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Date: Sat, 21 Jan 2023 15:25:36 -0500
Subject: ARB Docket 3560 - 190 Massachusetts Avenue

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Dear Ms. Zsembery:

I am writing to express my concerns for the proposed development at 190 Mass Ave, which will be discussed at the ARB Hearing on Monday, 1/23/23. I am unable to attend the hearing in person but I would like my comments entered for the record.

The most recently submitted plans are somewhat improved over the last proposal for this site, but I still have concerns and questions about the proposed development.

Of particular concern:

- Inadequate parking for the number of units — this was a significant issue before, and it remains a significant issue now. There is no evidence that the majority of residents in any part of Arlington can manage without cars, especially given the current levels of MBTA service, and the result will be parking issues for all of the surrounding streets. Even avid cyclists can't necessarily commute to work via bike if they work somewhere on Rte 128 or elsewhere. We have no data — nor has the developer provided any — to demonstrate that people moving into this neighborhood are highly likely to commute to Boston or Cambridge. My personal experience suggests that many may not. My husband was a successful cabinetmaker with clients all over the metro area, and he was required to commute in his work vehicle for his entire career. I worked in Back Bay for 8 years. For the rest of my 40+ year career in this area, I worked in Needham, Waltham, Bedford, and Tewksbury. Westbound traffic on Route 2 during morning rush hour even now suggests that many people in the area reverse commute. The Boston Globe has reported that biotech companies in the area are suffering right now, and many are choosing to move from high-priced Cambridge space to suburban offices. Without data to show actual commuting patterns for Arlington residents (especially East Arlington residents), we can not reasonably make assumptions that anyone will move into this building without the number of cars required by the zoning rules.
- Inadequate clearance in the parking garage for vans — not everyone with a vehicle drives an automobile. Some people are required to drive work vans for their jobs, and many people with disabilities require specially equipped vans. This design has no accommodation for handicap-adapted vans.

- Inadequate trash disposal for the number of residences and businesses in the building. There is no place to put a dumpster, meaning that trash barrels would have to be placed on the sidewalks around the building, impeding pedestrian access.
- The proposed setbacks violate zoning rules along Chandler Street and in the back of the building. The developer proposes approximately 18' and our zoning laws require approximately 20' or more for this particular proposed structure.
- The proposed FAR is approximately 50% greater than allowed under the zoning laws.
- This would be a large construction site approximately one block from the Hardy School, across Mass Ave from the Fox Library, along a busy corridor, next to a bus stop and across Lake Street from the Capitol Theater. There is no provision for managing the disruption to the neighborhood. The last time our neighborhood was disrupted this significantly was during the Mass Ave rebuild project, during which time several businesses suffered severe losses and at least two of them closed shortly thereafter. Parking in the neighborhood will be severely impacted for many months as construction workers fill available parking in the area. The impact on remaining businesses, not to mention on residents and visitors to Capitol Square, will be significant.

Capitol Square has historically been a vibrant neighborhood. The damage done by the winter of 2015 (during which there was no on-street parking on our side streets due to massive piles of snow for three months), the Mass Ave construction project (with sidewalks torn up and parking unavailable), and the Covid lockdown, is beginning to subside. We're finally beginning to regain what was lost following those horrific years.

This proposed project — both during and after construction — would dampen the village feel of Capitol Square, and would present some significant disadvantages in both the short- and long-term.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Marceau
Cleveland St.

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