contact with the groundwater, particularly when it rises during and after storm events. This will interfere with groundwater flow, **funneling it around the structure, increasing basement flooding of nearby homes**. In addition, over time, initially tight construction will develop cracks and the groundwater will enter below-ground stormwater management structures **rendering them ineffective**.

The proposed project will add a significant amount of sewage to the system in the area. The system relies on gravity to work properly. Much of the piping in the project area is in contact with the groundwater, particularly when it rains a lot and the groundwater level rises. Unfortunately, this old piping has leaks and allows groundwater to infiltrate. During the big storms of October 1996 and March 2010, sewage was bubbling up out of the manhole in Margaret Street at the entrance to Thorndike Field (it is labeled as sewer not stormwater). **There are serious questions about the capacity of the sewage system to safely handle the significantly increased flow the proposed project will generate.**

The massive size of the building is not compatible with the size and scale of the neighborhood, and the light and noise pollution will cause harm. Foundation pile driving will damage the foundations of numerous homes. Basement flooding due to the groundwater level in the neighborhood, particularly during and after storm events will be made worse. The project will have devastating impacts on the neighborhood. Please do not allow it. Please contact me with any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Griffith', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jennifer Griffith
4 Edith Street
Arlington, MA 02474