

June 10th, 2022

To: Mark Development, Senior Resource Group
CC: Newton Planning & Development Department, Land Use Committee

The Court Street Development is in the Washington Street Vision Plan (WSVP) target area. It is located directly behind the Whole Foods on Washington Street in Newtonville, located in Ward 2. The WSVP was adopted by the City Council on December 16th, 2019, as an amendment to Newton's Comprehensive Plan.

In the WSVP, the Area-Wide Planning Principles state the following: "Require gentle transitions to adjacent neighborhoods". The WSVP then goes on to say, "...that building heights be lower adjacent to residences in order to be complementary to the scale of surrounding neighborhoods."

At the May 17th meeting, I brought up the lack of "gentle transition" into the Court Street neighborhood. One of the reasons I brought it up is because neither the petitioner nor the Planning Department brought up this important building principle in either presentation.

The presentation by Mark Development and Senior Resource Group (SRG), and the Planning Department showed a variation of building heights for the proposed development, that included building heights up to 7 stories near the Court Street residential neighborhood.

The Crafts Street development directly abuts a residential neighborhood on Court Street. The zoning district for this neighborhood is a combination of the MR1 and MR2 district. The land use is a combination of single and multifamily homes. According to Newton's Zoning Code, the maximum building height in either MR district is 36 feet and 3 stories.

The WSVP provides a clear visual example of a gentle transition into a residential neighborhood (Attachment A). And even though the petitioner is not asking for a zone change to the Mixed-Use 4 zoning district, our zoning code does provide an illustration for setbacks requirements when a development abuts a residential district (Attachment B).

Mark Development also owns and manages the property known as Trio, which is located on Washington Street in Newtonville. The maximum building height of Trio is 5 stories. I am providing examples of how the building drops down in height as it approaches the residential neighborhood on Foster Street (Attachments C & D).

As the Ward 2 representative on the Land Use Committee, I am asking the petitioner to provide a rendering of the Crafts Street development that shows the gentle transition into the Court Street neighborhood, as it is explained in the WSVP. Additionally, I am asking for a rendering of the development from the vantage point of the fire access road that shows the maximum building height.

Tarik J. Lucas
Newton City Councilor At-Large, Ward 2







