

Linda M. Finucane

From: Theodore M. Hess Mahan
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 4:19 PM
To: Linda M. Finucane; Marc C. Laredo; Gregory J. Schwartz; Scott F. Lennon; Susan Albright; James R. Cote; John W. Harney; Deborah J. Crossley; Richard Lipof
Cc: Barbara Brousal-Glaser; Alexandra Ananth; Stephen Pantalone; Buchbinder, Stephen; Ouida C. M. Young
Subject: 979 Watertown Street

Dear Members of the Land Use Committee:

I will not be able to attend tonight's public hearing and working session this evening due to a death in the family and an early morning medical appointment which I must attend with another member of my family tomorrow morning.

My colleagues from Ward 3 and I have met with the petitioners and their counsel several times and reviewed the plans for the mini-mart and gas station at 979 Watertown Street, and I wholeheartedly support this application, subject only to reviewing any comments from the neighbors at the public hearing. In particular, I am satisfied that the proposed fence abutting the softball field on Eden Avenue and the other improvements and conditions that that petitioner has agreed to are sufficient to mitigate the impact of the project, including removal of excess signage.

In addition, I do not believe that the restoration of the landscaping along the border along the sidewalk is either necessary or desirable. For the past 18 years I have lived on Watertown Street a few blocks away from the gas station, used it regularly, and passed this station on my way to the commuter rail station daily and on the way to church every Sunday. Prior to being removed, the vegetative border next to the sidewalk was regularly run over by cars and gasoline trucks exiting and entering the station, and in that condition only detracted from its appearance.

Moreover, I believe that the fence along the CVS parking lot belongs to the owner of that building, and I would not support requiring that the petitioner erect another fence right next to it as a condition of the special permit. While not beautiful, the chain link fence next to the CVS parking lot is in good condition and need not be replaced. I have no strong feeling one way or the other on the enclosure for the dumpster, provided that it is easily accessible for pick up and will be screened from view from the street.

Finally, while I understand why it may be desirable from a pedestrian perspective to reduce the size of the curb cuts, I am concerned whether the gasoline trucks will just end up running over the curbs when exiting and entering the station, and would also not support requiring it as a condition. Again, I have observed cars, landscaping trucks (of which there are many from West Newton who visit this station on their way to work) and gasoline trucks exiting and entering that station for the past 18 years, and because of the dimensions of the lot and the street and the locations of the curb cuts, I think it will be difficult for trucks to make a left turn in or out if the curb cuts are reduced. The problem will only be exacerbated by cars parking or standing next to the curb in the additional space that would be created while picking up their takeout orders from Sweet Tomatoes or Shing Yee, or parking illegally and running into the bank or CVS on a "quick" errand.

As you may be aware, last Fall, the petitioner was originally issued a building permit in error and work on the project was stopped pending the grant of an amendment to the existing special permit. My colleagues and I have discussed it and we have no desire to further delay this project unnecessarily. I therefore hope that the Land Use committee will vote this petition out favorably tonight if at all possible.

Thank you. Please contact me if you have any questions.

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"Sunlight is said to be the best disinfectant." --Louis D. Brandeis