

Nadia Khan

From: David A. Olson
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2017 8:48 AM
To: citycouncil
Cc: Nadia Khan
Subject: FW: Objection to special permit for Washington Place

From: Jan Matlis [
Sent: Saturday, January 28, 2017 4:56 PM
To: David A. Olson
Subject: Objection to special permit for Washington Place

Hi Mr. Olson,

I heard you might be the right person to ask to forward an email to the City Council. Thanks very much.

I would like to try to sway the City Council members to vote against a special permit for Washington Place along Washington Street near the corner of Washington and Walnut streets.

First, I would like to say that I am very much in favor of affordable housing and a vibrant business area where I live in Newtonville. However, I would like to see both of those goals achieved without caving into the developer to get even more profit than he undoubtedly knows he can get without a special permit (or he wouldn't have bought all that land).

It is unfortunate that the development he has planned will be so massive and unvaried. I know you're probably given lovely pictures filled with sun, children on bicycles, and families taking the air. To get a dose of reality, you should walk by some of the really big developments that butt up against the street in our own community and in others. They're not filled with sun. Children don't go there to ride bicycles. And families keep away.

The pocket park that has been lauded as an amenity is laughable. People who don't live in big developments don't go into their interior courtyards. The developer needs a reasonable enough air shaft to convince people to buy his condominiums. That's all that park is.

The suggestion that the city should give up publicly owned street space to increase the setback of this massive project is also ludicrous. To achieve a setback, the developer should set back his buildings on his own land. I have never heard of the city giving away part of the public street to a little home owner in order to allow that home owner to build an even bigger building with an accessory apartment. That's not to say that the public street shouldn't be reconfigured, but it shouldn't be presented as part of the developer's setback plans.

I would ask you to remember that as well as having excellent schools and social services, some of the other wonderful things that make Newton a lovely place to live are fresh air, sun, and a sense of open space, even in its village centers. We've protected that through zoning. Once we give it away, it's gone forever. I can't believe the only way to get affordable housing is to let the really big fish do what they want with us.

Jan Matlis
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