


Maria Morelli

From: Charles Morgan <morgancharles@earthlink.net>
Sent: Wednesday, July 20, 2016 10:47 AM
To: Mary Nickerson
Cc: Maria Morelli; 

Subject: Re: North Brookline

Mary, this is right and well said. I do think you underestimate the level of a kind of corruption (not malicious in intent) that has crept into the governance of our town over the years. I've been to planning board meetings where the planning board has little interest in advocating for our building code and by-laws and instead works with the developer's architects to effect compromises (without much public input) that are more suitable to the developers than to the neighborhood. It's sad, and the planning board is made up of Brookline citizens (mostly architects).

What I've also noticed is that the only way to stop things seems to be to bring in large numbers of neighbors to protest. Fortunately, we are often able to do this in Brookline. The shame is that if the planning board and zoning board (let alone the Selectmen, but that's a different story of insidious intent) were willing to fight for the already existing by-laws and even for the ways that 40B proposals can be undermined or delayed, we wouldn't have to gather troops every time our neighborhoods are under threat.

The fact is we can't gather troops for every developer's proposal, so things sneak in all the time, and our elected and appointed leaders, alas, are not really protecting the interest of neighborhoods. Right now it is a developer's bonanza for all the reasons you mention.

For now, we need to keep gathering and inspiring troops.

Charlie

Charles Morgan, M.F.A., Ph.D.

On Jul 19, 2016, at 9:10 AM, Mary Nickerson <marynckrsn@gmail.com> wrote:

Brookline is a wonderful place to live, and no wonder developers see great profits ahead when properties can be maxed out. The town also gains with tax money. If the work is done in sync with the neighborhood and with care for safety and standards, then everyone wins. I don't think that any of us in this neighborhood are opposed to new housing.

But we are seeing plans for a huge change to the easygoing feel of our streets. Three proposed apartment buildings (Harvard Street, Center Street, Beacon Street) loom ominously over the traditional houses with high-density, shadow-casting, traffic-loading, tree-felling hauteur.

The most important matter for many of us is that of scale. I can only wonder if the developers deliberately proposed oversized plans, with the thought that they would have to make concessions, and that the cagey thing to do was to ridiculously outsize the proposal. If one stands across the street from any of the proposed buildings, especially those north of Beacon Street, and imagines the new projects, it is clear that they were conceived without regard to the surroundings. The proposed buildings would greatly diminish the serenity and value of the nearby homes. And these are *homes*, not just houses, and they are owner-occupied and maintained.

Development in North Brookline has been steeply increasing in the last three or four years, and many of the projects have been pleasing to everyone. However, almost on our doorstep have been two relatively small

reconstructions that have been the cause of much dismay. Permissions have been given -- mysteriously, even secretly -- where they should not have been (140 Winchester Street; have you seen it? Heaven help us) and 44 Coolidge Street, where the developer is gaming the system by serial postponings of hearings. Some developers know how to roll over town boards, and perhaps some town boards have decided to throw our neighborhood to the wolves. In any case, we feel unheard and unprotected, so we are doubly doubtful that the proposed projects are going to enhance the area.

I want to believe that our concerns will be heard and that they will be met with compromises and careful oversight. I want to believe that the town actively cares about its residents. I want to believe that the town will be improved by the new constructions. But I do not believe it yet.

Mary Nickerson
20 Coolidge Street (since 1977)