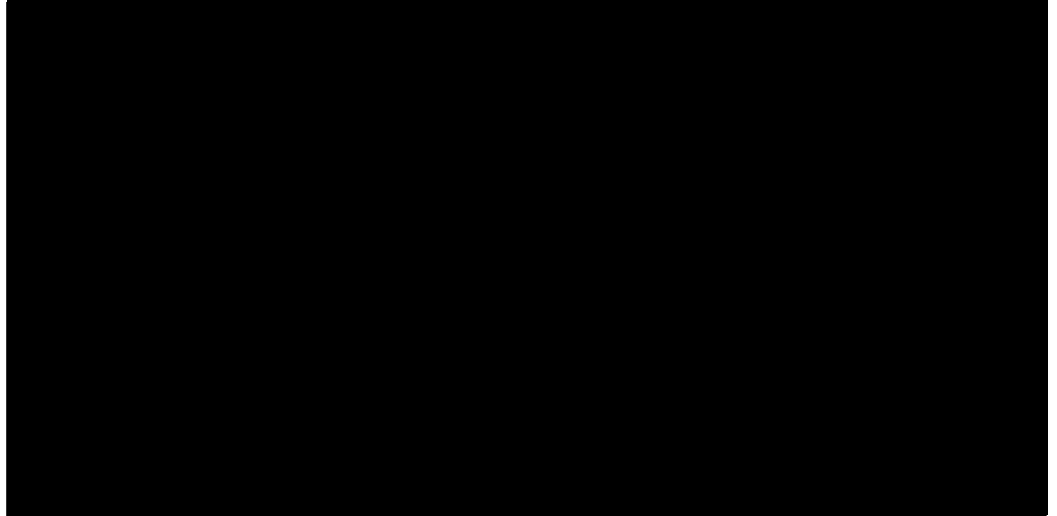


## Maria Morelli

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**From:** George Abbott White <whizzer65@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2016 12:57 PM  
**To:** Charles Morgan  
**Cc:** Mary Nickerson; Maria Morelli; Colm McMahon; Caroline Buckley; Michael Jacobs;



**Subject:** Re: North Brookline

Charles,

Agreed. It HAS seemed - to judge by the last several years - that the Planning Board I've observed has seemed more neutral or often taken a Let's-Make-a-Deal attitude towards Developers. More recently at Board hearings, however, I've noticed much sharper questioning, particularly attention to the look & feel of design; clearly out of scale proposals; inadequate setbacks; lack of communication with neighbors; and, with the recent presentation by the Planning Board of the 420 Harvard Street proposal - considerable, sharp push back.

Perhaps this is a consequence of neighbors getting together as you say and making their voices heard individually and collectively.

Perhaps it's also large numbers of concerned homeowners - and even small local merchants - actually attending the meetings, posing their own sharp questions, pushing the Board - and Town leaders' - inadequate attention to the needs of neighborhood children and elders around issues of safety, noise, sanitation in these Developers' proposals.

Whatever it is - including neighbors pooling expert technical information and ponying up for professional legal assistance - attention is getting paid.

Whatever. We need to do more, and frustrating as it often seems, keep doing it. A good next step: Throughout North Brookline - indeed all Brookline - we need to encourage every Town Meeting Member to inform themselves regarding the Developer Steamroller, and get on board.

George White, TMM 9

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On Wed, Jul 20, 2016 at 10:47 AM, Charles Morgan <[morgancharles@earthlink.net](mailto:morgancharles@earthlink.net)> wrote:

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](mailto: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)

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George Abbott White, PhD  
USA