



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

Senator Cindy F. Friedman
Fourth Middlesex District

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October 19, 2021

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

RE: Thorndike Place at the Mugar Wetlands

Dear Board:

I have followed your public review of the proposed Thorndike Place development at the site in East Arlington owned by the Mugar Family for the past several months, and I still remain in strong opposition to this project.

This site serves as a critical area of flood retention that has helped mitigate the constant flooding that occurs in this neighborhood. Without it, it is clear that the neighborhood will experience increased levels of flooding further jeopardizing their homes, safety and health. The problem is only exacerbated by the effects of climate change which we now understand causes more frequent severe weather events. Increased storm activity will also affect the already fragile Amelia Earhart Dam. A breach of the Dam will cause the Alewife Brook to back up and will in turn have an additional negative affect on a neighborhood already experiencing serious flooding.

I understand that the developer has offered to donate a piece of the land to the Town. Besides the fact that the wet land being offered has had waste dumped on it for decades and now is home to an ever-growing homeless population, it does not in any way mitigate the problems that a

Chair
Joint Committee on
Health Care Financing

Vice Chair
Senate Committee on
Ways and Means

development like the one being proposed will impose on the neighborhood, the Town and the ecosystem of the area.

In addition, while the traffic issues along Lake Street and the surrounding narrow feeder streets have been lessened during the pandemic, the bumper-to-bumper traffic is returning and the high-speed cut throughs scattered across our neighborhoods will become an even greater reality and problem for neighbors if this development is built.

I urge you to consider this project and its ramifications seriously, which I'm sure you are doing. I am a proponent of smart development and transit-oriented housing. But allowing any housing to be built regardless of whether an area can environmentally sustain it without causing hardship to the greater residents, is neither smart nor wise. And having been involved in this issue for quite some time, I do not believe any conditions that the Town may put on the developers will be enough to mitigate the harm the project will cause.

My office has worked on this issue since I became a Senator and before that I was involved as chief of staff to the late Senator Donnelly. As a private citizen and Town meeting member, I voted against the project at least three times.

I have not observed anything over the last few months of public review that has changed my position on this development project. I remain strongly opposed to it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Cindy F. Friedman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cindy" being the most prominent.

Cindy F. Friedman
State Senator
4th Middlesex