

Chris Klein
ZBA
Arlington, MA 02474

July 7, 2020

Dear Members of the Board,

I am a homeowner, long time resident of Arlington and neighbor of the Mugar Woods. We love living in this community and we raised our children here. **My family and I strongly oppose building a large apartment development in the Mugar Woods.**

This corner of town is a remnant of the Great Swamp that are the headwaters of Alewife Brook leading to the Mystic River. There have been many flood events in this low land since we have lived here. There are still old peat deposits nearby.

The area also used to be a tidal swamp. There were old tide mills on the Mystic River. There was even an old saw mill on the Mugar property.

We are protected from tidal flooding by the Amelia Earhardt dam downstream. The dam helps to relieve us from floods from the Mystic drainage and increases in precipitation from global warming. We could use the fourth pump at the dam to bolster that protection.

It does not make any sense to put more buildings, houses, and pavement on the Mugar property.

That property helps to alleviate flooding on our adjacent properties in its current land use, as open space and heavily vegetated. The plants, trees and soils are sponges soaking up the groundwater, giving floodwater space to spread out. Sewage overflows (mainly from Belmont and Cambridge) enter the Alewife Brook and Little River with big rain events. This proposal would add more sewerage flow to that system that already has trouble handling all the new developments along Route 2, in the Quadrangle in Cambridge, in the Belmont Uplands.

The Mugar property currently houses a large homeless encampment. While it may seem connected that the “affordable” units in this development could serve as housing for that number of individuals, it still doesn't help those people. These people have many more problems than just homelessness. They need services as well. I don't have answers for these problems, but I don't think creating more buildings and less green space is going to help matters.

As the pandemic has made us all keenly aware, density is not always a good thing. At least some of our yards are big enough to go outside and sit and be at a safe space without fear of spreading this deadly virus. I don't think bringing 200 plus units of housing to this corner of town will keep us safe or quiet or engender a sense of community. We have these now in our neighborhood. Lets leave it that way.

I would also say that allowing the existing lots to be built along Dorothy Road to continue with two-family townhouses is the only part of the proposal that seems reasonable and in scale with the existing neighborhood. It does need to be done so that they are not flooded overland or by groundwaters, and get mold, mildew, and have to replace utilities in the basement.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely, Cori Beckwith