

Name: Cheng, Henry  
Address: 24 Sparhawk Circle

Stoneham, MA 02180

Date: Dec 12, 2013

Members of the Board  
Board of Selectmen  
35 Central Street  
Stoneham, MA 02180

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

Dear Members of the Board:

As a resident of Stoneham, I am firmly opposed to the application for Site Approval submitted by Weiss Farm, LLC currently under review at MassHousing. The proposed construction of 3 five story buildings 66 feet high with 264 apartments and 456 parking spaces at 170 Franklin Street is totally inappropriate for that location. I urge you to ask MassHousing to reject the application.

#### Reasons for Project Rejection

##### Traffic on Congested Franklin Street and Safety of School Children

Construction of 264 apartments and 456 parking spaces will bring hundreds of additional automobiles entering and exiting Franklin Street on a daily basis. Given that Stoneham has no public transportation on Franklin Street, tenants living at the Commons at Weiss Farm will travel by automobile.

There is no way that Franklin Street can handle additional automobile traffic. Franklin Street is already burdened with excessive traffic because of commuters, schools, existing apartments and condominiums and places of business. The backup of cars on Franklin Street is especially bad on school days.

Commuters from Melrose and Stoneham regularly use Franklin Street because it provides a corridor to three major highways, Routes 1, 93, 95.

Parents use Franklin Street to drive their children to schools in Stoneham. There are 12 schools in Stoneham nine of which are within a half mile of Franklin Street. The entrances to three schools on Franklin Street including the high school with a student population of 675 are all within a few hundred feet of Weiss Farm. There are two schools on Franklin Street for preschool aged children.

The school committee in Stoneham recently used traffic data to determine that the Middle School could not be constructed on existing high school property because it would severely impact daily traffic and safety on Franklin Street. How can the developer rationalize construction of a huge apartment project on Franklin Street when the Middle School could not be constructed there?

Given the high concentration of schools in the already congested Franklin Street area, the addition of 264 apartments and hundreds of automobiles on Franklin Street will create a serious safety issue for school children. To consider adding an apartment project anywhere on Franklin Street is obviously unacceptable.

#### Disregard for Local Zoning Laws

Developer's plans request relief from six Town zoning laws. For example, Stoneham limits building height to 30 feet but plans are for 66 foot high buildings, more than double the allowable height. It is clear that the developer has no intention of conforming with Town zoning laws or construction that is in keeping with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

#### Water Drainage and Potential Health Hazards

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 from the combination of new construction and farmland soil erosion could create a health hazard from polluted water.

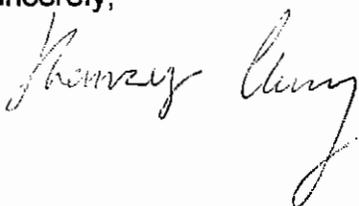
#### Unwelcome Increase in Demand on Town Utilities

The addition of 264 apartments consisting of 27 studios, 105 one bedroom, 114 two bedroom and 18 three bedroom units will increase demand on our entire school system at the elementary, middle and high school levels requiring marked increases in our teaching staff, support staff, school supplies and building space. Crowded classrooms at any level are not what this town desires or needs. A project of this size and scope would require additional fire and police personnel and other resources as well. Our need for additional town personnel and resources would create a budget shortfall that would have to be subsidized by Stoneham taxpayers. This project undoubtedly will increase our taxes.

#### Additional Housing Units are Not Needed in Stoneham

The latest decennial U. S. Census shows that Stoneham had 464 vacant housing units and a rental vacancy rate of 7.4%. Stoneham and seven bordering cities and towns had 5,670 vacant housing units and a rental vacancy rate of 6.1%. Construction of 264 additional apartments in Stoneham is not necessary.

Sincerely,



Name: Huang, Carolyn  
Address: 24 Sparhawk Circle

Stoneham, MA 02180

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