

Maria Morelli

From: Diana Spiegel <dianaspiegel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 24, 2017 3:30 PM
To: Maria Morelli
Subject: Babcock Place

Maria, Please forward to the ZBA. Thank you, Diana Spiegel

To: Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals
Re: Babcock Place
From: Diana Spiegel
Date: July 24, 2017

I write as a neighbor of the proposed Babcock Place project, having lived as a homeowner for almost 40 years at 39 Stetson Street near its intersection with Freeman St. The Babcock Place proposal presents many problems for the neighborhood due to its massing, including inadequate setbacks, inadequate usable open space, excessive height, and destruction of mature trees.

I urge that you specifically consider the density of the Babcock Place 40B proposal as it relates to the neighborhood context. Many neighborhood residents feel that the FAR of 2.67, along with at-grade parking and hilly topography, both of which increase the perceived massing of the building, is too far out of line with the 1.5 and even more so the 1.0 FAR limits of the M1.5 and T-5 zoning districts whose border this project straddles.

As the Selectmen wrote in their January letter to MHFA:

"The design, massing, height, bulk, scale, absence of any open space, and lack of reasonable setbacks are all in stark contrast to the neighborhood context in which the project is located.... It is also inconsistent with an overriding goal of Brookline's Housing Production Plan, recently approved by both the Board of Selectmen and DHCD, to "protect and enhance the physical and architectural character of Brookline's neighborhoods and encourage new environmentally-sustainable affordable housing in all neighborhoods that complements neighborhood identity."

Furthermore, I write with great concern about the construction of wood frame buildings of 4 stories or more, especially in dense North Brookline, after Sunday's massive fire in Waltham. Note front page article in today's Boston Globe:

Amid embers, questions smolder - Second inferno in projects under construction prompts concern about building method

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/07/23/massive-alarm-fire-brings-destroys-apartment-complex-downtown-waltham/B8YMiHrDfM0V7I1uhH3MmJ/story.html>

Sincerely,
Diana Spiegel
TMM Precinct 2