

Nadia KHAN
Clerk, lands Committee
City of Newton

Dear Ms. Khan,

We are currently out of the country but will be affected by the development at 255-257 Newtonville Ave., Item #48-16 on the agenda for the Lands Committee this evening -DEPFile # 239-753. We live immediately across Newtonville Ave. on the corner of Lewis St. Would you please bring the following letter to the attention of the Chair and request that our concerns be addressed and minuted. Thank you for your help with this.

Kind regards,

Emma Sue and Bill Louis

April 4, 2016

Marc Laredo, Chair
Land Use Committee
Newton City Council
100 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton MA, 02459

Dear Councilor Laredo

My husband and I apologize for not being able to attend the April 5 meeting of the Conservation Commission as we are currently overseas.

We live at 3 Lewis St, Newton, on the corner of Lewis St. and Newtonville Ave. immediately across from 255-257 Newtonville Ave. which is item #-15(2) on your agenda this evening. We have lived there for forty years and this development will directly impact our property and that of our neighbor at 43 Eastside Parkway, Bud Grantham, perhaps more than most. It has the potential to adversely affect the outlook from the house, our living conditions parking and property values.

What is proposed represents a large development which immediately abuts a residential area and parkland, actively used by young children, students and families. It contains popular sporting facilities for baseball, football, and tennis. It has a dog park. It is in fact an important area of the city where people can relax and enjoy themselves and it is important that this atmosphere is preserved and not lost to the community. We would like to identify the following concerns.

1. This is a large development and as such requires a special permit. There has been considerable discussion, already, about the need for proper landscaping and preservation of existing trees. **The applicants have attempted to give us an unobtrusive building and provide screening, in particular along Lewis Terrace, but it is not adequate along most of the Newtonville Ave frontage. So far all requests to reduce the footprint have simply been met with a statement that it would not be commercially viable. No supporting evidence has been provided. For example if the Newtonville Ave setback was increased a small amount, say by 10-20 feet, even 5-10 feet, it would allow more planting and further lessen the impact on the neighborhood.**

A less effective alternative is to remove the small Zig Zag indentation in the building at the Lewis Terrace Newtonville Ave corner and reduce it to an L shape, moving the elevator elsewhere. This would result in only a small loss in floor space but **COULD SAVE UP TO A FURTHER 10 TREES**

It is hard to accept that such small changes would seriously impact the commercial viability of the development..

2. We do not believe you can consider the parking requirement requested without looking at the street parking in Newtonville Ave. In the small triangle where Eastside Parkway bifurcates and each arm empties into Newtonville Ave, starting at the dog park continuing east along Newtonville Ave to the junction with the entry of the other arm of Eastside Parkway at the side of 43 Eastside Parkway and then on up Newtonville Ave to the Lewis Terrace/Lewis St cross road is a total distance of about 70 yards. In the morning and evening this is a high traffic area where large numbers of cars come out of eastside parkway, frequently ignoring the stop sign, turn right into Newtonville Ave and then virtually immediately left into Lewis Terrace. This is almost continuous for long periods between 7-9am and the traffic flow is reversed in the evening between 4-6pm when people are returning home. A single large vehicle parked in this area can disrupt traffic and on occasion where 2 or more large vehicles park in front of the Norcross building it can bring traffic to a standstill. Parking of large vehicles at night can disturb the neighborhood particularly the immediate neighbors

It is a common habit for many customers and staff to park in front of businesses even if there is parking space available inside. Moreover if a large vehicle is taking up space in the lot provided more people attending the facility may opt to park in the street. The problem will be worse if the required parking estimate is incorrect.

We feel: (a) there needs to be a safety margin allowing for future expansion included in the parking allotment and the ability to expand the area if the estimates prove to be inadequate (b) parking should not be permitted in Newtonville Ave between the dog park and Lewis Terrace. on week days between 7-9am and 4-6pm, overnight from 11pm and at all times for large vehicles and trucks, 7 days a week.

3. John and Tamara Bliss have copied us with their letter to the Committee. We agree with some feeling that there are too many accidents at the Newtonville Ave Lewis St/Terrace intersection. Over the last 5 years at least 4 cars have ended up on our property and more in front of or by the side of the house, causing considerable concern and damage to trees and established plants. About 12 months ago the

Firemen had to use the 'Jaws of Life' to extract 2 people from one vehicle. On another occasion on the night before Thanksgiving around 6pm a car, at high speed ignored the stop sign at the end of Lewis Terrace tried to turn right into Newtonville Ave, miscalculated and ended up running through our garden down the side of our property , down a small terraced wall onto our drive ,through the hedge separating us from the Granthams, made a sharp turn through another hedge onto Newtonville Ave heading for a lamppost which it barely avoided by doing a screeching 180 degree left turn into East Side parkway.

We tell this story to make the point that the major cause of these accidents is speeding usually by cars travelling West down the Newtonville Ave hill and colliding with cars coming through the stop sign at Lewis Terrace. I do not recall an accident occurring with cars turning right into Newtonville Ave with the exception of the lunatic I described above, who was never caught.

The introduction of cross walks has improved things a little but cars still speed through even when people are entering the crosswalk **In our view the most effective way to reduce speeding and the number and severity of accidents at this corner is to make a 4 way stop.**

4. Finally, we would like to remind you that at an earlier meeting last year the Newton Historic Commission objected to the demolition of the old railway office building on the grounds that it was well preserved and was an important link with Newton's railway heritage. The railway played a key role in the early development of Newton and it would be appropriate if some recognition of this heritage was included in the development. **For example, it could be included in the naming of the building or a plaque or a small model and photographs of it and Newton's railway heritage in the office and along some corridors of the building.**

Thank you for considering these requests.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Sue Louis and Bill Louis
3 Lewis St., Newton