

ZBA & Town Meeting Members,

I'm an engineer, in a family of engineers, and am a townie – born & raised in East Arlington. While still working for a living, as one must do to afford staying in Arlington, I also now take care of my elderly disabled parent and manage our family home of 55 years that is on Melrose Street. My siblings & I went to Hardy School and we were and still are part of the community involved in both scouting (we have 3 Eagle Scouts in our immediate family), caring for neighbors, supporting local businesses, and caring about keeping Arlington a TOWN that is enjoyable to live in.

This is a town by choice both in government structure and in style. Or at least it was argued as such in the past. East Arlington is a working class bedroom community largely of houses built on farmland in the 1920's including the one I live in. They are fragile homes built on silt and shockingly expensive for what they are. Six feet below grade in our back yard is original fine sand - as if from an hour glass – these are things you know living in one place all your life. As a young scout in the 70's working on an environmental science merit badge I studied our soil profile - this was beach front property at one point and may be again the way things are going. We, in East Arlington, are barely above sea level as any GPS will confirm.

Arlington, an already tight expensive to own a home community, seems to be issuing building permits more large building complexes than I remember ever seeing going up in the last 55+ years living here. Such things should not be linear nor surged – the town is overbuilt and the lots are ridiculously small for a town. East Arlington is no exception. What had been a quiet pleasant place to live has been under assault decade after decade increasingly worse with closer sounds of pile drivers and diesels overbuilding concrete monstrosities specifically beyond the bike path in the direction South. First it was Alewife. Then crawling west along rte 2 with large apartments. More recently they have now plowed through and paved over the silver maple woods lost forever and with complexes beyond displacing wetlands always with little actual regard for impact despite the assurances.

Effects:

Wildlife, once rarely seen, have been driven onto the rte 2 Lake street exit with us having to suddenly dodge full sized deer and other animals with alarming frequency now. On side streets between rte 2 and Mass Ave rodents especially are common now – they too were rare before all this wetland construction. Yes, we've watched with great alarm the destruction of wetlands in Arlington & surrounding Cambridge & Belmont margins.

We are also able to measure the effects in other ways. Not only have the flood maps have been revised in the last 15 years imposing a new safety and loss burden on homeowners but also mold & seepage into foundations along with infestations of rats into basements are new topics shared with my neighbors. Let's be clear – we NEVER had these problems before and they most certainly are on the rise coinciding with both climate driven water levels but also with arrogant building in our watershed.

My sump pump now pumps for weeks after every storm and the middle length of our street (Melrose) floods 1-2 feet regularly now even with the storm drains kept clear by us citizens. The wake from cars passing through washes over curbs towards below grade basement doors and it happens with INCREASING frequency. These are East Arlington Problems – most especially south of Mass Ave.

The words Development & Plans are now threats in this dense and WET neighborhood. Liabilities are outweighing value when flood maps are not only rewritten but are disregarded by big projects. Adding apartment buildings, traffic, and students to small neighborhood schools. Displacing wetlands is nothing but flirting with disaster.

Representatives and home owners alike must ask when is the noise, water displacement, mold, flooding, increased home insurance, and never ending building going to stop? Encroaching city structures and

attributes threaten of safety of our homes and value of the communities at large. The Mugar Wetlands are not a luxury – they are a NECESSITY as we are increasingly saturated.

I oppose this horrible project.

Sincerely,

Bill Groves

Melrose Street – which is in line with the proposed monstrosity.

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