

TO: Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals

DATE: April 21, 2019

Re: 1299 Beacon St.

Delivered via email:

Dear Members of the Zoning Board:

As the 1299 Beacon St. proposal has progressed, you have heard our concerns regarding the impact additional traffic will have on Sewall Ave. Our concerns about the traffic impact and its negative impact on safety have not changed. In fact, if anything the change to the on-street parking proposed by this project seems to exacerbate the problem. The proposal to remove 3 public parking spaces from Sewall Ave. doesn't reduce congestion. It only pushes those cars to look for other places to park. Tradespeople, caregivers and visitors already have a very difficult time finding a parking space in this neighborhood. Eliminating 3 or more on-street parking spaces just adds to the existing problem. When the Marriott Hotel was built on Webster Street, the Town required they include parking for the public. Along with many other questions we have about this project, we are wondering if there could be a set aside for public parking located within the 1299 Beacon St. garage.

We'd like to reiterate that the thought of having housing with a primary entrance on Sewall Ave. would be very nice. This is a lovely neighborhood and additional housing would only enhance the community. However, we have all been concerned about the size and scale of this building and the fact that it's primary vehicle access, for this oversized building, is on already overburdened Sewall Ave. The developer has stated publicly, through its representatives, that there will be minimal traffic impact to Sewall Ave. But the reality is that 74 residential units come not only with the vehicles of the residents, but the vehicles of visitors, the vehicles of caregivers, Uber vehicles, emergency vehicles, moving trucks, delivery vehicles that most likely will need to back up on Sewall Ave. to get into the loading dock, maintenance vehicles, restaurant delivery vehicles, restaurant patron vehicles, trash vehicles and the corresponding trash cans. All these vehicles added on a clear day will be very dangerous. Then think about the snowy days where the street is narrowed by snow. This traffic issue is real and is exacerbated by the fact that the plans, which originally called for no driveway on its property, now calls for a driveway that would accommodate a single vehicle. This assumes that no one will ever leave their vehicle for a moment, blocking the driveway, and run into the building to get someone or pick something up. If the building were pushed further away from Sewall Ave to allow one lane of parked vehicles on its property that would accommodate delivery, maintenance, etc. vehicles to park while at the same time providing a lane to pick up and drop off residents, this would not only create a bit of a buffer zone on Sewall Ave. but would dramatically mitigate the traffic problem created by this building.

In addition, this building provides no green space. According to the Boston Globe of Sunday April 21, 2019 "Landlords go barking mad for dog owners". Landlords are accepting pets as a way to promote their buildings. Dogs add a great deal to the quality of many peoples' lives, and are very much like family. But dogs need to be able to relieve themselves. Where will this happen if there is no provision for green space on this property?

We expect the developer argues the need to build a building that contains approximately 110,00 square feet (74 apartments and 5,000 square feet of retail space) and 87 parking spaces on an approximately 18,650 square foot lot as necessary to be financially viable. However, this very same developer is before this very same Board requesting a 40B project be granted in the Town of Brookline that contains approximately 80,000 square feet (50 apartments and 70 parking spaces) on approximately 17,700 square feet of property.

If the 1180 Boylston Street project is financially viable for this developer, then why is it necessary to build almost 30,000 square feet more in this location that already has a difficult traffic issue? The Boylston Street project is 6 stories. Could the Beacon Street project also be scaled to 6 stories?

Additionally is the concern that the construction of a building of this magnitude will have on adjacent buildings. According to the developers Geotechnical consultant's report:

"6.6 Protection and Monitoring of Adjacent Structures

The contractor should be required to perform pre- and post-construction conditions surveys of structures within 100 feet of the site. The surveys should document existing visible damage or signs of distress outside the buildings, and readily accessible areas of the building interiors. The surveys should be provided to the respective property owners. We recommend that you meet with the adjacent building owners to inform them of your plans and that you establish a contingency for repairs to the adjacent buildings if necessary.

We recommend that the adjacent buildings be monitored for vibrations and movements during construction. Vibrations can be monitored using seismographs placed inside the buildings. We recommend that the peak particle velocity not exceed 0.5 inches per second for continuous vibrations (such as jack hammering or hoe ramming). At a minimum, vibrations should be monitored at 1295, 1295A-1297, and 1307-1317 Beacon Street.

Survey points should be installed at selected locations on the adjacent buildings and the excavation support system, and their horizontal and vertical positions should be established before the start of construction. The survey points should be monitored for vertical and horizontal movements on a weekly basis through construction. More frequent monitoring should be performed for adjacent structures during installation of the excavation support system and while excavating below the foundation elevation of the adjacent structures.....

Crack gages should be installed at representative cracks observed in the adjacent structures during the pre-construction condition surveys. The crack gages should be monitored on a weekly basis during construction.

Temporary groundwater observation wells should be installed inside and outside the excavation to monitor groundwater levels during dewatering activities. The groundwater levels should be monitored on a daily basis beginning at least two weeks before the start of dewatering and throughout dewatering.

Construction activities should be modified or stopped if vibrations exceed 0.5 inch per second, or if the vibrations disrupt activities within the building. Construction operations should be evaluated and modified if necessary if movements exceed 1/4 inch. If movements exceed 1/2 inch, construction operations should be stopped and modified if necessary.

Even with good contractor practices, some cosmetic damage to adjacent structures may occur due to ground movements and vibrations. The contract documents should include provisions that require the contractor to repair any damage to adjacent structures caused by the construction activities.”

Based on this report, we are requesting that the town require the developer to perform pre and post construction conditions surveys within the 100 feet of the site, which would include 30 Longwood Avenue, provide these results to adjacent building owners, monitor the adjacent building for vibrations and movements during construction, install and monitor crack gages, and monitor groundwater levels. Furthermore rather than setting aside a contingency fund, which realistically could be tapped for other purposes until it is depleted, we would like to see the Town require the developer secure a bond commercially acceptable to the Town specifically for the purpose of making whole any damage that is done to surrounding buildings.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Myra and Howard Berloff

30 Longwood Ave.