

## Concerns Regarding Special Permit Criteria – 307 Washington Street

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From Marina Popova <marinap4arl@gmail.com>

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To ZBA <ZBA@town.arlington.ma.us>

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Dear **Members of the Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals**,

I am writing regarding the Boston Gas application for a Special Permit at 307 Washington Street.

After reviewing the proposal and attending the January 13 hearing, I do not believe the application meets the required criteria for a Special Permit under Section 3.3.3 of the Arlington Zoning Bylaw—specifically parts **B** and **F**.

### **Section 3.3.3.B – Public convenience or welfare**

The applicant has not demonstrated that the proposed expansion is essential or clearly beneficial to the public. This project appears to be an “essential want,” not an essential need. Gas infrastructure in Arlington does not need to expand—it needs to be better maintained and, over time, reduced in line with climate and safety goals. The existence of hundreds of gas leaks in town raises serious questions about whether expanding facilities is truly in the public interest.

### **Section 3.3.3.F – Impact on health, welfare, and neighborhood character**

The proposal would require clearing approximately 1,600 square feet of mature woodland, one of the few remaining natural buffers in this area. Removing these trees would increase heat, worsen stormwater runoff, and eliminate wildlife habitat. This would be detrimental to the health and welfare of residents and to the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Importantly, there are reasonable alternatives that could significantly reduce or avoid this harm, including re-using the existing facility footprint, upgrading equipment in place, and using the existing driveway on the adjacent parcel rather than cutting a new one through the woods. Logistical or coordination challenges do not justify permanent environmental damage.

I also want to note that **nearly 300 Arlington residents have already signed a petition asking the ZBA not to grant this Special Permit**, reflecting significant community concern.

I respectfully urge the ZBA to find that the criteria for a Special Permit have not been met and to require less destructive alternatives or deny the application.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marina Popova

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 13

255 Ridge Str