

Nadia Khan

From: Alexandra Ananth
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2017 2:52 PM
To: TKates42@aol.com
Cc: Nadia Khan
Subject: RE: Orr Block - Comments

Hi Todd,

I'm not sure if the City Clerk responded to you but since you left me a voice message I wanted to let you know that your email was forwarded to the City Council.

Best,

Alexandra Ananth
 Chief Planner for Current Planning
 City of Newton Planning and Development Department
 617-796-1121

From:
Sent: Thursday, January 12, 2017 5:28 PM
To: David A. Olson
Cc: Alexandra Ananth
Subject: Orr Block - Comments

Dear City Councilors, Land Use Committee and Planning Department:

My name is Todd Kates; I live at 402 Newtonville Ave., Newtonville, 1/2 block down from Walnut St.

Over the last several months I have attended several of the hearings regarding the development of the Orr Block.

I have listened intently as residents from other parts of Newton and neighboring cities and towns have come to voice their support of the proposed project.

I have listened to the insults the residents of Newtonville have been called due to our lack of support of the project (NIMBY, lack of vision, etc.).

As someone who drives these roads daily, I wanted to send you my thoughts on the development of our village center.

I do not oppose the development of this area; in fact, it can only help the dated buildings and area.

New vitality will be wonderful, and as a person employed by an organization who creates housing for people with disabilities, I am excited about the prospect of more accessible housing. But I do not view this just as a housing issue. I believe more thoughtful consideration of how much density this area can absorb.

I disagree with the traffic studies that have been presented. We will not only have the 160+ apartments, but also the new apartments on Austin St. I stated at an earlier meeting that it can take me upwards of 20 minutes to drive from Newtonville Ave. to the high school and back during rush hour. With the addition of nearly 250 apartments, am I to believe that there will be no impact on traffic during key commute times? I frequently park behind the Orr Building now, and it is very difficult to exit the lot on to Walnut and Washington St. now. Am I to believe that the addition of 160 units (plus the units on Austin) are not going to make the traffic worse.

Also, many of us on Newtonville Ave. and Madison Ave. have noticed an increase in traffic as drivers use these streets as an alternate to the traffic of Washington St. My street is generally used as a parking lot for those not wishing to use the municipal lot; frequently, cars park in front of our driveways making it necessary for us to call the police. (A "no parking within 5 feet of a driveway" was posted on Madison Ave.; one should be placed on Newtonville Ave. as well.) (I write this letter on a day when someone parked in front of my driveway.)

I support smart growth, but I question the amount of growth we can absorb. With the MU4 being approved, will this be the precedent for the rest of Washington St.? Is there a plan for to determine how much density we can absorb?

I hope this is determined before future projects are considered.

Finally, I hope someone from the city reaches out to the businesses who are being forced to relocate or go out of business. While new development can be exciting, let's not forget the number of businesses who have been at the Orr site we will be losing.

Thank you,
Todd Kates