

John Eaton
18 Citation Ave
Stoneham, MA 02180

February 27, 2014

John J Scullin, Chairman
Board of Health
35 Central Street
Stoneham, MA 02180

Subject: The Commons at Weiss Farm;
MassHousing Project #SA-13-006

Dear Chairman Scullin:

This is regarding the application for project eligibility submitted by Weiss Farm, LLC currently under review at MassHousing.

On January 13, 2014, the applicant submitted a new proposal to MassHousing with revisions that made no substantial changes to the project. The total unit count and overall unit mix is unchanged. The proposed new construction calls for 3 five story buildings and 5 townhouses including 264 rental apartments and 443 parking spaces in a quiet residential area at 170 Franklin Street.

I am writing because I am disappointed in the response by the Board of Health to this proposed project. Fifteen other Stoneham residents share my concern and with their permission I have added their names to this letter below my signature.

The mission of the Board of Health is to promote and protect the health and wellness of the community and perform the core functions of public health assessment, assurance and surveillance.

The focus of the 12/10/13 e-mail from John Fralick, Health Agent, to the Board of Selectmen is on underlying pest problems associated with the large space at 170 Franklin Street and the spread of such infestation into neighborhood areas. Without question, that is a legitimate health concern to raise. Residents of Melrose have expressed concern over pest infestation, as well.

There are other important health issues that John Fralick did not address. From 1919 to present, the land was a farm. The issue of soil erosion, drainage and whatever was dumped on the land such as chemicals or fertilizer over many years since 1919 was not mentioned in John Fralick's e-mail.

Regarding the letter dated December 10, 2013, from the Conservation Commission, Robert Conway told the Board of Selectmen that there has been

testimony concerning historic land-fills adjacent to and on the property. Robert Conway asks if the disturbance of, or the settlement of, adjacent areas caused by increased fill on the proposed site will cause ground water contamination. The degree to which such ground water contamination could become a health hazard is not mentioned in Fralick's e-mail.

Much of the 26 acres at Weiss Farm is wetlands. Accumulation of water from rainfall on the property at Weiss Farm and flooding of the surrounding area historically has been a problem for homes adjacent to Weiss Farm which have received water in the past. The massive size of the proposed development will likely make water drainage worse as formerly pervious land becomes impervious with new construction. An increase in water runoff and the combination of new construction, farmland soil erosion and the disturbance of historic land fills on or adjacent to the property could create a health hazard from contaminated water. Based on this possibility, you must consider the health and well-being of all residents in Stoneham and Melrose.

Time is of the essence. Under the regulations in 760 CMR 56.05 (3), within seven days of receiving an application for comprehensive permit, the Board of Appeals will invite the participation of each Local Board, including the Board of Health, to assist in making its decision on the application. That means the Board of Health must have its research on the Weiss Farm Project ready for prompt dissemination.

I hope all members of the Board of Health are aware of this regulation and that they will be ready to participate in the decision making when the time comes.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Sincerely,

John Eaton

Others who share my concern:

Paul Armano

Kristen Armano

Mary Lou Bracciotti

Camille Chesnick

Stan Chesnick

George Georgountzos

Effie Georgountzos

Mary Pecoraro

Joe Pecoraro

Tara Lawler

Robert Lawler
Paula Sarno
James Sarno
Russell Wilson
Linda Wilson

cc: Chairman Robert Saltzman, Board of Appeals, 35 Central Street, Stoneham,
MA 02180

cc: Chairman Robert Sweeney, Board of Selectmen, 35 Central Street,
Stoneham, MA 02180