

Dear Conservation Commission members:

I have been attending the Conservation Commission (ConComm) meetings on the proposed Thorndike Place for many months. I appreciate the ConComm members' efforts to come to a considered, fair, and evidence-based decision about the proposed development. But more and more when I'm Zooming into these meetings, I have been thinking about Rachel Carson, the mother of our modern environmental movement. Rachel Carson tied the impact of human actions (in her case, DDT, in our case, a large housing development abutting a wetland) to short- and long-term adverse environmental effects. If it weren't for Rachel Carson, I suspect that Arlington would not have a Conservation Commission, or have eagles nesting above Spy Pond and Mystic Lakes, or that some ConComm members might not have gone into environmentally-oriented careers. As I listen to the ConComm discussions about groundwater mounding analyses and the likely exacerbation of neighborhood flooding if Thorndike Place is built, I think: what information would Rachel want to decide whether to approve, or reject Thorndike Place? how might she advise the ConComm members? What would Rachel do?

Rachel Carson relied not only on her own astute, scientific observations, but also paid attention to multiple sources of data. For example, a letter from a friend describing birds dying following DDT spraying was said to be the impetus for her iconic work, *Silent Spring*. The ConComm has received scores of letters from neighbors describing current flooding and concerns of increased flooding and environmental degradation should Thorndike Place be built. I ask the ConComm to pay serious attention to these letters -- these provide critical data -- in addition to testimony from hydrology experts and the well data on groundwater levels.

As the ConComm hearings on Thorndike Place draw to a close, please ask yourselves: what would Rachel do? I think we would all agree that she advise the ConComm members to reject the Thorndike Place development on the grounds of adverse effects on the wetlands, strong likelihood of increased flooding, and compromising this area of East Arlington for current and future generations. For these reasons, please do not approve the Thorndike Place development.

Sincerely,

Lisa Fredman
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Member, Coalition to Save the Mugar Wetlands