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**Opposition to Boston Gas Special Permit – January 27, 2026 Hearing**

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**From** Russell Sargent <russell.sargent@gmail.com>  
**Date** Mon 1/26/2026 8:08 PM  
**To** ZBA <ZBA@town.arlington.ma.us>  
**Cc** Maryann Sargent <maryann.sargent@gmail.com>

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Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

I am writing to express my opposition to Boston Gas's request for a Special Permit currently before the Board. A quick walkthrough the area will reveal paths used by neighborhood children, who use this area as a fun cut through to and from Stratton school.

Under Section 3.3.3 of Arlington's Zoning Bylaw, approval requires that the proposed use be essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare (3.3.3.B) and that it not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to health or welfare (3.3.3.F). Based on the materials presented and the January 13 hearing, I do not believe this proposal meets either standard.

First, the project is not clearly essential. Boston Gas has not demonstrated that expanding into this wooded area is necessary to meet public need. Multiple alternatives exist, including reuse of the existing site footprint, coordination with neighbors on phased upgrades, and use of the existing driveway. These options would allow infrastructure improvements without unnecessary destruction of A desirable wooden area and natural habitat. A project with viable, less damaging alternatives cannot reasonably be considered an essential use of protected land.

Second, the proposal would harm both the neighborhood and public welfare. This wooded area already serves an important neighborhood function. Nearby families and children regularly spend time in and around the woods. A many children from this part of town use the nearby paths to as a fun, safe, and convenient cut between Tower Street and Tomahawk Road on the way to (and from) Stratton school. Its loss would directly affect community well-being and the character of the this area of town.

Additionally, The removal of mature trees and established woodland raises concerns about the loss of wild space and the long-term degradation of the surrounding residential area. This directly conflicts with the bylaw's requirement that approved uses not be detrimental to health, welfare, or neighborhood character

This is one of the few remaining wooded buffers in Arlington. Once it is gone, it is gone permanently. The Board should require Boston Gas to pursue less destructive alternatives rather than approving a plan that shifts environmental and quality-of-life costs onto nearby residents.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the ZBA to deny the Special Permit as currently proposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Russell and Maryann Sargent

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Arlington, MA