

Dear Mr. Arbeene and Planning Board Members,

I am adding my voice to those already expressing opposition to a proposed assisted living facility that infringes on Pond Road, Wellesley. I am also opposed to passage of warrant 43. As a senior citizen and 30 + year resident of Wellesley who raised a family here, my expectations of our government representatives, are that they represent the interests of the town residents. I also expect my elected officials on both the Planning Board and Select Board to follow the covenants of Wellesley's unified plan that identifies the town's intention to protect our land use by "restoring, preserving and enhancing open space and sensitive natural resources for protection of water resources, wildlife habitat, biodiversity and enrichment of community character." The Select Board has correctly voted against this project and the Planning Board should do the same. Anything less would violate public trust.

This is a particularly necessary time for me and many other citizens to speak out because the continuous consideration of spot rezoning initiatives like the one on Pond Road or 489 Worcester Street are not thoughtful redevelopment planning. Of particular interest to me, is that in the Unified Plan, there is clear language that the process to create this plan was predicated on eliciting the Wellesley community's values and concerns for the future. The unified plan was developed through extensive efforts to allow residents to participate in the creation of the plan. The citizens have spoken, and they want, which the Unified Plan captures, "to preserve/enhance open space, trails, parks, conservation land, waterways." In addition, "to preserve green space to protect the environment and natural resources," which include protecting our wildlife refuges and incorporating sustainability measures that protect our open spaces. Pond Road is one of seven designated scenic roads in Wellesley as voted on in Town Meeting per state law. Therefore, I ask that the Planning Board step up to protect this open space, which is often used by walkers, runners, bicyclists alike as routine recreational space.

I oppose Warrant 43 because it will open the door to more spot rezoning initiatives and would deny the community engagement so prevalently stated as a value within the Unified Plan. The Planning and other Town Boards should strengthen Town zoning regulations to ensure the continuity of town character, quality of life and encourage community involvement in these discussions. These too are in the values described within the Unified Plan. No Board should have unchecked ability to grant rezoning of any development proposal because the scope of impact of such authority violates the value of the Unified Plan that is demonstrated by the inclusion of community participation in Town Plan.

It is incumbent upon the Planning Board to correctly identify all spaces that are historic resources and promote their preservation as well as mitigate the adverse impact to our natural resources, wetlands and wildlife refuges.

Sincerely,
Andrea H. Harding
Resident – 10 Sawyer Road, Wellesley