MOUNT VERNON
C O M P A N Y

February 24, 2017

Mayor Setti Warren
Newton City Council
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459-1449

Dear Mayor Warren and members of the City Council:

I read with dismay the news in the Globe and Tab that the Washington Place project would not be moving forward with a City Council vote in the next several weeks. Having followed this process closely, I can certainly imagine that it became clear to the Mark Development team that the project was not going to win City Council support and took the path that seemed most likely to be successful.

As one of the closest neighbors to this project and the owner of commercial office space at 246 Walnut Street in Newtonville, this is a project that I believe would have benefited the entire village. From a business perspective, a revitalized Orr block would have helped me to attract more office tenants and maintain a consistently higher occupancy level in the office building. The single biggest complaint that we receive from tenants in this building is the lack of area amenities which this project would have offered.

While I have every hope that the project will proceed under 40B with many of the same benefits, it is enormously frustrating that this will cost extra time. There is no reason that this outcome should have occurred – the City Council should be thinking holistically about the needs of our community, not just a small group of neighbors.

With every anti-growth decision that the City makes, smart and thoughtful developers are dissuaded from presenting creative projects like Washington Place. It certainly would give me pause in considering a development in Newton knowing the likely headwind I would face.

I urge you to do everything in your power to voice support for the new 40B proposal as it moves forward with the state review process. Newtonville needs this project.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Percelay
Chairman, The Mount Vernon Company