

Wetlands Committee November 2, 2023 Meeting

489 Worcester/8 Cliff Road

Good evening. My name is Ann Rappaport and my husband Carey and I live at 7 Bradford Road. We are direct abutters to the proposed 489 Worcester Street/ 8 Cliff Road project. I am a long-time – almost 45 year – resident of Wellesley, a Town Meeting Member and current member of the Library Board of Trustees. I am speaking tonight on my own and my husband's behalf.

Before I discuss any specific objections to the request to modify the area subject to protection, let me first say that this discussion of modifications to the Wetlands area at the rear of the property seems premature. The developers are planning to put 48 multifamily housing units on the property, which can only be achieved through a rezoning of the land which is currently in a Single Family Residence District with 20,000 sf lots. This rezoning will have to be approved by Annual Town Meeting next April otherwise this project cannot go forward. Why is there any need to start cutting down trees now or otherwise disturb the existing wetlands? Wouldn't it be more prudent to wait until Town Meeting has approved the zoning change? Doesn't this wetlands modification request create possibly unnecessary work for your Committee?

I want to talk a little about the wetlands area which borders the 489 Worcester Street/8 Cliff Road property. It is a lovely wild, forested wetlands area with a small stream running through it. There is currently no human presence in this area, so it has become an important resource for the animals who live in our neighborhood. I have been told that this wetlands area is part of an animal corridor that connects Abbotts Pond, west of the property and adjacent to Route 9, to Wights Pond which is adjacent to the Wellesley Farms Train Station with backyards abutting the Commuter Rail line forming additional parts of this corridor. Certainly we regularly see astounding varieties of animal life given how close we live to Route 9, including deer, foxes, groundhogs, red tailed hawks and wild turkeys. Before the property at 489 Worcester went to auction, I had never actually seen this forested wetland area and it was glorious and startling to see such a pristine and unspoiled area in a typical suburban community. It seems like it is incumbent on us to

protect these vital areas that provide extraordinary environmental benefits despite their small sizes.

The developers' current plan will remove 46 mature trees having DBH > 5" within the 100 foot buffer zone bordering the wetlands as well as tripling the current impervious area on the site from about 29,000 sf to almost 86,000 sf. This is an increase of an additional 1.3 acres of building and pavement beyond what currently exists! An underground parking garage with room for about 65 cars is also part of the developers' plan and the proposed blasting to create the garage will also have a negative impact on the wetlands area. We also note that there are significant regular maintenance requirements for the underground catchments and subsurface infiltration systems that are necessary to keep stormwater on the property. How is this maintenance schedule enforced years down the road after the project has been completed and units sold? Runoff generated on 489 Worcester/8 Cliff Road will end up on lower Cliff Road as there is a substantial grade on and adjacent to the property.

The developers have represented this project as having minimal impact on the wetlands area and the 100' buffer zone. Given the proposed tree removal, blasting and the massive increase in impervious area on the site, we should all be quite skeptical.

Thank you.