

From: Alan Agresti [mailto:]
Sent: Tuesday, June 11, 2019 11:49 AM
To: Maria Morelli
Subject: Comments on 1299 Beacon hearing, 6/3/2019

Dear Members of the Zoning Board:

We'd like to thank you for the considerable amount of time you are spending carefully considering the proposed building at 1299 Beacon. We live next to the proposed building, on 30 Longwood Ave.

From our perspective, even with the proposed changes, this building is still unsuitable for this location for several reasons:

- We feel the proposed height and mass is still completely out of scale relative to the small footprint of the lot and will adversely affect the character of Coolidge Corner.
- Additionally, we believe it will create unsafe conditions for drivers and pedestrians, for these reasons:
 - 1) because of the narrow, one-way, curved nature of Sewall Avenue;
 - 2) based on the congestion already in place due the street's occupants abutting the proposed site, notably Trader Joe's, the post office, and a synagogue that includes a religious school for children;
 - 3) because of the dangerous back-up it could create on Longwood Avenue, just literally yards away from the service entrance to the proposed building;
 - 4) because a two-year construction phase will see a steady stream of heavy-duty trucks regularly using this short segment of narrow one-way Sewall, already crowded with postal vehicles and pedestrians.
- We believe the trash disposal, service and parking needs of such a large building could not be accommodated without major adverse disruption to the other occupants of the street. We were surprised to hear in the June 3 meeting the gross underestimation of the trash removal needs of 64 – 65 units, and the inadequate "trolley method" of getting said trash to the street. Based on the number of trash bins in use at 30 Longwood for 15 units, the discussion at the meeting Monday showing a small amount of trash being taken out of the garage seems preposterous. Additionally, we have doubts that the space planned for the trash in the building's design will be adequate to

handle the number of units. While we believe that the members of the plan board have visited the location, we wish that everyone considering this project could spend time daily walking down Sewall Ave from Harvard Street to Longwood Avenue and imagine the adverse impact if the building goes up as currently planned.

Driving around Boston, what impresses is how many neighborhoods have worked hard to preserve their unique character and charm. While there are tall buildings that have gone up in Brookline, as the developers point out, for the most part they detract rather than add to the character and stand out like a sore thumb compared to the buildings around them. Further, the existing tall buildings closest to the proposed site at least have the advantage of being surrounded by far more green space than is proposed in this plan.

Finally, these existing buildings should serve as a cautionary tale against poor decision making, not be used as a rationale to repeat the same mistakes that could easily destroy the gem that is Coolidge Corner. We strongly agree that providing affordable housing is important, but contend that 13 affordable units in a development of this size does not justify the permanent harm this building will do to the safety of the surrounding neighborhood. We see many recent examples of planned affordable housing both attractive and in scale in various neighborhoods around Boston. We would welcome that on this site.

At the June 3rd hearing, the attorney for the project stood up and warned that any more diminishment of the scale of the building would prohibit the developers from obtaining financing. We would argue that that is no basis for approving a project so out of scale and permanently harmful to the safety and character of the neighborhood.

We understand the latest incarnation of this building is scaled back a bit from the first inappropriate proposal, but we don't believe that justifies the approval of a project that is still unsuitable for the reasons we cited above. We are not anti-development. A building set back further from the road with fewer stories, like so many going up in Coolidge Corner, with more concern for neighborhood safety, would be welcomed to the neighborhood.

Thank you for listening to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Alan Agresti and Jacki Levine
30 Longwood Ave., no. 101