



# *Town of Brookline*

## *Massachusetts*

### **PLANNING BOARD**

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To: Brookline Board of Appeals  
From: Brookline Planning Board  
Date: April 18, 2013  
Subject: **Establish a common driveway for two lots, each with two attached single-family townhomes**  
Location: 28-30 and 32-34 Meadowbrook Road

Atlas Sheet:	88B	Case #:	ZBA 2013-0026
Zoning:	T-5	Lot:	13-14
		Lot Area (s.f.):	5,000 s.f. each

Board of Appeals Hearing: **May 2, 2013 at 7:15 pm, continued to June 20, 2013**

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### **BACKGROUND**

A building permit was issued for each lot for two by-right attached townhomes. Construction on the dwellings is almost complete.

### **SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD**

This is a neighborhood off of Clyde and Newton Streets comprised of modest homes, many of which are two-families. The area is bordered by conservation land and is located near Allandale Farm and Larz Anderson Park.

### **APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL**

The applicant is proposing to construct a 15' wide common driveway to serve all four units rather than separate driveways for each property. Each property is required to have five parking spaces – two will be in garages, one under each building, and three in tandem towards the back of each side of the drive, for a total of ten spaces. About half way back, the driveway is bumped out 6.5' on both sides, for a total width of 27' in front of the garages.

**FINDINGS****Section 6.04.5.e. – Design of All Off-Street Parking Facilities**

In all districts, the Board of Appeals may by special permit authorize the owners of adjoining properties to establish common driveways under mutual easements provided that any such permit shall not become effective until the easement has been recorded.

**PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS**

The Planning Board typically supports common driveway requests because they decrease the amount of paving on a lot and allow more green space to be provided. However, in this case, the common driveway is not practicable given the design of the townhouses and that five parking spaces are required to be provided for each lot, due to the size of each unit. Since each townhouse has only one garage space, three additional tandem spaces must be provided in the driveway itself. This blocks the garage spaces and compromises the vehicular circulation on the lot. The Planning Board believes adequate parking is not being provided and cannot support this unworkable design.

Numerous neighborhood residents were present at the Planning Board meeting and were in opposition to the issuance of a special permit. They were concerned not only about the common driveway, but also about proper drainage, since flooding in the area occurs every spring.

The townhouses were constructed at risk by the developer because the design was based on being approved for a common driveway, which requires a special permit. The developer assumed the relief would be granted, but the Planning Board cannot support a special permit for a parking design that does not meet any of the criteria for a special permit under Section 5.09, which requires that the site be appropriate for the use and structure, not adversely affect the neighborhood, not create a nuisance or hazard to vehicles or pedestrians, and provide adequate facilities for the proper operation of the use. The Planning Board recommends denial of the special permit and suggests that the developer explore ways to provide more parking spaces under the buildings themselves, perhaps by eliminating some of the habitable floor area at the lowest levels.

**Therefore, the Planning Board unanimously recommends denial of the Site Plan by VTP Associates, dated February 26, 2013.**

*PSS*