

MEETING WITH MR. TOM GLEASON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASS
HOUSING AND STAFF

On March 13, 2014, Representative Jason Lewis met with MassHousing Executive Director Thomas Gleason along with Town Counsel Bill Soloman, Town Administrator Dave Ragucci and special counsel Jon Witten. The Town, with the support of Rep. Lewis, assert that the developer of the proposed “Commons at Weiss Farm” has failed to follow the mandatory and unambiguous process established by MassHousing regarding community input prior to formal submissions to MassHousing for project eligibility letter approval. The developer alleges compliance with this requirement; the Town is adamant that this critical requirement—to meet with Town officials prior to submitting an application to MassHousing—was never met.

In addition, Representative Lewis, along with Town Counsel and others made it clear that the “Commons at Weiss Farm’s” original proposal was so dramatically flawed that MassHousing required changes at the outset of the application, simply highlighting the fact that the Town never had input in the original (or revised) proposal. It was obvious during the meeting, and we hope upon reflection MassHousing agrees, that had the Town been made part of the required review process before submission to MassHousing, an entirely different project would have been designed. Discussion also revolved around substantive issues of traffic on Franklin Street, flooding on and abutting the locus and the proposed project’s serious complications of both.

After much discussion, Mr. Gleason requested that the Town provide him with a chronological order of events supporting the facts that the developer did not meet with the Town, as required. Representative Lewis and others on behalf of the Town requested that MassHousing send this application back to the developer to both comply with MassHousing’s own policies but, more importantly, to require the developer to meet with the Town and obtain the Town’s input and guidance as to what density, design and scope of a project might be acceptable. We hope to hear from MassHousing within the next several weeks as to how they will proceed in this matter.