City of Newton, Massachusetts
Climate and Sustainability Team

Date: July 12, 2022

To: Councilor Richard Lipof, Land Use Committee Chair

CC: Stephen J. Buchbinder, Attorney; Sunrise Senior Living, Design Team; Property Owner; Katy Sheesley, GHP, Green Building Professional; Katie Whewhell, Chief Planner

From: Ann Berwick, Co-Director of Climate and Sustainability; Bill Ferguson, Co-Director of Climate and Sustainability; Liora Silkes, Energy Coach

RE: 11 Florence Special Permit Sustainability Review

The Climate and Sustainability Team has reviewed the materials submitted by the project team and found the plans for 11 Florence Street to be in compliance with the Sustainability Requirements as set forth by Zoning Ordinance Chapter 5 Section 13.

By planning to build 11 Florence St to the requirements of the Enterprise Green Community Building Rating System, this project is on track to meet the requirements of Section 5.13.4.A of the Newton Zoning Ordinance. By planning to install EV charging stations for 10% of parking spaces and making another 10% EV charger ready, the project is on track to meet the requirements of Section 5.13.4.B of the Newton Zoning Ordinance. We are seeing substantial growth in EV adoption and would encourage the project team to install even more chargers than required.

The City Climate and Sustainability Team is happy to see the commitment to the EGC rating system, therefore touching on a broad range of sustainability topics. That said, we encourage the project team to give more attention to making 11 Florence St as energy efficient as possible and to using electricity for as much of the project's energy needs as possible.

The City of Newton is considering adopting a BERDO (Building Emissions Reporting and Disclosure Ordinance) in 2023, which would require large buildings such as this one to decrease their emissions to established standards at certain intervals between the passage of the ordinance and reaching net-zero at 2050. We urge the project team to consider the financial benefits of creating a building closer to net-zero from initial construction as opposed to needing to retrofit at a later date. With that in mind, the City Climate and Sustainability Team suggests the project team conduct a Passive House feasibility study and consider following the recommendations of the study. Additionally, if the project were to achieve Passive House certification, that would add more points to the EGC rating.

We are glad to see that the project team is exploring potential solar strategies and suggest the project become at least solar-ready, with careful consideration given to the location of mechanicals on the roof to leave room for a future solar installation if not installing solar during construction. We suggest doing a solar analysis to evaluate potential costs and benefits of installing solar during construction, especially since the project will be on a single electric meter which makes reaping the financial benefits of solar much easier.

Finally, we encourage the project team to explore ways to analyze and reduce the embodied carbon associated with constructing a new project, such as procuring low-carbon concrete.