

STONEHAM  
TOWN

FEB 14 9 56 AM '14

**DAVID L. SMITH**

**3 Waverley Oaks Rd. #202 Waltham, Ma. 02452-6274  
(781) 647 3332 or (781) 626-1474 cell or [cwrtmass@comcast.net](mailto:cwrtmass@comcast.net)**

February 10, 2014

Board of Selectmen  
Town of Stoneham  
35 Central St. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Stoneham, Ma. 02180  
Attn: Erica Sinclair

Dear (M) Sinclair:

What I am about to say about the proposed Development at the Weiss Farm, is being said as a Local Massachusetts Historian and Preservationist. By way of proper introduction, among the many items on that resume, would be that I am The President of The Civil War Round Table of Greater Boston (est. 1957) ([www.cwrtgb.com](http://www.cwrtgb.com)) and a Commissioner on The Mass. Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission ([www.ma150.org](http://www.ma150.org)). Along with these, I am also a member of many other Historical & Preservation Organizations in Massachusetts and Nationally with organizations such as The National Trust For Historic Preservation and The Civil War Trust, all trying to preserve American History of all years.

In the City of Waltham where I live, I am also a member and former Chairperson of The Waltham Historical Commission and The Waltham Historical Society. So, as you can see, I do have a strong background in these areas of Preserving American History and the legal and Governmental process of how that is done. For full disclosure, let me just add that my connections to Stoneham are my friendship with John Eaton of Citation St. and Debra & Dan Sullivan of The Book Oasis on Main St. John & Marie are friends of mine, John being a former colleague with the Commonwealth of Mass., while Dan & Debra are members of my Civil War Round Table. I would also state that I do not consider myself an expert on Stoneham, but there are some things that I do know with certainty.

I know that Stoneham has an American History connection dating back four hundred years. I know that The Weiss Farm area has an American history connection dating back for over one hundred years, I know that the young men of Stoneham were among the very first to join the fray in April 1775 and April 1861 so that we could all be here today to enjoy the Freedoms and Liberties that we have. Those Stoneham men in April 1861 were with The Mass. 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment who were the first to give their lives in Baltimore when they were attacked.

I also know that Stoneham was one of the first communities in Massachusetts to establish Anti-Slavery Societies, along with Boston and to have an Underground Railroad connection like Waltham, Springfield., New Bedford, and Worcester. Stoneham was also one of the first Towns in Massachusetts along with these others, to lead the fight for Women's Rights in their Suffrage Movement as well as the Rights of Children in those years.

I know that Stoneham has a long and proud History with the beginnings of The American Industrial Revolution, led by my City of Waltham. I know that the young men (and yes even women), who marched in all of those savage and bloody battles of the American Civil War, marched in shoes that were made in cities like Stoneham and Lynn.

Page 2---

I also know, because I have seen it with my own eyes, and lived through it, the terrible decisions that were made by those in the Governmental process, in the name of progress or some other (alleged) positive effect for the Town. I was born in and suffered through what I refer to as "The Great Rappaport Real Estate Rape", because that is just what it was. The Destruction of The West End and Scollay Square area of downtown Boston where I lived, did nothing for those of us who had our lives there, and made a living there. Later, I would see as someone in Boston and Brighton, similar types of destruction of an area's History and its buildings and unique Architecture.

I will also state with this same certainty, that every City & Town in Massachusetts needs to find ways to bring more businesses in, add to the tax rolls, grow with its population, especially more children, to find more and better ways of utilizing its great resources, its schools, and its culture. I have been involved with this conundrum in Waltham as you have heard. We do have this growth without destroying our History, but it has not been easy.

In Waltham, we had had a Demolition Delay Ordinance in effect for about six years now. It began as a six month delay and is now a one year delay, and if it were up to me alone, I would make it a two year delay which would definitely stop certain developers from their ploys of waiting during their other vetting processes before they destroy.

Another resource that we have in Waltham, of which I am quite proud, is our Mayors and City Councilors (fifteen of them), who for years, have tried to maintain this need for growth and more taxes with a 'complete and total plan' for maintaining its History and its Culture. We have failed at times with some bad decisions, but overall, we do succeed.

I am not arguing that Stoneham or Waltham for that matter, could not use more housing units for those new people we want to come with those children, and certainly even Ch. 40B housing is always needed somewhere, but not at the expense of its great History. This should never happen at a site such as The Weiss Farm. I would also argue that this Waltham type of 'complete plan' should remember the other problems of transportation, heavier use of Governmental resources of Fire & Police, and Water & Sewerage. There is also the extra burden that will be brought by modern technology of the Communications Industry and their needs.

Mostly though, I am saying that such a development would have more negative than positive. It would not only destroy (forever) Stoneham History, but Massachusetts History and American History as well. Please accept my thanks for your allowing me to state this case, and I am always available for any further discussion on this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Smith", enclosed within a large, loopy oval scribble.

David L. Smith