

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 speaking tonight because we were unable to attend the Planning Meeting two weeks ago at which this project was discussed, but our absence then should not be construed as tacit acceptance of the current plan.

Simply put, the project is too big, and too dense for the area in which it is proposed, an already busy corridor along Cliff Road and Route 9 with major traffic problems even before adding additional housing. I'm not going to talk further about traffic at this time but clearly traffic in this location is a well-acknowledged problem which will affect many Wellesley residents, not just abutters.

My concern tonight is the zoning change being proposed, which will require existing single family resident district land to be rezoned. This is currently contemplated by using the process delineated in Chapter 40R of the Mass General Laws. However, unlike earlier projects from these two developers - Terrazza and the Bristol – the 489 Worcester/8 Cliff Road project was filed AFTER Wellesley reached so-called “safe harbor” status. We currently exceed our 10% affordable housing goals and so Wellesley is no longer threatened by Chapter 40B projects in which town zoning can be set aside by the state. It has also been publicly announced that Wellesley is zoned with sufficient density in the appropriate areas to meet our MBTA Communities guidelines. If the town chooses to rezone part of a single family residence district, which will require Town Meeting approval, it will be something which we choose to do to ourselves.

Residents like us, who purchased homes in this single family residence district, will see our properties lose value. One way of looking at this current condo complex proposal is as a massive transfer of wealth from the residents of the Bradford and Cliff Road neighborhoods to these developers. Rezoning a single family residence district would be a terrible precedent for the town to set and would mean that no neighborhood, particularly those within 0.5 mile of the town's three train stations, would be safe from this type of action. As I said in my last letter to the Select Board and Planning Board, iteratively taking bite-sized pieces out of our single family residence zones is a reactive approach to the problem of generating more multifamily housing. If the Select Board wants to work proactively with nonprofit developers to build multifamily housing in areas of town already properly zoned for this type of housing – the Route 16 corridor and Wellesley Square Commercial District come to mind – and perhaps work to

generate projects with greater percentages of affordable or workforce housing by offering tax incentives or other sweeteners, this would seem a much more reasonable and productive approach.

More concretely, the current plans will remove 46 mature trees and will triple the current impervious area on the site from about 29,000 sf to almost 86,000 sf. This is an increase of 57,000 sf which is equal to an additional 1.3 acres of building and pavement beyond what currently exists! It is hard to argue that this type of development would not change the fabric of this neighborhood. The developers are already seeking permission from the Wetlands Committee in a hearing this Thursday, November 2, to remove/fill/dredge and/or alter a protected area on the property, before the project has even come close to receiving approval from Town Meeting.

I think we need to take a step backwards and work to come up with a project that is satisfactory to the neighborhoods involved. The Planning Board should be looking at the town's needs more broadly and not just reacting to each new project as it comes along. Wellesley has shown over the years that a comprehensive process involving all stakeholders generally arrives at a more successful project – the High School renovation and the purchase of the North 40 being prime examples. We have zoning bylaws, including Large House Review and the Tree Bylaw, to avoid overbuilding, to respect the natural environments, to be consistent with the scale of the neighborhood, and to respect neighboring properties. I hope you will conclude that the 489 Worcester/8 Cliff Road project does none of these things.