

Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals
c/o Maria Morelli
Project Coordinator
Planning Department

In Re: 134-138 Babcock Place: Preparing for public hearing on waivers & conditions

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Looking forward to the ZBA's public review of waivers and application of conditions this Wednesday, March 7, I want to share some perspective on the MHA charges (attached) and previous comments by stakeholders.

In public meeting at Town Hall on August 23rd, 2017, Cliff Boehmer, the architectural peer reviewer commented: "...the increasing of all of the setbacks I think is important to really make this (project design) viable and really have a chance of having a border with the neighbors that is respectful." (Transcript p34)

ZBA member Kate Poverman added "And I reiterate that I think that the building has to have much better, larger setbacks, at least 20 feet, maybe even more, is necessary to prevent harm to abutters. And, you know, a final comment is one which we all know and have gone over, is that you can't have a building that takes up basically every single inch of the lot. The intensity of that use is just too much and it's not supportable, even under 40B. So make it smaller." (Transcript p109)

In Town Hall meeting on October 2nd, ZBA members only briefly commented on setbacks and Mr. Boehmer turned his attention almost exclusively to modification of the 5th story and aligning the front facade with its nearest neighbor despite prior emphasis on setbacks (30-40 feet by rights) which has been largely neglected by the developer. Subsequently, the project's applicant has said that they are "done" with modifications. But in the interest of an informed public discussion of waivers, I am attaching an excerpt of the project eligibility letter from Timothy Sullivan of the Mass Housing Authority to the project Applicant. And with respect to the conditions set forth in the letter, I hope you will consider the following:

- 1) Architectural style has been addressed; but size has barely been touched. It's easy enough to claim compromise when applicants open the bidding at 35% in excess of what the project needs to be for economic viability, but this tactic insults the community.
- 2) Traffic impacts have been discussed but resulted only in the elimination of a separate loading drive.
- 3) The impact of this site on parking (loss of 50 spaces and inadequate ratio for the new construction) of this enormous project has been swept under the rug. Why? What process is this?

- 4) The “planting plan” calls for species that won’t grow in the shady corridors imposed by this enormous building.
- 5) The true shade impact on the adjacent O’Brien Park has never been analyzed for the time periods that matter, i.e., 4 to 9pm from March to October.

To reiterate: We support and welcome affordable housing. But we call on you now to remember what you said about setbacks and do the right thing. Please help us all get to “yes” on a significantly smaller project design for 134-138 Babcock Place—a project design that creates a positive legacy that the developer, Town and citizens of Brookline can be proud of—a building that starts by respecting its neighbors.

Thanks for your consideration and good work,
Respectfully, John Robert Anderson, MD
Site Approval Letter

1. Development of this Site will require compliance with all state and federal environmental laws, regulations and standards applicable to existing conditions and to the proposed use related to building construction, stormwater management, and wastewater collection and treatment. The Applicant should expect that the Municipality will require evidence of such compliance prior to the issuance of a building permit for the Project.
2. In the course of the local hearing process, the Applicant should be prepared to address specific concerns relative to the size, scale and architectural style of the proposed multi-family building and to discuss possible mutually acceptable modifications to building plans and elevations aimed at improving its integration into the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
3. The Applicant should be prepared to address concerns relative to the Project’s visual, shade, noise, and light impacts on individual abutting properties and to fully describe proposed measures to address and mitigate these concerns.
4. The Applicant should be prepared to provide sufficient data to assess potential traffic impacts on area roadways and intersections, including the safety of proposed site access and egress for cars and pedestrians on to Babcock Street, and to respond to reasonable requests for mitigation.
5. The Applicant should be prepared to address Municipal concerns relative to the sufficiency of parking spaces to serve the needs of Project residents, and potential off-site parking impacts.
6. The Applicant should provide a detailed planting plan, and to identify proposed measures to protect existing tree cover (both on-site and in the yards of abutting properties) during and after construction.
7. In their application for a comprehensive permit, the Applicant should respond to reasonable requests from the Municipality to provide additional information relative to site grading, building design, light and shade impacts, trash removal, snow storage, etc.
8. Prior to submission of an application for a Comprehensive Permit, the Applicant should meet with the Brookline Fire Department to review the plans and address public safety concerns.

This Site Approval is expressly limited to the development of no more than 60 rental units under

