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November 21, 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:

A resident of Melrose, I am very concerned about the application for Site Approval submitted by Weiss Farm, LLC currently under review at MassHousing. The proposed construction of 264 apartments and 456 parking spaces at the proposed location at 170 Franklin Street is totally inappropriate. Please urge MassHousing to reject the application.

#### Reasons for Project Rejection

Increased Traffic on Franklin Street Corridor and Surrounding Melrose Roadways  
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, it is reasonable to expect that prospective tenants will travel by automobile.

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

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

Parents use Franklin Street to drive their kids to public and private schools in Stoneham. There are 12 schools in Stoneham, six public and six private, accounting for a student population of 3,305. Nine of the 12 schools are within a half mile of Franklin Street including Stoneham High School, Colonial Park Elementary School, South Elementary School and Greater Boston Academy. Three of the 12 schools are right on Franklin Street including the high school which has a student population of 675. Two other schools on Franklin Street are private for preschool aged children.

In addition to several places of business, there are single family homes, apartments and condominium buildings on Franklin Street including Brookmeadow and Villa Grande. An assisted living complex with 88 apartments is currently under construction on Franklin Street.

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 day to day traffic 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?

#### Water Drainage Problems

Much of the 26 acres at Weiss Farm is wetlands. The massive size of the proposed development will likely add to the displacement of water causing flooding problems from constant runoff as formerly pervious land becomes impervious with new construction. Any water runoff will flow downstream to Melrose.

The property is significantly sloped down towards the north where a drainage channel is located in the wetlands. The channel flows to a wetland area in the south east corner of the project site where there is a pump station. Water flows under Franklin Street and then in a southerly route into Melrose which is located downhill from Stoneham. Weiss Farm becomes a lake during storms and has contributed to Melrose water problems in the past. The Weiss Farm Project will likely make water drainage problems worse.

The overwhelming number of residents of Melrose believe that this massive apartment project is inappropriate at the proposed location at 170 Franklin Street. The application should be rejected.

Sincerely,



Julia Motl Lowe