

April 29, 2024

Natasha Waden, Director  
Town of Arlington Board of Health  
27 Maple Street  
Arlington, MA 476

Dear Director Waden and members of the department of Arlington Health and Human Services;

I am writing at the suggestion of Susan Chapnick, Vice Chair of the Arlington Conservation Commission (Con Comm). As a neighbor and member of the Coalition to Save the Mugar Wetlands, I am troubled by the potential adverse health effects associated with the development of the proposed Thorndike Place on Dorothy Road in East Arlington.

At the last Con Comm hearing when discussing the planting and restoration plan, I raised concerns about the possible known and yet-to-be known deleterious health impacts of the use of herbicides proposed by the developer; a sprayed application to eliminate extensive invasive vegetation. A large portion of the property is composed of wetlands and the use of herbicides near wetlands and water bodies have been found to increase algae blooms. On a personal note, a friend's brother died of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), likely caused by contact with blue-green algae blooms. The proposed use of herbicides may have adverse health consequences for the neighborhood, kids who play sports at Thorndike Field, and the wildlife that inhabit the property.

The repercussions of this development also include flooding, standing water, and destruction of the tree canopy. The 4-story building with its underground parking and impervious surfaces will certainly exacerbate local flooding. On numerous occasions though-out the years, I and others have documented standing water near Thorndike Field and on streets abutting the proposed development. Standing water creates a breeding ground for mosquitos, increasing the risk of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and other mosquito-borne diseases. The development plan proposes the removal of many mature trees from the 17.7-acre site. Increasing scientific evidence demonstrates the public health benefits of trees ameliorating the impacts of climate change, preserving biodiversity, and promoting human health.

In summary, the proposed Thorndike Place development poses numerous concerns for the public health of Arlingtonians. I hope Arlington Health and Human Services will share these concerns by contacting the Conservation Commission and other Town officials.

Sincerely,

Lisa Fredman  
63 Mott Street  
Member of the Coalition to Save the Mugar Wetlands