

Nadia Khan

From: Jini Fairley
Sent: Monday, August 07, 2017 3:59 PM
To: Land Use Committee
Cc: Barney Heath; Jini Fairley
Subject: Comments on 7/26/17 Kessler Woods Proposal

Dear Land Use Committee members,

In my position as the city's ADA/504 Coordinator, I am compelled to send additional comments regarding the accessibility at Kessler Woods vs. 219 Commonwealth Avenue, in light of the newest proposal from Chestnut Hill Realty, submitted to the Planning Department on July 26, 2017.

In the first table in this proposal, the table is very misleading as to what is accessible at Kessler Woods only and, in the second column, when combined with 219 Commonwealth Avenue.

Under the Federal Fair Housing Act and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board rules and regulations for new construction, ALL 88 apartments at Kessler Woods will be accessible, that is, Group 1 apartments. Yes, I said that 100% of the Kessler Woods apartments, required to comply with the federal and state laws for new construction, must be accessible.

In addition, at least 5% (4.4) of the 88 apartments at Kessler Woods must be fully accessible/Group 2A apartments and also 2% of the 88 apartments (1.76) must be accessible for residents who have sensory impairments.

In order to accurately reflect the inferences of this proposed table, The Special Permit column should list 4.4 Group 2A fully accessible apartments, and 4.4 plus 1 at 219 Commonwealth Avenue Combined, that number would be 5.4, if the small 1 bedroom at 219 Commonwealth Avenue is constructed as a Group 2A fully accessible apartment.

Thus, there is the net gain of 1 1BR Group 2A/fully accessible apartment when considering both Kessler Woods and 219 Commonwealth Avenue.

However, if all or some of the affordable 8 2 bedroom apartments at Kessler Woods are moved off site to 219 Commonwealth Avenue, as this proposal indicates, there will be a net loss of 8 accessible apartments. The table would have 88 accessible apartments under the Special Permit/Kessler Woods column and 81 accessible apartments under the combined column, thus there is no equivalency as the table implies.

Except for the small 1 BR accessible apartment to be located on the ground floor of 219 Commonwealth Avenue, there are no other accessible apartments nor any visitability nor accessible amenities for this offsite location.

However, if these 8 2-BR apartments remain at Kessler Woods, along with the 5 1-BR affordable apartments, all 13 affordable apartments will also be accessible, a rare commodity in the Newton housing stock.

Please take into consideration the loss of accessible apartments when deliberating on this special permit amendment proposal.

Much appreciated,
Jini

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