

## Linda M. Finucane

---

**From:** David A. Olson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 20, 2015 10:17 AM  
**To:** Linda M. Finucane  
**Subject:** FW: Additional info re rezoning petition #273-14 (114 River St) and Special Permit # 273-14(2) (5-7 Elm St)

**From:** Julia Malakie [<mailto:malakiephoto@aim.com>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 20, 2015 10:13 AM

**To:** David A. Olson; Alison M. Leary; Scott F. Lennon; Allan Ciccone Jr.; Emily Norton; Marcia Johnson; Susan Albright; Theodore M. Hess Mahan; James R. Cote; John W. Harney; Leonard J. Gentile; Amy Sangiolo; John Rice; Brian E. Yates; Deborah J. Crossley; Richard B. Blazar; Gregory J. Schwartz; Victoria Danberg; R. Lisle Baker; Marc C. Laredo; Ruthanne Fuller; Cheryl Lappin; Richard Lipof; David Kalis; Barbara Brousal-Glaser

**Subject:** Additional info re rezoning petition #273-14 (114 River St) and Special Permit #273-14(2) (5-7 Elm St)

To members of the Board of Aldermen:

As you vote, again, on the above items, I would like to note the following:

1) **Claims about what could/would be built by-right are overly alarmist.** The most that could be built by-right on the 19,483 sq.ft. parcel at 5-7 Elm St in a MR2 district, is a two-family residence with an FAR of .39 -- a structure of 7,598 sq.ft. That is 4,277 sq.ft. smaller than the proposed project.

2) **The effect of the proposed project on the streetscape would be much greater than a by-right two family.** The proposed build of 11,875 sq.ft. is 56% bigger than what would be allowed by right. With most of the structure's mass on the Elm St parcel, and visible from River St, it would have the visual impact of an FAR closer to .61.

3) **Market demand for large luxury units in this part of West Newton appears weak.** Only one of the five Phase 1 units appears to have sold -- 13 Elm St Unit 2 (the smallest of the five, at 3,154 sq.ft.) for \$1.2 million on August 25, 2014. 11 Elm St is listed for \$1.359M (128 days on Zillow). According to Zillow, 15 Elm St is under contract (130 days on Zillow), although the website [elmgardens.org](http://elmgardens.org) lists both 11 and 15 as available. I see no record of 17 or 19 having sold to date, and 19 Elm is evidently occupied by the petitioner's daughter, based on the December 2, 2014 Land Use Committee Report. ("Michelle Lundberg, 19 Elm Street, is the petitioner's daughter...") There is a "For Sale By Owner" sign in front of 11-19 Elm (see photo below), although it is unclear which unit it refers to.



4) **A different project would better align with Planning Department recommendations and Comprehensive Plan goals for village centers.** I believe if the 5-7 Elm St project were a by-right sized structure (about 7,600 sq.ft.), but with a Special Permit allowing more than two, but smaller units of varied size (e.g. 1,500, 1,800, 2,000, and 2,300), with the River St parcel as landscaped green space, it would be welcomed by the neighborhood, be consistent with Planning's stated preference, provide more market-affordable entry-to-Newton and downsizing options, and support what was envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.

Approving the rezoning and Special Permit as proposed will only exacerbate what I've called the "luxury townhousification" of West Newton, and encourage more of the same in other villages. The only way to get better projects that current residents will welcome and support, is to start voting down ones like this.

Sincerely,  
Julia Malakie  
50 Murray Road  
West Newton