

December 22, 2016

Neil Wishinsky, Chairman, Board of Selectmen
Alison Steinfeld, Director, Planning & Community Development Department
Town of Brookline
333 Washington St
Brookline, MA 02445

To the Board of Selectmen:

We are writing once again to express our objection to the building being proposed at 1299 Beacon Street. While the developer has submitted a revised plan, the new plan remains thoroughly inappropriate in terms of the location, the design, and the continuation of the safety and traffic issues. The project is simply too big when it comes to the vital matters of traffic and safety, given the large numbers of commercial and residential vehicles that would be coming in and out of the project's proposed Sewall Avenue driveway. As you well know, Sewall continues to be a very busy street in general, but is particularly stressed by the comings and goings (and double-parking) of Post Office vehicles and people delivering children to Temple Sinai. This presents real problems for fire and ambulance services, but also pedestrians (given that the sidewalk on the Post Office side is sometimes blocked by multiple Post Office trucks. these problems become even more severe —and dangerous— during winter months, when snow plowing narrows the width of the street.

Again, notwithstanding that the design of the building reduces the size slightly, the proposed building is still out of scale with the rest of the Coolidge Corner neighborhood. The height, size and density of the project continue to be of concern to us. We live at 51A Sewall Avenue and face the Temple. We are directly affected by the Trader Joe's traffic, the parking of postal trucks on Sewall, the double parking of postal office employees and the traffic from the comings and goings at the Temple. It is not unusual for us to not be able to get out of our driveway today because cars are double parked. It is not unusual today for there to be honking cars and upset individuals because of traffic jams and cars blocked into their legal parking spaces because of double parked cars. It is also not unusual today to see cars drive up this one-way section of Sewall the wrong way.

Needless to say, the address of the proposed building is on Beacon Street, but the rear of the building faces Sewall Avenue. The proposal intends to add parking to accommodate more than 75 cars. And given the dual commercial and residential purpose of the project, there will not just be residents coming and going, but a substantial increase in vehicles making commercial deliveries and dropping off shoppers in the proposed Sewall Avenue driveway to the complex. At many times during the day, the situation would resemble that which is encountered at the driveway entrance to Trader Joe's around the corner, which frequently ends up blocking traffic on Longwood Avenue (the proposed driveway and turnaround area at 1299 Beacon would of course be even smaller than that of the Trader Joe's parking lot. And given the backup of traffic on Sewall that exists when there is a red light at the Beacon St.-Charles St. intersection, the gridlock on Sewall from the additional

traffic exiting the 1299 complex would be intolerable. Simply put, Sewall Avenue cannot presently accommodate any significant rise in vehicle traffic.

There is a particular concern with emergency vehicles, as referenced above. Several times, they have been blocked or significantly delayed from coming down the street because of the existing traffic on the street, double-parked cars and postal trucks, and even trucks that have separately pulled up on the curb on our side of the street. In the winter, when it snows, this can become a real nightmare. The plows have no space to push the snow so the legal parking lanes disappear and yet cars continue to park alongside the piled up snow making the street even more narrow.

Meanwhile, for pedestrians, the additional traffic would be a genuine cause for concerns about safety. The sidewalk today in front of the post office cannot be walked on because postal employee cars and trucks park over the sidewalk. The addition of the building means significantly increased foot traffic on the sidewalks which cannot be traversed. The constant driving of trucks on the both sidewalks on each side of the street has resulted in breaks in the sidewalk that are unsafe for individuals generally but particularly for those with wheelchairs or walkers.

The revised design of the project does nothing to address the truly substantial safety concerns about the project. While we have strong support for the concept of affordable housing in Brookline, this is not the place for a building of this size and scale because of safety and traffic concerns.

Once again, we urge you to contact state officials to deny approval for this project.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Michele and Malcolm Russell-Einhorn
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