

John Eaton
18 Citation Ave
Stoneham, MA 02180

February 27, 2014

Shelly MacNeill, Chairman
Stoneham School Committee
149 Franklin Street
Stoneham, MA 02180

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

Dear Chairman MacNeill:

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

I am writing to you because I am disappointed in the lack of response by the School Committee to the proposed Project. Thirteen other Stoneham residents share my concern and with their permission I have added their names to this letter below my signature.

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.

Seven local boards and departments, numerous elected and appointed public officials and hundreds of Stoneham residents have submitted written comments and concerns to the Board of Selectmen on the Project so that Town Selectmen could make the proper response to MassHousing. To my knowledge, no written comments or concerns were ever submitted by the Stoneham School Committee.

The stated core values of the School Committee is to foster and hold high expectation for the level of student learning and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school culture.

This Project 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 Stoneham School Committee 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.

The addition of 264 apartments consisting of 27 studios, 105 one bedroom, 114 two bedroom and 18 three bedroom units will likely 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.

Given the safety issue, and the likely increase in demand on our school system, the silence of the Stoneham School Committee on this Project is incomprehensible especially in view of the School Committee's stated core value to maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school culture.

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 local boards to assist in making its decision on the application. That means the School Committee must have its research on the Weiss Farm Project ready for prompt dissemination.

I hope all members of the School Committee are aware of this regulation and that they will be ready to participate in 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

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