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To: Newton Zoning Board of Appeals *ahenriquez@newtonma.gov*  
Newton City Council *citycouncil@newtonma.gov*

Re: Dunston East Development, Petition 09-19, Hearing on March 17, 2020

As a resident of Newton, as well as having worked on numerous real estate transactions involving for-profit and nonprofit developments, I am writing to voice my support in favor of Mark Development's application for a Comprehensive Permit in connection with its proposed mixed use development in the region bounded by Washington Street, Dunston Street, and Kempton Place.

I would start by stating that I reside on a street that is proximate to the newly erected Washington Place at the intersection of Washington and Walnut Streets. This project has been a major undertaking which presented significant logistical, design, and operational issues that would be highly challenging to even the most sophisticated of developers. Initially, I was skeptical that it would be effectuated in a manner that would be sensitive to its impact on the neighboring community in terms of congestion, noise, debris, and pedestrian and vehicular disruption, and that it would be done in a timely manner. I am pleased to say that these concerns were unwarranted, because the developer carried out the entire project in a professional manner that was highly respectful of the community with minimal noise and debris from the work site, little traffic dislocation, and it was performed with no discernable delays. This development will be the anchor for breathing new life into the commercial section of Newtonville, which has been stagnant for a number of years and may suffer further economic decline as a result of the Corona epidemic. This has demonstrated to me that Mark Development has the know-how, resources, vision, and commitment to carry out these large scale projects and I am confident that this, as well as their proposed development at Dunston East, will bring many benefits to the City of Newton.

With respect to Dunston East, based upon my aforementioned comments, I am confident that we can expect Mark Development to create another highly desirable mixed use project that will bring similar benefits to West Newton. Currently, that site is far from being put to its highest and best use and there is a great deal of potential that can be unlocked by allowing this project to proceed. It will bring in the sort of highly desirable apartments that are scarce in Newton, and more importantly, it will provide additional low income housing units that we have a moral and legal imperative to have in Newton. And the commercial component will inject vitality into the villages of Newtonville and West Newton that will make it a much more desirable area to live, work, and shop. Furthermore, Dunston East, like Washington Place, conforms to the Washington Street Vision, the benefits of which will accrue to all residents who live along or proximate to the Washington Street corridor.

From attending public meetings I can understand the reluctance of some residents to vote in favor of what they view as unbridled development, however, Dunston East and Washington Place are not unrestrained development. Rather, they are projects that have been well planned and designed with considerable input from the community and government agencies. I believe the developer has been very open to taking public feedback into consideration and has attempted to present a project that addresses many of these legitimate concerns. And from what I have heard, the developer continues to be open to listening to and addressing other genuine concerns to build a project that works for the community as a whole. On the other hand, I have heard opposition from certain groups that oppose development of even the most modest scale, however, I feel that sort of reflexive response does a disservice to the city, its residents and puts us at a disadvantage to other towns that are more forward thinking.

In conclusion, for the reasons stated above, as a resident of Newton with no personal interest in the matter, I urge you to vote in favor granting Mark Development's petition for the Comprehensive Permit.

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