

Nadia Khan

From: David A. Olson
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 7:52 AM
To: citycouncil
Cc: Nadia Khan
Subject: Fw: Please forward today to all members of the City Council

From: elena wright
Sent: Sunday, February 12, 2017 4:40 PM
To: David A. Olson
Subject: Please forward today to all members of the City Council

To Newton Councilors who need to consider that Newton is a very desirable suburb because we have not succumbed to the temptations of the pro-density contingent who want to make Washington Street look like the urban renewal blocks on Harrison Avenue in Boston. All the arguments that **land use decisions should protect and improve on Newton's 1.5% Land Area Minimum 40B immunity are important, but what about the architectural character of our villages? That is also about to be lost.**

Excerpt below is from James Howard Kunstler's TED talk. His pictures of livable suburban centers include three story buildings (not four, five, or eight.) I agree with his views against suburban strip malls, big box stores, and soulless urban-style buildings. However, I don't agree that we will need mass bicycle riding. Fossil fuels will not run out before they are replaced by better, cleaner technologies.

“Probably the most significant public space failure in America, designed by the leading architects of the day, Harry Cobb and I.M. Pei: Boston City Hall Plaza. A public place so dismal that the winos don't even want to go there.

“This is the back of Boston City Hall, the most important, you know, significant civic building in Boston. And what is the message that is coming, what are the vocabularies and grammars that are coming, from this building and how is it informing us about who we are?

“This, in fact, would be a better building if we put mosaic portraits of Josef Stalin, Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein, and all the other great despots of the 20th century on the side of the building, because then we'd honestly be saying what the building is really communicating to us. You know, that it's a despotic building.”

What does he mean by despotic? He means high-handed, repressive, autocratic, and dictatorial. The opposite of democratic. That might be how you will be perceived if the giant, hideous, 4-5 story building replaces the Orr block. The developers should never have permission to build such a monstrosity next to an historic district . Don't be lulled into a fantasy that this kind of building will look like it belongs in our town centers. Years from now, Newton could be J.H. Kunstler's subject of ridicule.

