

Stacy Berloff
30 Longwood Ave., Unit 104
Brookline, MA 02446

April 30, 2018

Zoning Board of Appeals
333 Washington St.
Brookline, MA 02445

Dear Members of the Board:

I am writing to you because I learned that the 1299 Beacon St. proposal is once again moving forward. I understand it has been reduced from the original 14-story building and 2 levels of underground parking to 12 stories and one level of underground parking. The proposal still places the building from lot line to lot line in the .4 acre space that is currently occupied by 1299 Beacon St. and its corresponding parking lot that abuts Sewall Ave. and it still proposes using a parking plan that includes vehicle lifts and valets.

I have been a resident of 30 Longwood Ave. since 2000 – the year it was first occupied. 30 Longwood Ave. sits at the corner of Longwood Ave. and Sewall Ave. and the side of our building is directly across the street from the proposed new building. I live with my parents. I know I have written this before, but it is important for me to repeat that the reason my parents purchased in this building was in order for me to live in a safe environment where I can be as independent as possible. You see, I am a person with a disability and use a power wheelchair. When I am able, I go around town with my Service Dog, Billy.

Brookline is my home and I love living here. I know when I go out people will not be staring at me. I am not the only person using a wheelchair, or a service dog, or with a disability. There are lots of people in my neighborhood who have disabilities. The diversity of my neighborhood and the feeling of being safe allow me to be happy where I live.

I understand that the developer has conducted a traffic study that seems to indicate that Sewall Ave. can easily handle the additional traffic that this building would generate. I think you can have studies look like anything you'd like them to look like. Let me tell you about my experience as a pedestrian on this small street. I believe Sewall Ave. is already a street that is overburdened with vehicles. I can't tell you how many times I have been in the middle of the crosswalk and a car comes barreling down one-way Sewall Ave. going the wrong way, or people jockeying for a parking space start backing up almost hitting me. Because both private cars of postal workers and the mail trucks have insufficient space in the post office lot, they park, and double park along Sewall Ave.

Then there are the parents who are dropping off or picking up their children from programs that are held at Temple Sinai. They regularly double park, very often blocking the driveway into our building.

All of this congestion results in delivery trucks parking on the sidewalks on both sides of Sewall Ave. Where that is merely unsightly or inconvenient for most pedestrians who are forced to walk on the grass to get around them, for me it is extremely dangerous. It forces me either out into the street (which is really unsafe) or having to go down a block only to cross the street in the opposite direction of where I wanted to go.

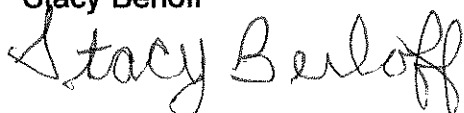
The thought of increasing the amount of traffic on Sewall Ave. from a building that will have 74 apartments, 2 levels of retail space, and 99 parking spaces, truly frightens me. Although this is a slight reduction from the original proposal, it will still increase the traffic tremendously. As the delivery trucks, service trucks, and trash trucks that are servicing this building back into the loading dock, will they see me in my wheelchair if I am on the sidewalk? When we first moved here the post office used large trucks to deliver the mail to their facility. They used to turn onto the lawn of 51 Sewall. When 51 Sewall was developed and a wall was put up around the property, the large trucks no longer had enough space to back into the post office loading dock, so for a while they started turning into our driveway which was not constructed to hold that kind of weight; and because Sewall Ave. was never designed to handle that size truck, they would often leave their truck parked in the middle of our drive and run over to the post office to have someone move the vehicles in their lot so they could back up. This means we were trapped in our garage. How is it going to work to have moving vans and additional delivery trucks trying to back up on a street and into a loading dock that has already been proven to be impossible? Will they decide that they will pull their trucks onto the 30 Longwood property that abuts Sewall Ave? And how dangerous will that be for pedestrians, especially for young children who may dart in front of a parent or for a person using a wheelchair, all of whom should feel safe on a sidewalk.

I can't tell you how many times, because either mail trucks or lines of double parked cars were blocking our driveway, I've been late for doctor appointments. You would think that out of common courtesy people would move their vehicle so we could get out, but that simply is not the case. They have yelled at us, sworn at us, and some of the nicer ones have simply said they'll move shortly - but not right then. In addition, I often use The Ride, and the drivers have a very difficult time finding a safe place around my building to pick me up. More cars and big trucks will only make this harder.

I can't imagine how this size building whose only vehicle access is via Sewall Ave. can possibly work. All the difficulty I have encountered over the years will be so very much worse. Not just for my own safety and quality of life, but for the safety and quality of life of all the other pedestrians who regularly use my neighborhood, both folks with and without disabilities, I beg you to please scale back the size and scope of this building.

Sincerely,

Stacy Berloff

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stacy Berloff". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.