



TOWN of BROOKLINE

Massachusetts

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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January 27, 2014

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MELVIN A. KLECKNER
Town Administrator

Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of Brookline
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

RE: The Residences at South Brookline I
Application for Comprehensive Permit

Dear Chairman Geller and Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, I wish to convey the Board's position on Chestnut Hill Realty's application for a Comprehensive Permit to construct The Residences at South Brookline I. This position is expanded upon considerably in the Town's "Response to MassDevelopment with Respect to The Residences at South Brookline—2013."

Hancock Village has stood for over 60 years as a testament to both high quality residential development and a solid collaborative effort by all parties who were involved in its design and construction. Formally deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Town of Brookline, City of Boston and the Massachusetts Historic Commission, Hancock Village epitomizes the Garden Village concept. Promoting a strong sense of community amongst its residents, the existing apartment complex is founded on a respect for the environment that is physically manifested in significant areas of open space, beautifully landscaped park areas, integration of natural resources into the site design, and a separation of pedestrian and vehicular uses.

The Selectmen vigorously and unanimously assert that the current proposed development of Hancock Village is poorly conceived and undermines the characteristics and underlying philosophy that, in 1946, established Hancock Village as a well-planned community with the support and cooperation of the Town. The Applicant has chosen the least appropriate locations on its property to propose new structures.

Accordingly, the Board of Selectmen urges the Board of Appeals to protect the character of Hancock Village by preserving community open space and providing visual and physical access to that open space, protecting natural resources both within and adjacent to the complex, supporting existing development patterns, and respecting the deference to the pedestrian, particularly children, embodied in the physical design of Hancock Village.

The Board of Selectmen is convinced that new residential development, with affordable housing, can be incorporated into the existing development pattern of both Hancock Village and the surrounding community while preserving the very qualities that make Hancock Village a prototype for a well-designed residential community. If the ZBA considers approving the proposed development, it should only do so with conditions.

The Board of Selectmen has identified the following priorities for any future development within Hancock Village:

1. The greenbelt must be retained as open space to the maximum extent possible and mature shade trees must be protected.
2. New development must protect, rather than destroy, the historic, architectural and natural qualities of Hancock Village including, but in no way limited, to the puddingstone outcroppings.
3. Any new buildings must be harmonious with the neighboring architecture in scale and detailing. Any multi-story building must be sited and articulated to mitigate and minimize visual impact on the existing neighborhood.
4. Any and all potential negative traffic, circulation, public safety, stormwater and drainage impacts on both Hancock Village residents and abutting and nearby properties and roadways must be identified and mitigated completely by the Applicant.

The Board of Selectmen is confident that municipal staff and professional consultants engaged on behalf of the Town will articulate and represent the best interests of the Town and neighborhood in identifying and providing mechanisms to eliminate the aforementioned impacts.

The Board of Selectmen stands poised to work with the Board of Appeals and the Applicant, to assign municipal officials and staff to support your review, and to secure appropriate consulting services on your behalf. The Selectmen have appropriated funds, some of which will be reimbursed by the Applicant, to insure that civil engineering, traffic engineering and urban design specialists are available to provide consulting services either directly or indirectly to the Board of Appeals on this project.

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, I appreciate your dedication to the Town of Brookline.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Betsy DeWitt, Chairwoman
Board of Selectmen