

Dear Zoning Board, Brookline, MA:

C/O of Maria Morelli

July 18, 2016

I have attended several meetings. These 1) outlined the 40B law's parameters twice, 2) described time-lines and process, 3) offered the developer's presentation, 4) allowed time for Zoning Board members' questions. I find myself struck, though, by an asymmetrical relationship involving the power structures and timing between town and developer professionals on one hand, and people who will live each day amidst the stylistic, spatial, and stand-alone effects of the proposed looming building on the other.

Open as the meetings are meant to be, the asymmetry matches, through a kind of head-start of law; voices' rhetorical emphases in the word "affordable," an idea I agree with; mandated due dates that community members seem apprised of toward the end of a longer sequence; among several professionals private meetings which have already taken place; at public hearings time taken by developer's power points; then slides disallowing comparisons with heights and styles of traditional structures, retail and residential, but that do lead eyes to comparisons with not-as-proximate, not in sightline, more modern yet imposing other high-rises. – To return, some details in the process seem to parallel the proposal's asymmetry.

I will offer closer details. Fuller Street and Coolidge, at 30 feet wide, two-way, are two of the narrowest streets in the neighborhood. Compare their widths to Center Street's or Naples'. Yet Fuller and Coolidge today are already stressed on week days by private garbage-truck pickups, separate ones occurring daily or every other day – the pull-ins, pickups, and exits in addition to the town's weekly pickups. Add to these the food delivery trucks and refrigeration trailers, often huge, whose engines can be left vibrating for a half hour to an hour, for nine food establishments situated along just 200 feet of Harvard Street.

Dorado Tacos. Dok Bua Thai. The Four Coffee House. Kupel's Bakery. The Butcherie. The Daily Catch. Dante's Pizza. A new donut place replacing Wulf's. Taam China. – And several more across Harvard toward Naples.

These commercial neighbors have a right to do business. I like many of them. That is not the argument. Each one, though, requires many services which affect traffic and pedestrians on narrow streets at already busy intersections crossing a major traffic artery and bus route. Count up the actual deliveries and sizeable-truck traffic for each. Let's imagine (I asked a few owners), 4 deliveries a week for each (though more deliveries are plausible when different ingredients are included). 9×4 deliveries is 36, x the pull-ins and exits is 72. With a few other ingredients, conservatively, a total could be 45 delivery trips (9 more) or 9×4 equals 36 more pull-ins and exits each week. For the 200 foot stretch of Harvard Street whose other busy usage already requires that Fuller and Coolidge, much narrower, be turned into Harvard Street's back alleys, the total of large-truck becomes 108 pull-ins and exits. As for garbage pickups, at every other day, MWF – though for several food places these are daily – with MWF (3) visits x the 9 establishments, the number of visits comes to 27 to 30 by sizeable garbage trucks every week. Doubling this 30 for both the pull-ins and exits brings garbage big-truck maneuvering on the two-way, 30 foot streets to 60 different times. Then add the town's 2 trucks once a week for residents (no pull-ins and pull-outs). The required sizeable-truck traffic of delivery and sanitation trucks on the 30-foot wide, two-way streets, Fuller and Coolidge, amounts to 170 pull-ins and exits. Two years ago during

the big snow, I advised a plow-driver that Fuller had to be one-way. No one could get through. I was listened to.

Parking needs and narrowness are factors. In addition to 170 required delivery and garbage pull-ins and exits of large trucks on 30-foot wide two-way streets, teams of workers at the nine food establishments require places to park. For the nine establishments and many shifts, is 60 workers fair (some use bikes)? My guess is that this number is more than 60. So a packed stand of workers' cars on one side of 30-foot wide streets leaves 20 feet of space for the two-way traffic on Coolidge and Fuller. As the required, sizeable trucks pull in and exit, often ten feet across, maneuvering, backing, turning - 170 times. Only after these facts come spaces for patrons and shoppers, comes parking for Devotion School teachers, come children and elders crossing, come residents needing to come and go.

An intersection with such a multi-layered, food-service requiring density is one of the most appropriate places in town for an imposing, developer-friendly, sizeable jolt of increased density? The proposal seems insulting.

The developer repeated in a user-friendly manner scaled back to walkers' real experiences, for that moment, anyway, that perhaps a café could be housed at 420 Harvard Street. Has the developer, town or Zoning Board, people who do not all live here, looked or listened with a view to beyond, or even parallel with, profit? Or is his "perhaps a café," sounding like a friendly suggestion, a signal of another asymmetry, a quiet brush-off, a routine of not having to notice, maybe a larger done-deal of "who cares?" about the lived quality of certain intersections in North Brookline?

Other questions concern sight-lines, shadow studies, architecture, and proximate homeowners who have spent substantially, with no law aiding subsidies, to maintain traditional homes and contribute to their environment's attractiveness. A tax-paying resident can reasonably expect developers and public, town and state structures to participate with them. Is a request for this symmetry unfair?

As they stand, I think the process and proposed development present different damaging asymmetries. Across Fuller Street from the proposed tower's site, a place recently was developed in a manner sensitive to its own and the neighborhood's original style and heights. Why is this stucco modesty and style not a better model than an intrusive and close, insultingly out of scale, non-blending tower? Is the answer to the scale the real standard of "affordable" or is it profit for the developer, owner, and some tenants? More, does this proposal as presented reflect the kind of standard by which Brookline once became attractive, and in other neighborhoods remains so?

Sincerely, Kent Mitchell