



Zoning & Planning Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Tuesday, May 29, 2018

Present: Councilors Albright (Chair), Leary, Baker, Danberg, Brousal-Glaser, Kalis and Krintzman
Absent: Councilor Downs

Also present: Councilors Gentile, Norton, Markiewicz, Greenberg, Kelley, Crossley, Cote and Noel

Planning & Development Board: Scott Wolf (Chair), Peter Doeringer, Sonia Parisca, Jennifer Molinsky and Christopher Steele

City Staff Present: Barney Heath (Director, Planning Dept.), James Freas (Deputy Director, Planning Dept.), Rachel Powers (Community Development Programs Manager), Maura O'Keefe (Assistant City Solicitor), John Lojek (Commissioner, Inspectional Services), Kathryn Ellis (Economic Development Director), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

#201-18 Zoning amendment to limit residential portion of business zone developments
COUNCILOR GENTILE, MARKIEWICZ, COTE AND NORTON requesting amendments to Chapter 30, Newton Zoning Ordinance, to require that any development in a business zone, limit the residential portion of the project to 50% of the total development.
Public Hearing Closed; Planning & Development Board Held 5-0
Action: Public Hearing Closed; Held 7-0

Note: Councilor Albright opened the public hearing on items #201-18, #202-18 and #203-18. The Planning & Development Board opened their public hearing as well. Councilor Albright explained that the Planning Department would offer background information on moratoria and the Mixed Use 4 (MU4) district, and then Councilor Gentile would present the items. (Please see the notes below for the Planning Department comments.) She would then take public comment on all three items, simultaneously.

Councilor Gentile Comments

Councilor Gentile explained that he is speaking as a concerned resident of the City on these items. He wanted to assure homeowners and small business owners along Washington Street that item #203-18 requesting a moratorium, would not affect them. The item is directed at the large developments that are being proposed along the Washington Street corridor.

He noted that the Austin Street and Washington Place projects approved through MU4 were contentious and divisive. Both were approved by the City Council by a small margin and he did not believe that was wise policy for making land use decisions. Now that those projects have begun, he felt it was a good time to arrange a forum for residents to speak to the Councilors about these types of projects going forward.

Councilor Gentile wanted everyone to understand that any financial success that he has ever had in his life is tied to the financing of residential properties. He fully appreciates the place for development and does not want people to think that he is against all development because that is simply not the case. Development and modernization is inevitable, but the appropriate level must be determined.

Councilor Gentile indicated that he is not looking for a vote at this meeting and would primarily like to hear from the public. He will then meet with the other docketers of these items to determine what, if anything, they would like to propose to the Zoning & Planning Committee going forward.

#202-18 Zoning amendment to Mixed Used 4 district

COUNCILOR GENTILE MARKIEWICZ, COTE AND NORTON requesting amendments to Chapter 30, Newton Zoning Ordinance, so that the Mixed Used 4 (MU4) zone is either eliminated; or the dimensional controls are reduced; or a moratorium of two years be placed on any new MU4 development; or any combination of these three action.

Public Hearing Closed; Planning & Development Board Held 5-0

Action: Public Hearing Closed; Zoning & Planning Held 7-0

Note: James Freas, Deputy Director of the Planning Department, provided some background on the Mixed Used 4 (MU4) district at the request of the Chair. The MU4 proposal originated with the Austin Street Development site. The only district that would have been large enough to encompass that project was the existing Business Use 4, however, it was not appropriate for a village center as it allowed for the most intense density and building height of any district in the City. MU4 was created to be Newton's "village district" by working with the Zoning & Planning Committee and using the analysis provided by the Austin Street Working Group, as well as looking at existing conditions of other villages in the City. From the beginning, it was designed as a district that could only be applied by legislative act and special permit by the City Council and can only be applied to be specific projects. Therefore, it does not appear on the zoning map of the City except for Austin Street and Washington Place. The MU4 district was approved by the City Council in the fall of 2012. More information is included in the Planning Memo for this item, which was attached to the agenda.

#203-18 Zoning amendment for moratorium on zone changes/construction Washington St.

COUNCILOR GENTILE AND NORTON requesting amendments to Chapter 30, Newton Zoning Ordinance, to adopt an immediate moratorium on any zone changes and/or construction/development along both sides of Washington Street, including

abutting properties, from the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue Washington Street in Auburndale/West Newton, to the intersection of Washington Street and Centre Street in Newton Corner. This moratorium shall remain in place until Zoning Redesign and the proposed “actionable plan for the Washington Street Corridor” are completed. This moratorium does not apply to by right construction/development that is currently allowed by the Newton Zoning Ordinances. This moratorium shall expire on September 30, 2019.

Public Hearing Closed; Planning & Development Board Held 5-0

Action: Hearing Closed; Zoning & Planning Held 7-0

Note: James Freas, Deputy Director of the Planning Department explained that moratoria are used in certain extraordinary circumstances to temporarily halt activities of a certain type. The idea is to provide a “time-out” in order to place controls or mitigation measures in place. Most are targeted towards non-discretionary issues because otherwise the City Council can have more control. There must be a clear and defined timeframe and end point; there should be a precise target such that the issue is narrowly defined; and there should be an identified objective of the work to be accomplished during the moratorium. More information is included in the Planning Memo for this item, which was attached to the agenda.

Public Comment

In Favor of Docket Items

Priscilla, Newtonville said she has lived here for 50 years and she is pro-development, but on a human scale. The thought of high-rises all along the Washington corridor is staggering. She was concerned that one developer was in control of so much property in the area. She wanted to know who would pay for services when these units are occupied – this would include schools, security, infrastructure. Will this be in the laps of the residents for the next 50 years. At least 40,000 residents in Newton are seniors and it would be difficult to cross the street when the traffic is multiplied. The human cost of this has to be considered.

Cindy Spittel, 74 Fenno Road thanked Councilor Gentile for docketing these items. As a fourth generation Newton resident, she feels the City is already in total gridlock without adding 1,000 new units. The schools are filled to capacity. She does not feel a moratorium is going backwards, she sees it as time for a through process. Newtonville was railroaded through and there is no parking and you can't drive across the city in less than 40 minutes. The Mayor's opinion, although she is wonderful, leaves out the rest of the City.

Darcy Morales-Zullo, 93 Randall Park said she supports these proposals. She loves the distinct villages in the City and the proposed developments would take so much character away from them. Her 96 year old father is very concerned as well. She felt this meeting was imperative to hear from the residents of the City. There is so much traffic in Newton and the schools are bursting at the seams and she is concerned about skyscrapers in the City. She is all for affordable housing but she feels time needs to be taken to look at the impact on every citizen of the City.

Margery Weider, 31 Judkins Street thinks it is important to slow down the process so people can heard and can consider the unintended consequences of not having a moratorium. She questions the affordable housing gig – who is this affordable for? The amounts do not seem affordable for most people. Schools are already overcrowded, traffic is terrible and the developer of Orr Block was not willing to kick in to improve the accessibility of the T. She did not see how that would now suddenly happen. She was the PTO president at the Carr School at the time of school building closings and everyone was assured there would be no problem with that and then there were problems after that. This needs to slow down.

Ernest Loewenstein, 57 Hyde Street supported these items and said it is not necessary to rush ahead with special permit after special permit. These developments are not going to make any significant difference for older people. Also, Newtonville does not have any transit oriented development. There are a few trains that go to Boston and back which are inconvenient except for commuting, and it has a bus every half hour or hour or more. There is not going to be any improvement in transportation and the MBTA has already said that. To step back and let the process cool off for a year to get these on the table in a rational way is a decent and honorable course of action.

Ellen Ryan, 29 Davis Ave said the community has already started to see the effects of the anticipation of building. There are parking problems and West Newton has not even begun construction yet. The CVS and Santander parking lots will be lost. She is concerned when the City is looking for a new site for a Senior Center and a police station and yet a developer can find these huge blocks of property to use for his own. She does not understand why the City can't find space. The developer has a vision for Washington Street and she want the vision to be from the community and those that live in the area. The Mayor has hired a consultant to help determine the direction, which is a good idea, but she supports these amendments. She has not heard anything about the impact on the schools. Newton South is at the capacity. She would rather not go through any problems with school buildings and adding that burden to the taxpayers. She thinks there needs to be some time to develop a unified vision, otherwise, every time a project comes up, there will be conflict.

Pamela Geib, 7 Briar Lane is surprised as some of the language being used tonight. The moratorium would be in place for just a little more than a year. Common sense has been lacking for West Newton all the way to Newton Centre because a billionaire developer on what he calls the meat left on the bone of housing development. Those were his words. This is a very fast train and it went undigested when she said everyone should wait to see how the project at Austin Street turned out before approving another big project. That information should be used to determine what should come next and then did not happen. There are two huge projects going on within two blocks of each other. The traffic is terrible and it is dangerous to cross the street. She is concerned about school and the quality of life. Many small businesses have been lost that have meant a way to her quality of life. She does not want to see more of that lost in other villages and get caught up in a developers vision.

Tarek Lucas, 36 Central Avenue said he is not speaking on behalf on the Newtonville Area Council. He supports the proposals because MU4 has further divided a City that was already divided. It has pitted neighbor against neighbor, parent against parent and city councilor against city councilor. There is either an anti-development or irresponsible development folks. The name calling has to stop and it is not way to build a city. MU4 has helped destroy the community he lives in, Newtonville. He supports the elimination or scaled back version of MU4.

Chris Pitts, 1756 Beacon Street supports the proposals. He is from Waban and on the Waban Area Council. A survey was done by the Council and the results showed that 70% said they like the villages just the way they are. It is part of what they like about Newton and distinguishes it from others in the greater Boston area. Moratoria have their place and it is just a pause to consider what is being planned. Some consultant work and surveys are being undertaken and that data will be helpful. Increasing the number of housing units does not lower costs and there are no examples of that. Supply and demand does not apply to land.

Pam Shufro, 20 Blithdale Street said she supports the moratorium. A comprehensive vision is needed on what is needed on that corridor. A moratorium will give us time to get that vision in place, not based on anecdotal stories but with really hard data. There is a consultant to do something, but certainly it should involve scientific data collection along with a scientifically random sample demographically based and analyzed survey of what the residents of Newton, where they live, who they are, how old they are, how much money they make and what they can afford for a market rate rental apartment. That is the kind of data needed. Of course we want affordable housing and accessible housing. She is a senior and her husband has a disability, but she doesn't think what they are going to get with the blunt instrument of "the market forces say this". If at 350 a square foot, according to Mr. Korff's calculations, for rents now, not the future, that comes out to \$48K a year for an 1,100 square foot 2 bedroom apartment. If 80% of the apartments cost that, could people afford that for their families, and could seniors on social security afford that? There is a lottery for less expensive units and there are so many, that not everyone can get one.

Adel Foz, 16 Page Road said he has lived there for about 45 years and spent 37 years doing traffic and transportation studies for neighborhoods, corridors, cities and regions all over New England. He supports the moratorium so that the traffic and transportation situations can be figured out. High end apartment owners have cars and they drive them. He thinks a traffic study is needed because this is a major corridor for traffic. Newton is not an island and it takes more than two intersections to make this work. A study has to look at the whole corridor.

Fred Arnstein, 7 Briar Lane supports the amendments. He was very interested in what James Freas said because he did not realize that the MU4 designation is a site-by-site designation. It is interesting to see that in the cases that it has come up for vote, it has been approved both times. The fear is that it will set a precedent for other properties and would be voted in automatically in other places. He does not see any reason to doubt that based on conversations he has had. The

amendments are the right thing to do. He sees that people who want development are saying go for it without restraint. Those who want more reasonable development are more thoughtful.

Edgar Klugman 65 Kirkstall Road said he has lived there since 1977 and had lived in England, Germany, Afghanistan and many other countries before. We are so fortunate to be able to have this council meeting and to be able to voice our opinions. In many other places, he could not speak and his voice was not heard. This is a treasure and the community is extremely bright and gifted. He would like to hear more about children and intergenerational and boundless playgrounds so that those who are challenged physically can use them. It was unclear whether he was in favor or opposed to the amendments.

Nancy Patriacca, 110 Nevada Street said she hopes the leaders and constituents will have a pause in the rush to redevelop Newton. She is not sure if the moratorium is needed but she is in favor of the spirit of it. She is not alone in her concern that the development is happening too quickly. She went to the Mayor's kick-off event for Hello Washington and she valued the exchange of ideas. She was interested in trees and density and one of the tables was talking about finance. One gentleman said the City is in debt and there would be more income if the developer would include more businesses and office space, and the School Department is already worried about too many kids and not enough space. She said everyone is talking about affordable housing but what about affordable housing for those who already live here and working class families and middle class families or those who are retired and age in place. Too many apartments will add more kids to the schools. It is important to be mindful of affordability on that level as well. She is not against development and she is for affordable housing but those who already live here have to worry about increased tax bills. Let's not let the developers make their money and leave the residents with the bill.

Wendy Plezniak, 38 Waban Street said she learned this year how important it is for citizens to get out in front of their issues early and discuss them with City Councilors. Developers are adept at what they do, marketing their projects, promising solutions to a city's problems. Members of this Committee may forget how most people who live here have never reached out to government and do not know how to navigate the city's website and understand how to come forward and make their voices heard. It takes time for neighbors and communities to talk to each other and craft their opinions in a coherent matter and mesh their concerns together before they stand before you. This is a human process and all the constituents have busy lives, as Councilors do. Developers are adept at the process and she wanted councilors to remember that there are groups of people that take time to plan well and act. She is grateful for these amendments and she wants to slow down projects to accommodate the human pace.

Paul Snyder, Arbor Road said he lives a block off of Washington Street and he has made a good part of his living with real estate development. As an attorney he has represented developers, and as associate regional counsel for private market finance at HUD for 15 years, he personally closed thousands of Section 8 and Section 236 housing units around New England. Housing development is important, however, housing development has to be done in a reasonable and moderate manner

and cannot be done at the point of a gun and facing the severe economic pressures of real estate in this community. A moratorium makes sense and he asked the committee to support it.

Lorraine Stannick, 411 Newtonville Avenue said she and her husband have lived in Newton for 36 years and she supports the proposals. There are many critical needs that need further discussion such as impacts on school, transportation and livability. She lives one block from Washington Street and Austin Street and it will have a big impact on the entire City of Newton. All of Washington Street will be covered with large buildings and it won't be the city they moved into.

Daniel Lawry, 33 Waban Street said there should be a moratorium on MU4 because there have been at least 3 major developments in the last year and have pushed their vision on Newton. Citizens have been trying to figure out how to express their opinions to the City Council and there has been large public opposition to those projects and yet the projects have been pushed through anyway without any plan from the City Council as to how the commercial space should be utilized. The City Council needs to make a plan that is driven by the residents. He is in favor of all three proposals.

Peter Harrington, said he supports these proposals so that there is an opportunity to step back from the onslaught of development and to gather information. The question is what kind of changes are coming and will they be drastic and will it protect the interests of the residents. The City Councilors names will be on these changes and he assumed they want to do the best they can. When things are rushed they end up with mistakes. The availability of information allows people access to more knowledge than ever before and that knowledge can be overwhelming as well as helpful. There are 3,500 units that are proposed for construction in the near future and include Riverside, West Newton, Newtonville, California Street and Needham Street. Limiting residential is not a bad idea in each project. There is not enough commercial base to support the current residents and there will be even less to support the new residents. He provided some pictures for the City Council to look at.

Name and address inaudible. The speaker said all the talk about affordable housing is driving her crazy. She lives on \$1374/month on social security. She has lived on the edge of poverty her entire life despite the fact she has a bachelors degree, a nursing diploma and a degree in nursing. She left nursing in 1997 because of medical issues she was making \$22/hour. She has lived in supportive housing her whole life and if she had not she would not have been able to work with low income people in low paying jobs. She canvassed people in the City and found that almost no one can live in Newton. Housing for seniors is a 6-10 year wait and none of these units proposed are affordable. If you want affordable housing, build affordable housing. (rest of testimony is inaudible).

James Pacheco, comments attached.

Margret Shefler, 77 Fairway Drive supports Councilor Gentile's amendment and ask that the Committee strongly consider voting for that.

Annie Raines, Court Street . Nantucket and Cambridge have been transformed by developer's vision. These towns once held police officers, teachers, architects, musicians, etc. people with disabilities, senior citizens, and children. Through development these communities were priced out of living in those towns. I am in favor of two out of three. I am ambivalent about the first one. I think it is hasty. However, I believe the moratorium amendments of either two years or so would be incredibly valuable in allowing public discourse to take place. Why we can't we have a bus depot in Newton Corner? If Newton becomes more like Cambridge, we could not live here. Please consider two out of three proposals.

Elaine Arruda, 921 Commonwealth Avenue said she met a family that instead of Newton decided to move to New Hampshire. They had concerns regarding high density development that would crowd schools and increase taxes. I shared those concerns and here to support the docket item for eliminating a moratorium on zoning. Current zoning allows too much leeway on height and too much residential versus commercial units. Her preference is for 3 story maximum in village centers and a higher percentage of commercial versus residential. It is unfair for residents to shoulder the burden of covering all the cities expenses. Housing is cash negative for Newton. Commercial is cash positive. We should be the ones to shape Newton's future, not the developers.

Bill Roessner 1058 Walnut Street said he is in support of the moratorium. The elephant in the room is deficit that we seem not to be able to pay for residential real estate taxation. The vision on the developer's part is dollar signs. I think the Council owes it to the citizens to look into this moratorium further.

Diane Prunte, 305 Winchester Street said she is in support of the docket items and is concerned about Newton affording the proposed building. She would like a public explanation of how this all can be afforded and to take a step back and think about what we are doing. We should not be giving any more approvals until we figure out our vision.

Amy Wayne, 1616 Centre Street, Newton Highlands said she approves of these docket items. The Planning needs to go first and it feels waiting will not harm the city.

Helen Nayar, 75 Grove Hill Ave. said that those who were around for Austin Street, remember it was ad hoc and we have not seen the results of MU4. She thinks we should stop and approve Mr. Gentile's proposal on a moratorium. We have to know what we are doing because what we do will effect each and every resident of this town. As a senior, she said these huge developments which give huge profits to developers have a diverse effect on the taxes on the seniors who live here. She has not seen much analysis and would like to see someone segment our population and tell us what the effects of these huge developments are going to be on our taxes.

Margaret Ward, Washington Street in Newtonville said all her needs and services were met living in Newtonville. Her concern is that this massive development will destroy the very fabric of the villages. Trades people will lose their jobs. Why is it that high density is the only solution to

provide affordable housing? She would like to see the Orr building not get demolished. This developer is about leveling, demolishing and building cheaply.

Julia Malakie, 50 Murry Road, West Newton said she strongly supports all three provisions. She thinks it is folly to allow any more commercially zoned land to be lost when we are in the situation that we are in. She wishes we could repeal MU4 but doesn't expect that, but there should be a pause to evaluate to the extent we can see the effect of the MU4's that have already been approved. She opposes the \$500,000 no-bid contract and thinks that was a mistake and wrong to be rushed into it. It seems the height of illogic and hypocrisy to let the process go through. She is trying to have people come to meetings and participate in that process and urges people to show up, write letters and if they don't do it, there is no resistance at all. Even if someone is pro high density development, they should be supporting the moratorium until September 2019 to allow the zoning re-design and the principal process to finish. She finds it ironic that so many people are against these docket items cite the Hello Washington Street process.

George Mansfield, 312 Lake Avenue, Newton Highlands was very impressed with the people who spoke from their hearts. They spoke with knowledge, and spoke with important questions. He supports these amendments and thinks MU4 has been in place from 2009 or before. The heart of a plan crafted in three or four years and supports conserving the quality of village centers, services, and the kinds of planned use, housing availability, is one of the key factors that MU4 does not look at. MU3 and MU4 were overlay districts to allow development on parcels that were under developed, such as the Riverside parcel, the Chestnut Hill parcel, and the Needham Street project. They did not anticipate MU4 taking affordable housing, existing small businesses so he urged spending a lot of time and look at the history of this and use that for the context of your decisions.

Kathleen Kouril Greiser, 258 Mill Street, Newtonville said she is in support of all three items, mostly in support of the elimination of the zoning category MU4. She thinks MU4 was a well-intentioned mistake. What we are opposed to is bad change, change that hurts Newton. Change that hurts the people of Newton, change that worsens our debt, change that is not sensible. Mr. Gifford brought up a laundry list of things. She absolutely supports the elimination of zoning category MU4. She supports a moratorium, zoning changes that would scale it down and lead a smaller percentage of residential. We are going through this thirteen month, Hello Washington planning process that we spent a half million dollars of money on and it is meaningless if Mr. Korff can submit zoning change applications and special permit applications during the remaining twelve month period and those are set in motion before we finish the process. It makes a mockery of the process. We are going to have our entire Zoning Ordinance rewritten, to get ahead of people like Mr. Korff but Mr. Korff is still free to keep submitting applications during this time. If you really want to give our Planning Department and our Law Department the time to properly write a new Zoning Ordinance, wouldn't it make sense to do something to stop Mr. Korff in the interim? She thinks MU4 is kind of a development dream category. It allows so much profit on high priced, high density, wood framed luxury apartments where so many of the costs are associated. These costs are externalized onto local citizens. Creating MU4 has not led to vibrant or inclusive village centers but to evictions, closure of small businesses, demolitions, anguish and strife. Thriving Newtonville is being demolished right now. MU4 is replacing the commercial tax base with high density, residential, at a

time when we are in more than a billion dollars in debt. It cannot be justified. The people who say you have to build high density housing make no sense. This is property speculation; it is not about affordable housing and if you didn't read the article in which Mr. Korff referred to us as the meat on the bone, I urge you to do so because we deserve better.

Jessica O'Rourke, 305 Albemarle Road said the conclusion she draws is that public input about the measures that are proposed tonight will go on in parallel with the process of issuing permits to developers to build along Washington Street and it would seem to be not the right order. Those two should be sequential, rather than parallel. The voters in the past approved a non-binding ballot initiative to require public input for city owned, tax payer owned land that was surplus and sold to developers and my understanding is that process is going on now for West Newton and taking public input on selling the park and the ground around Police Headquarters has not taken place and it would seem to be against the ballot initiative and the request passed by voters in that initiative.

Tony, 305 Albemarle Road said he was there because he thinks the Councilors all look pretty bad. Someone just made the comment, "that you don't have to approve everything this developer has asked" but that is what you do and he is not holding his breath that the Council is not going to do that every time. He thinks a moratorium is just a good beginning for how you should be looking at this. Permits should be incredibly rare, especially when they are opposed. One after the other is approved.

Virginia, 27 Taft, West Newton is encouraging the Committee to support the amendments, all three of them. One of the big things that she has a problem with is she sees no objectives that have metrics and numbers with them. She asked this of the Hello Washington people and they could not give her what was their vision and objectives were. Once you get objectives, you can make the plan but until you have objectives you cannot really make a plan to achieve anything. The second thing is the Police Station. Washington Street has two entrances and exits to the Pike. One reason we see low violence is because of the visibility of the Police Station. She doesn't understand the objective of moving the Police Station other than wanting a new building. Villages should have more voice on what is being done on Washington Street than the other villages. She doesn't hear anyone talking about developing Route 9 to achieve some of these objectives and she thinks that is another opportunity. She is not against building, not against advancing the cause, and interested in having the villages have their character and maintain their opportunities.

Mary, said she was told recently by someone that what Newton was looking at as low income would be considered \$80,000 and less which I think is a nice income. What about the people that live in Nonantum, and surrounding areas, seniors, disabled, people on fixed income who do not meet those requirements of \$80,000 or less? She is one of those people. She would like to make more money than she makes, for sure. She did not think the Councilors were taking into consideration the low and moderate income people and families and did not think they are thinking of the community as a whole. The villages are beautiful, and she agree that there could be some type of changes but everyone needs to be spoken to first. Nonantum is more crowded. Newtonville is crowded. We need to discuss the marijuana dispensary; how does everyone feels

about that? She is opposed to that. We are not thinking about the integrity of our city. What about people like me, what about our seniors? The schools are overcrowded

Opposed to Docket Items

Jini Fairley, ADA Coordinator, City of Newton, said she works everyday with people with disabilities and those who are aging who are acquiring age-related disabilities and many are of them are searching for accessible and affordable housing. Whenever there are restrictions on development, it eliminates more and more appropriate units. She also explained that more businesses need to be accessible. She submitted written comments as well, which are attached.

Lois Levin, 407 Chestnut St, comments attached.

Michael Scott, Nutter McLennen and Fish, representing Mark Development, comments attached.

Marcia Johnson, 39 Bemis Street said that she was opposed to these proposals. The City needs to do a better job of planning for the future, creating housing opportunities, supporting the village centers in the e-commerce economy and thinking progressively about transit-oriented development. Not everyone agrees with that, but the approach of this moratorium could be seen as an abdication of the Council's obligation to tackle those tough issues. The City is in the position it is because it has been slow to translate the concepts from the Comprehensive Plan into zoning standards and to see that the current economic climate makes Newton an attractive place to live for a diverse set of people. She can only think the moratorium on projects on Washington Street and limits on MU4 projects is designed to stop change, not take time for a more thoughtful planning process. Many of the existing zoning tools are clunky but they can work to make sure the city gets what it needs from the biggest project proposals. She can almost guarantee that a moratorium and limitations take away any incentive to move quickly to plan for growth and development and slows down the much needed Washington St. planning initiative. Having diverse sets of opinions is fair, but not changing at all is not an option. She urged the Committee to vote against these measures. Keeping them in Committee could have a chilling effect on the ability to think proactively about the future.

Jane Franz, 12 Glastonbury Oval said she urged the Committee to maintain the MU4 district. Removing an entire district to address a concern occurring at a specific moment in time is the wrong reason to abandon any policy or ordinance that may adversely affect the city in the years to come. Making such a drastic action is like throwing out the baby with the bathwater. She urges the City Council, Mayor and School Committee to address the specific concerns of those whose daily lives will be affected by various developments, as has been standard practice in the past. This will provide the city with the flexibility to address changes in demographics, transportation, commercial interests, etc, Removing this district will tie the hands of future City Councils for years to come. Years ago, there were small businesses in Newtonville and they do not exist now. Internet access in a coffee shop was not on the radar 20 years ago. Ten years ago, no one was concerned about where the generation of aging baby boomers would live. With this in mind, she urged the Council to resolve the development issues in a way that does not jeopardize progress and the possibility of changes that are in the city's best interest.

Andrea Steenstrup, 21 Kimmel Terrace said if there was interest in freezing time, we could go back to when there was no Mass Pike and Newtonville was not split in two and there was a beautiful train station. That is not an option – we need to look forward, not backwards and progress with the world. Instead of fighting development, let's plan for it and let's be active and help shape it. Why fight to hold onto some vacant car dealers and other dilapidated one-story businesses. We have more opportunity to put more affordable and market rate housing near transportation, where it needs to be. If train ridership increases significantly, the train schedule could improve. If we work with developers we could work for a goal for a new train station. Look what happened with Boston Landing. That would improve life for Newtonville businesses and residents. This is the kind of forward-thinking we need to survive in this economy. Putting a moratorium on development to keep things as they are forever is stagnating and not the Newton she wants to live in. Newtonville and Washington Street are in her backyard and she wants to see deliberate, sensible planning. One co-docketer of the amendment has declared repeatedly that they do not meet with developers. How can you plan for the future without a seat at the table. She asked the Committee to vote against these items and make Newton a better place to live and let's not go backwards.

Sue Flicop, 145 Florence Street said she is speaking on her own behalf and not on behalf of the League of Women Voters. When she hears the words moratorium or ban she is concerned because they could lead to unintended consequences. A moratorium would really need to be thought through and it may not be necessary if it is directed at just two developments. She did not feel this was a good way to develop policy. The new Mayor is starting a process to work with a collaborative of people to develop a plan. That is the way to move the planning process forward. Constantly having a yes group and a no group and trying to get more numbers for each, is not a good effective discussion. She feels the best way to go forward is to let the Mayoral process continue and to reject these docket items.

Tamara Bliss, 9 Lewis Street, comments attached.

Bryan Barash, 161 Lowell Ave is opposed to these proposals. They feel like a blunt instrument to address zoning when what is needed is fine tuning. If we want the City to develop the way we can it to and assure resident buy-in, we should support the Mayor's Washington Street Visioning process and a robust community conversation around zoning reform. We do not need a blanket moratorium or to remove zoning classifications that are working, at least in some places. More affordable housing is needed. He has moved friends from the City who can't afford to live in Newton anymore. He would like to move forward as a community to decide how the City is shaped, together.

Jerry Reilly, 12 Spring Street said he is alarmed by what the amendments represent for the process. As he understands the history, it goes back 10 years when the MU4 zone was created with a nearly unanimous vote of the City Council and much work prior to that. The Orr Block project received a special permit from the City Council as well. That project was approved and all the other projects in the works on Washington Street perhaps should not be rushed into, however, the Council needs

to give explicit approval for those to move forward so there is control. As far as he can see, this is not about those projects, but it is to stop the projects that have already been approved and if that is the case it is a horrible way to move through this process.

Linda Brennan, 28 Orchard Avenue said she has lived in Newton for 43 years and she thanked everyone who participated in the Accessory apartment ordinance. She urged everyone to keep moving forward. This City cannot not stop and standstill in time. She teaches at Lesley University with young adults with severe disabilities. She deals with teachers and professors who can no longer live in Newton as well as nurses, doctors, firemen, police and families with handicapped children. This project will not meet all of our needs but it will meet some. The community needs to come together ethically and not have developers come in here and spend money to then come to a standstill. We are hurting ourselves by this behavior. Offering city and state workers should be able to live here. New construction offers environmentally friendly homes. It does not use lead paint or pipes, asbestos, and is energy efficient. This is a liberal and concerned community and we have people who need places to live. Thirty to fifty years ago we had teachers, nurses, doctors, professors living on the same street and that is no longer the case. We cannot turn our backs on people because at one point in our lives, someone helped us.

John Pelletier, 9 Central Ave said he lives a block off Washington Street and he and his wife have rented in Newtonville for the past 6 years. He is opposed to all three proposals. Limiting residential in business districts is crazy because we need people in the villages to shop at the businesses. The concerns in traffic are real. He bikes everywhere but for many people it is a major concern. Having housing in village centers is important since transportation has moved to the top greenhouse gas emission for the state of Massachusetts. Why would the City want to limit a tool in its toolbox by eliminating MU4. It was designed for very specific reasons and is not everywhere in the City. It is appropriate at the Newtonville site, but many not be appropriate elsewhere but it is built to be flexible. He can appreciate the idea of the moratorium but the existing special permit process and other reviews are more than enough control. There was vigorous debate on these projects and the same will happen with projects coming forward.

Rob Gifford, 41 Oxford Road, comments attached.

Marian Knapp, 250 Hammond Pond Parkway said she was strongly opposed to the proposed amendments. She emphasized that imposing a moratorium is that is slows down the process to provide housing for those who desperately need it. The City is down thousands of units that are needed for those who want to downsize as they reach their 60s. Delaying the process only makes this worse.

Jed, 83 Pembroke Street. This zoning proposal is just the kind of thing that we in the public and the Council has railed against for years because it is ill conceived, it is not based on any data and it is a knee jerk reaction to specific projects. It goes against the comprehensive plan; it goes against thezoning, both of which have been well thought out, planned, vetted, discussed, amended and voted on by the Council. We need to stop doing this. We need to base our decisions on the

planning that has gone before. We have mechanisms in place in order look at these projects individually, and revise them as we want. I urge the Council not to vote for these amendments.

Lynne Weisberg, 5 Alden Street. urged votes against these three Board Orders. First, moratoriums for this sort of thing are not good planning techniques. Every single project has to get approved by the City Council. In those six years there have been two projects that have gotten that designation. That is not rushing things through without adequate consideration. You all know how long it took for Austin Street to finally be approved; over seven years. Likewise Washington Place was not passed in a flash of a moment. There is a planning process that has been called, "Hello Washington Street" that will look at what is sensible planning in advance for the Washington Street corridor. To the extent that people have said that what is planned by the developer who owns a lot of property on Washington Street is that every single parcel would be a tall building. Some have referred to them as sky scrapers. That is not what he is planning and even if it were just because he would seek your approval doesn't mean that you have to give it. These are ill conceived ideas and should be voted down tonight.

Marcia Cooper, 170 Evelyn Road. Green Newton is an environmental group and we understand how closely Land Use and Development are intertwined with environmental issues. That is why we support the concept of smart growth which encourages more development and Newton's walkable village centers which are served by public transportation. Environmental quality is profoundly affected by the way cities are developed. Our new development is located near public transportation, village centers, resident's needs are easily met by walking to shops, restaurants, and public transportation. It is more likely to be utilized for community and walking to school and those kinds of things. Other important environmental improvements like relying on renewable energy are generally much easier to achieve when building denser housing and mixed use housing. When you think of solar and green power, the years it has taken to put wind power along the Massachusetts coast, you don't want to keep delaying six years to approve Austin Street and Washington Street.

Stephanie said having MU4 as a possible designation does not mean any development can set up an MU4. I have to believe the Councilors and Committees have the interest of Newton at heart and do the calculation. One of the purposes of MU4 is to make it possible for retail stores to have customers because by having people living near the stores they are able to buy from the stores and with that basic purpose in mind. It is very important to have more commercial development, but we cannot just do that without people who would be customers in the area. She did not know why people think that will disrupt the balance and we have to pay for schools without people getting taxes from the commercial area to pay for the schools. I am opposed to putting in the moratorium. I think we should rely on the Planning Committees. I do want to see more data. You can't set up a transit if no one is living there.

#268-18 Submission of the FY19 Annual Action Plan to HUD

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting City Council authorization to submit the FY19 Annual Action Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD) for the City of Newton Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) funds and the WestMetro HOME Consortium.

Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)

Note: Rachel Powers, Community Development Programs Manager joined the Committee. This item was last discussed at the May 14th Committee meeting and there had been some confusion over the City's housing goals in the Annual Action Plan that was to be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Ms. Powers explained that there are currently no identified housing projects. Some projects were referred to in the Action Plan that are being initiated by the City, but money has been allocated for those projects. Changes were made to the draft for clarification and a redline version was included in the Planning Memo that was attached the agenda. Those changes may be found at:

<http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/90015/05-29-18%20Planning%20Memo%20#268-18.pdf>

The Committee thanked Ms. Powers for the edits, remarking that they were done thoughtfully and well.

Councilor Danberg moved approval and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

#299-18 Appointment of Kelley Brown to the Planning & Development Board

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing KELLEY BROWN, 457 Waltham Street, West Newton, as a full member of the PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD for a term to expire February 1, 2019.

Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 5-0-1 (Kalis abstaining; Baker not voting)

Note: Kelley Brown joined the Committee. He explained that he has lived in Newton for 19 years and has not been engaged in the community as a volunteer since his children were in school. He has worked in planning his entire professional life and felt his experience could be helpful. Mr. Kelley is an institutional planner and works on behalf of MIT to help move their projects forward. He is also involved in transportation and open space planning around the campus. He felt the Planning & Development Board would be a great fit.

A Councilor asked about the Dudley Square project Mr. Kelley had worked on in Boston. He said it rose from community organizing and it centered on a very de-populated area of the city with many demolished buildings. The community worked against further ruination of the area that had come about through the dumping of construction debris, etc. in lots in the neighborhood. They decided they needed a community plan instead of fighting each fight separately. The Boston Redevelopment Authority gave the community group eminent domain authority. He also assisted through applying and receiving a grant and helping them best utilize their CDBG funds.

Councilor Brousal-Glaser moved approval. Councilor Kalis explained that he would be abstaining because there are going to be more appointments to the Board and wants to better understand

the entire make-up of the membership. He expects to vote in favor at the full City Council after getting that information. The Committee voted in favor 5-0-1 with Councilor Kalis abstaining.

#256-18 Appointment of Jennifer Bentley to Newton Historical Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing JENNIFER BENTLEY, 168 Mount Vernon Street, West Newton, as an at-large alternate member of the NEWTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION for a term to expire May 31, 2021. (60 days: July 6, 2018)

Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)

Note: Jennifer Bentley joined the Committee and said as a longtime resident, she would like to contribute to the community. She holds a graduate degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania and is in love with the history and culture here. Her experience also lies in architecture and construction and she has been in the industry for over 20 years. She also understands the need to balance homeowner's needs with preserving historic integrity and culture. She believes her expertise would be valuable to the Commission.

Councilor Danberg moved approval and the Committee voted in favor, unanimously.

#257-18 Appointment of Deborah Budd to the Newton Historical Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing DEBORAH BUDD, 224 Jackson Street, Newton Centre, as a realtor alternate member of the NEWTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION for a term to expire May 31, 2021. (60 days: July 6, 2018)

Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)

Note: Deborah Budd joined the Committee. She noted that she has lived in Newton since 1955 and has been a realtor since 2003 and was a teacher in Newton prior to that. She is very involved with issues related to the Historical Commission in her role as a broker. She said she understands very well the need to preserve the historic gems in Newton while allowing people to live modern lives.

A Councilor noted that Ms. Budd's experience in sales would be helpful on the Commission. At times, it would be necessary to really sell the idea of working with an historic home rather than demolishing it.

Councilor Danberg moved approval and the Committee voted in favor, unanimously.

#303-18 Appointment of Debora Jackson to the Economic Development Commission

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing DEBORA JACKSON, 4 Pine Meadow Drive, Auburndale, to the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION for a term to expire May 14, 2021.

Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)

Note: Debora Jackson joined the Committee. She noted that she brings experience from many different facets of her life, which would be beneficial to the EDC. She is an entrepreneur and

started her career as a software developer and worked with start-ups; she is a two time alumna of Worcester Polytechnic (WPI) and is a member of the Board of Trustees as well. She cares very much about innovation and having that opportunity in the City; she is an ordained member of the clergy and is a community builder who cares about bringing diversity and a different voice to economic development; and she is a longtime resident and is very invested in the City.

A Committee member asked if Rev. Jackson had any ideas to expand the Innovation Center. She said she was very interested in expanding the Center and is doing something similar at WPI.

Councilor Krintzman moved approval and the Committee voted in favor, unanimously.

#304-18 Appointment of Sarah Rahman to the Economic Development Commission
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing SARAH RAHMAN, 33 Staniford Street, Newton, as a member of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION for a term to expire May 14, 2021.

Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)

Note: Ms. Rahman joined the Committee. She explained that she has been interested in economic development for a long time and has consumed the bulk of her professional career. She works in this field at the state level and has worked on supporting innovation districts and advancing entrepreneurship. On the local level, she worked in Cambridge in the commercial districts. On the federal level, she was in a think tank in Washington DC and they looked across the country on how communities were implementing plans for their economic goals. Economic development falls at the crossroads of so many issues in the city like transportation, housing, demographics, workforce etc. There is never a single solution and there is always room for new ideas. It is also meaningful to quality of life and vitality to cities and towns.

The City is at an exciting juncture for economic development as it works on the N2 corridor and has an innovation center. She feels her experience along with her interest would make the EDC a great match for her.

Councilor Krintzman moved approval and the Committee voted in favor to approve Ms. Rahman's appointment, unanimously.

#305-18 Appointment of Beth Nicklas to the Economic Development Commission
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing BETH NICKLAS, 100 Algonquin Road, Chestnut Hill, as a member of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION for a term to expire May 14, 2021.

Action: Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)

Note: Beth Nicklas joined the Committee. She explained that she has been working with the Massachusetts Life Science Center relative to economic development. There has been a renaissance in Boston and Cambridge in that industry and she wants to bring her expertise to her

own City. She started her career working as a real estate finance attorney in Boston, representing developers and banks. She has many ideas about raising the tax base to support all the wonderful services in the City.

A Councilor asked about the small village centers and how those can be kept vital. Ms. Nicklas noted that in her current position, she has worked on early stage and startup companies through some state bond dollars. This attracts entrepreneurs and adds vitality. She would need to look closer at particular village centers and perhaps add maker-spaces, which brings excitement to an area. Parking is a major issue that needs to be dealt with in order to support businesses.

A Councilor said she would like to speak with Ms. Nicklas about expanding business recycling and what responsibilities businesses should have for solid waste and recycling. Ms. Nicklas said she would look forward to that conversation.

Councilor Kalis moved approval and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

#306-18 **Appointment of Matt Segneri to the Economic Development Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing MATT SEGNERI, 45 Cedar Street, Newton Centre, as a member of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION for a term to expire May 14, 2021.

Action: **Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)**

Note: Matt Segneri joined the Committee. He explained that he has worked with Mayor Menino in Boston and Mayor Bloomberg in New York over the last 10 years. At Harvard Business School, he leads a center on public/private non-profit leaders working together to solve big challenges in economics, education, income equality, etc. His most passionate issue in cities is business strategy. They walked through the districts and spoke to all the business owners to understand their needs and that is an important element for building a resilient economy. Doing the same in Newton is necessary so that large and small businesses in the City have a fair chance to thrive. Mr. Segneri said that Newton has such an engaged citizenry as well as elected officials and it is a pleasure to be here.

The Chair said she would like him and the EDC to think about the rising rents for businesses in the village centers.

Councilor Kalis moved approval and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

#307-18 **Re-appointment of Charles Tanowitz to the Economic Development Commission**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR re-appointing CHARLES TANOWITZ, 51 Harding Street, West, Newton, as a member of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION for a term to expire May 14, 2021.

Action: **Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)**

Note: The Committee voted in favor to approved Mr. Tanowitz's re-appointment unanimously.

#308-18 Re-appointment of Jeremy Freid to the Economic Development Commission
HER HONOR THE MAYOR re-appointing JEREMY FREID, 35 Cotton Street, Newton, as
a member of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION for a term to expire May
14, 2021.

Action: **Zoning & Planning Approved 6-0 (Baker not voting)**

Note: The Committee voted to approve Mr. Freid's re-appointment unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan S. Albright, Chair

David A. Olson

From: James Pacheco <james@pacheco.net>
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2018 4:59 PM
To: Maria Scibelli Greenberg; Allan Ciccone Jr.; Alison M. Leary; Emily Norton; Jake Auchincloss; Susan Albright; Barbara Brousal-Glaser; James R. Cote; Andrea W. Kelley; Christopher J. Markiewicz; Leonard J. Gentile; Joshua Krintzman; John Rice; Andreae Downs; Deborah J. Crossley; Brenda Noel; Gregory R. Schwartz; Victoria Danberg; R. Lisle Baker; Marc C. Laredo; Rebecca Walker Grossman; Cheryl Lappin; Richard Lipof; David Kalis
Cc: Ruthanne Fuller; David A. Olson
Subject: My response #201-18, #202-18, #203-18

I am writing in support of #201-18, #202-18 and #203-18

Good Evening chairman, council members, fellow Newtonites and concerned parties.

My name is James Pacheco. I reside in Newton Highlands on Circuit Ave

I think that we may all believe the temporary parking scheme we have developed while MU4 Austin Street is in construction Newtonville is adequate. Personally, I find it terrible. But after completion of the construction of Austin Street, I also think we should not discontinue this parking/shuttle scheme to Newton Corner, since the parking issues will be major concern for a long-time. We desperately need alternative means of transportation in Newton.

We need to have an extensive bikeway transportation scheme throughout Newton, where cyclists don't have to fear the horrors of vanishing bike lanes and bad auto drivers. We need to re-design all our bridges with side-extensions for these bikeways. I believe this transportation mode will greatly reduce our environmental impact. We need to encourage our neighboring cities and towns to join us in this effort.

Now, I understand we think we need to replace the vanishing affordable housing that is being phased out with the sunset agreements our former mayors and councilors allowed some thirty years ago. But, now we need a plan that accounts for the city's ability to provide an adequate infrastructure that can accommodate these new developments. A plan that shows the alternative transportation opportunities, a plan that shows the ability of our schools to absorb the population growth with this higher density that is currently occurring and being proposed, and a plan that shows the financial support for this future growth for reclaiming affordable residents. So that is why I believe we need a moratorium on MU4 construction – we are still in a discovery phase of what we have and what might be able to do – Basically, we don't have an approved documented plan that we can confidently say that "this is where we are going". Our current ordinances are so inadequate and somewhat confusing the developers appear to be able to build whatever they push through our councilors' permitting process. Lets outlaw devil strip options for all MU4 developers, - What a gross abuse of abutters' rights.

We appear to be allowing developers to stuff large housing structures in city areas where the roadways are totally inadequate. – In particle, this clearly visible around the MU4 Court Street development. We need to change some streets into one ways, especially around Cabot Ice Cream.– Two way traffic with parked cars on both sides on narrow streets – It is ridiculous and unsafe. We have a right to require higher standards for our safety and our health around these large MU4 structures and housing complexes.

There are health hazardous conditions of housing nears high traffic roadways [in particular the Pike and Route 9] – Why allow high density MU4 housing in an un-health environment. Any doubt about this –just google this Tufts studies on this subject. We have a right to require higher standards for our safety and our health in these large MU4 structures.

The MU-4 light weight wooded structures are fire-hazards both during construction and pose a serious issue to all due to the limitations of what can be done once a fire does start in these structures – They explode like match-boxes. The existing Newton apartment complexes are very poorly designed with minimum fire protection, minimum insulation and minimum sound insulation. We need higher standards than the minimum allowable by code. It is ridiculous to think that these current standards are adequate. We have a right to require higher standards for our safety and our health.

Please vote Yes on all three docket items: #201-18, #202-18 and #203-18

Thank you for listening my concerns.

Respectfully,
James Pacheco
48 Circuit Ave.
Newton, MA 02461-1603

☎ Work-Home: 617-244-8029

✉ E-mail: James@Pacheco.net

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ZAP Public Hearing Testimony

From Jini Fairley, City of Newton ADA/Section 504 Coordinator

May 29, 2018

Discussion Items:

201-18

On behalf of persons with disabilities who are in need of accessible and affordable housing, I am opposed to any zoning amendment that would limit the residential portion of a project to 50% in a business zone. Any limitations of residential development are limiting accessibility in housing, since new construction of 4 or more dwelling units must be accessible. In addition, since the unemployment rate for job seekers with disabilities is more than twice the able-bodied job seeker, any limitation placed on the development of residential projects also limits the affordability of these residences.

202-18:

On behalf of persons with disabilities searching for accessible and affordable housing in a mixed use environment, I am opposed to any changes to the MU4 zoning district, including elimination of MU4 or a 2 year moratorium, as mixed use developments that provide both businesses and residences will produce more accessible and affordable dwelling units in the city, and a model for the future.

203-18:

On behalf of persons with disabilities seeking accessible businesses and housing, I am opposed to any moratorium on commercial and residential development along the Washington corridor, as this would also be a moratorium on providing accessibility in both commercial properties and in housing. So many of our businesses are inaccessible, located in old buildings before there were any accessibility laws, and only in new construction can residents and visitors to Newton be assured that they will find accessible businesses and housing. In addition a moratorium on any development in this part of Newton also limits the additional affordability in housing that this city needs to provide, both for low income and persons with disabilities.

Dear City Councilor,

My wife and I purchased our first home in 1977, walking distance to the Riverside line, enabling us to have a home clinical office, to commute easily to hospitals, universities and schools where we worked, and to offer living space for visiting scholars, students and foreign guests.

We both come from Brookline; I've lived in Cambridge; we've both lived in NYC. We value dense housing and love diversity, including economic diversity. We supported the creation of affordable transit-oriented housing at 2 sites near our Waban home; sadly, that hasn't happened.

Two weeks ago we received a letter, from a Newton resident we don't know, that echoed language from the NVA website slanderous to developers and their supporters. He said that Newton's "housing problem" is caused by people who occupy large plots of land in parts of the city where developers are not proposing projects. He added up the living spaces of our house and those of 3 developers, divided by 4 to determine the average number of people we could accommodate, and compared that with the number of residents listed for these properties in the Assessor's database. No matter that what you do with space matters more than square footage. He noted that his house and a neighbor's house, located near proposed development, average a smaller space per resident than ours. Then came the quantum leap: developers and their supporters are all NIMBYs proposing to "densify areas of Newton where they don't live". So the low density of large homes is the reason we have a housing problem in Newton! Excuse me? Is he trying to help us make it easier to create auxiliary apartments in large homes? The letter ends with lines from a Vietnam-era Phil Ochs song mocking liberals (presumably to mock us).

I am sharing this because those proposing to limit residential development in business zones, eliminate Mixed Use 4 development, and place a moratorium on zoning changes along Washington Street are emboldening people like this letter writer. Efforts to stop creating affordable transit-oriented housing in Newton are disturbing to those of us deeply worried about our planet's profound climate crisis and the growing economic disparities in the US. Working with Engine 6, Livable Newton, Green Newton, Bike Newton and other groups to create affordable transit-oriented housing asap, we want to enable more young people to move here, old people to stay here, to get cars off the road, improve public transit, preserve and expand natural areas, shift to 100% renewable energy and make our city environmentally sustainable. And while I have your ear, I'll add that we should fully support building the NorthSouthRailLink to integrate Boston's two T systems before we experience total gridlock.

The 3 amendments being proposed throw a curve ball and should not be approved. Let's all work together to create much needed change in Newton.

Lois A Levin
497 Chestnut St.
Waban

#201-18: Require any development in a business zone limit the residential portion of the project to no more than 50% of the total development

- Over the last 10 years, each time Newton studies housing, it concludes that more needs to be done to increase the housing stock, particularly affordable housing.
 - The 2007 Newton Comprehensive Plan states: “We need to encourage retention of existing housing and development of new housing... that increases the City’s affordable housing stock, or that further enhances the existing character and diversity of housing types.”;
 - A similar conclusion was reached by the Newton Zoning Reform Group’s 2011 Final Report. It states that: “Vibrant village centers are the heart of Newton’s quality of life. Over the decades... Newton’s village commercial centers **have lost** density and key services as larger structures have been replaced with single-story retail buildings or parking lots and as offices have replaced upper-story residences.

- Business districts, which are largely located along major roadways in Newton, in village centers, and proximate to public transit, are the ideal location for additional residential development.

- By limiting the residential portion of a project and the residential density, Newton will not be able achieve its housing goals.

- Punctuating this point, the Zoning Reform Group advocated for an audit of Newton’s zoning regulations “to identify **barriers to** and **incentives for** the creation of more affordable housing.”
 - This proposed zoning amendment is very type of barrier to the creation of affordable housing that the Zoning Reform Group recommended eliminating.

- Finally, the City Council already has a great deal of control over the development of mixed use buildings in the business district per Section 4-2 of the Zoning Ordinance, which requires a special permit from the City Council for “any development in the business districts of 20,000 square feet or more of new gross floor area.”

#202-18: Eliminate MU4 zone, reduce dimensional controls in MU4 zone, adopt a moratorium on new MU4 development for 2 years, or any combination of these items

- The MU4 zone was established in 2012. The stated intent was to “encourage development for **fosters compact, pedestrian-oriented villages**,” “allow **sufficient density and intensity** to promote a lively pedestrian environment, public transit, and variety of businesses that serve the needs of the community” and to “expand the diversity of housing options available in the City.”
 - Increased density is a key component to the MU4 and reducing height and FAR will frustrate the purpose of the zone.
- The two MU4 districts adopted to date have **diversified Newton’s housing stock**, with **23 affordable units** projected at **Austin Street** and **at least 35 affordable/workforce units** projected at **Washington Place**.
 - The MU4 district has been a very effective method of adding to diversifying Newton’s housing stock.
- Finally, a further restrictions on or an elimination of the MU4 is not needed as the MU4 rezoning and the required special permit process are lengthy and already give the City Council a great deal of control over such developments.
 - Both of the existing MU4 districts were only established after over a year of study and comment before the City Council.
 - MU4 Districts are not part of Zoning Map and can only be included in Zoning Map by Petition, the approval of which is legislative in nature, completely within the discretion of the City Council.

#203-18: Immediate moratorium on any zone changes and/or construction/development along both sides of Washington Street, including abutting properties, between Commonwealth Avenue and Centre Street, until the earlier of completion of Zoning Redesign and the proposed “actionable plan for the Washington Street Corridor” are completed or September 30, 2019

- Again, this petition is contrary to the Zoning Reform Group’s Report, which, highlights Washington Street as one of Newton’s commercial corridors, along with Needham Street and Boylston Street, as having **significant potential for new development or redevelopment**.
- This moratorium also runs counter to the findings and recommendations by the City’s consultant, RKG, that it hired in 2016 to assist with creating a housing strategy.
 - The City of Newton’s 2016 housing Needs Analysis and Strategic Recommendations identify many different portions of Washington Street as “**Transformation Zones**” and “**Housing Opportunity Corridors**” in Wards 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- RKG notes that escalating housing values and limited housing diversity are already problems in Newton.
- RKG makes the following important findings:
 1. That “[g]rowth projections reveal affordability will continue to diminish”
 2. That the “imbalance of demand and supply is so great”... that “new construction” will be necessary to ensure some level of price diversity in Newton
 3. That there is a limited number of units under consideration in Newton and resistance to new construction is substantial, and
 4. That the continued increase in demand will further drive prices higher.
- To these points, RKG states that a ‘do nothing’ position by the City will only make matters worse.
 - I would suggest that this moratorium is an example of that “do nothing” approach
 - We are pleased that Newton is undertaking a study of Washington Street, but there is **no** need for a moratorium as Newton has an:
 - immediate need for more housing supply and
 - it already has zoning tools that can be used.
- There is also a matter of fairness and equity.
 - It is fundamentally unfair to have these petitions apply to projects that have already completed lengthy approval processes and received special permits.
 - Very significant amounts of time and money have been spent obtaining entitlements for these projects.

- Further, if these projects are not clearly exempt from this proposal, the uncertainty of whether they are subject to such provisions, will affect the ability to attract financing.
 - Banks and equity investors are risk averse, and if uncertainty exists, adequate financing will NOT be available.
- This chilling affect will exist even while these petitions are pending.
- We ask that there not be undue delay in deciding these matters, and at the very least – existing, approved projects be expressly excluded from each of the three petitions.

Dear councilors:

I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to the three zoning amendments proposed by councilors Gentile, Markiewitz, and Cote. These amendments ignore good planning and zoning practices.

The Council recently voted to launch an innovative, pro-active approach to development in Newton by initiating the Hello Washington Street planning process. You also have provided opportunities for Newton citizens to engage in the planning for the Needham Street Vision plan. These citizen engagement projects will provide opportunities for all Newton residents to express their opinions on the future of the Washington Street corridor and Needham Street. The end result will be new zoning for these important parts of our City. It will also provide an opportunity for Newton citizens to engage in creating the type of zoning they feel will enhance our community for the coming decades.

These amendments are using this process as an excuse to make drastic changes to our current zoning with little or no opportunity for citizen input.

Please vote against all three amendments.

Here are my thoughts on why you should vote against each of these amendments.

#201-18 Zoning amendment to limit residential portion of business zone developments

Newton's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes combining residential and commercial development, which is considered a sound planning practice. This amendment will limit development to two stories. Because of Newton's extremely high land prices, this amendment will make it financially unfeasible to build developments that combine housing and commercial development. This will have a negative impact on city finances and limit opportunities for housing for current Newton residents who want to downsize and for our public employees and those who work for our local businesses to find housing in Newton.

#202-18 Zoning amendment to Mixed Used 4 district.

The Newton City Council spent a year crafting the MU4 district to meet Newton's need for vibrant village centers and more housing. Twenty-three aldermen approved this new zone several years ago. They realized that our zoning laws were outdated and needed to provide options to meet the business and housing needs of the 21st century.

Through the planning processes created for Needham Street and for the Washington Street corridor, Newton residents will have an opportunity to determine whether to keep or make changes to the MU4 district. It's time to permit Newton residents to have input into our zoning laws.

#203-18 Zoning amendment for moratorium on zone changes/construction on Washington St

This amendment would take away the property rights of all Washington Street property owners until the completion of the new zoning for the Washington Street corridor.

The City Council can make decisions on any development that is proposed prior to the completion of the new zoning plan. This will enable property owners to make changes to their property, such as enlarging a kitchen, without waiting until the Washington Street is approved.

Let's give the community planning process time to create a vision for the type of zoning we want. **Please vote NO for each of these amendments.**

Regards, Tamara J. Bliss

Tamara J. Bliss
9 Lewis Street
Newton, MA 02458

Dear City Councilors,

I am urging you to reject docket items 201-18, 202-18 and 203-18, which would arbitrarily limit residential development in business zones, eliminate MU-4 zoning and place a moratorium on development in the Washington Street corridor. These proposed amendments run counter to best practices for zoning and planning and would effectively freeze the creation of new, much needed rental housing and mixed-use development in our village centers.

We moved to Newton in 1986, raised and educated our children here. We treasure the City's neighborhoods, schools and community spirit. However, we are frustrated by the stagnation in Newton's land use, resulting in:

1. Sky-rocketing median home prices (currently over \$1 million) and a severe shortage of modern rental stock. This is the result of the fact that from 2000-2016, Newton created only 22 net new housing units per year. There are few good options for our kids to move back into the community and even fewer options for seniors who would like to downsize from their homes.
2. An older and wealthier demographic profile. The only Newton households that are growing are over 45 years old and earning over \$150,000 per year.
3. A flat-lined commercial tax base with crumbling streets, sidewalks and public improvements. Many of the residential and commercial buildings in our City are antiquated and can't support modern and diverse uses that would serve to energize our village centers.

The proposed amendments would serve to freeze this very unsatisfactory status quo. So, I am urging you to vote "No," permitting the continuation of a thoughtful planning and development review process that will create new housing and revitalize our village centers and commercial corridors, while addressing the legitimate concerns of our community relative to traffic, density and school impact.

Thank you for your attention,

Robert Gifford
41 Oxford Road