

From: **Brian Rehrig** <[brehrig@alum.mit.edu](mailto:brehrig@alum.mit.edu)>

Date: Tue, Sep 28, 2021, 8:55 PM

Subject: Thorndike Place

To: [zba@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:zba@town.arlington.ma.us) <[zba@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:zba@town.arlington.ma.us)>

Cc: Patrick Hanlon <[patrick.m.hanlon@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.m.hanlon@gmail.com)>, Christian Klein ([cmqklein@gmail.com](mailto:cmqklein@gmail.com))  
<[cmqklein@gmail.com](mailto:cmqklein@gmail.com)>

To the Zoning Board of Appeals:

In March I submitted the attached suggested language regarding flooding and open space needs for your consideration in drafting your decision. I am resubmitting these suggested findings as I believe the current draft decision does not adequately address these issues.

Of special importance are the references to the Town's Master Plan and its Open Space and Recreation Plan, which clearly set out as Town policy the need to protect the parcel as open space.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,  
~Brian Rehrig

Brian H. Rehrig  
28 Academy Street  
Arlington, MA 02476

H 781.646.4625  
M 617.838.4767  
F 781.207.0374

## **FLOODING/STORMWATER**

The Board has received evidence of the history of flooding on and around the site, a remnant of the “Great Swamp” of Alewife lying almost entirely within the FEMA-designated 100-year flood plain; that “historical reports indicate that flooding occurs beyond the 100-year flood extents shown”<sup>1</sup> by FEMA; that “neighborhoods surrounding the Mugar Property have a long history of street and basement flooding during and after storm events”<sup>2</sup>; and that “Alewife Brook runs ‘backwards’ (away from the Mystic River) during large rain and flood events, which may contribute to flooding of the Property and its neighborhood.”<sup>3</sup>

The Board has addressed these concerns by the imposition of appropriate conditions and finds ...

## **OPEN SPACE NEED**

The Board has received evidence of the policies and efforts of local and state government to preserve the subject parcel for Open Space purposes; that a 1992 MDC study ranked the site 3<sup>th</sup> highest priority for conservation of 205 key open space parcels not yet protected in the metropolitan area<sup>4</sup>; that in 2000 the agency “reiterate[d] its belief that the Mugar parcel is among the most significant, privately owned Open Space parcels remaining in the metropolitan region”<sup>5</sup>; and that in 2015 its successor agency DCR “acknowledge[d] that permanent protection of the site would complement other protected open spaces in and around Alewife Brook”<sup>6</sup>; and that the parcel abuts other protected Open Spaces including the Minuteman Bikeway and Thorndike Field.

It has received evidence that the Town of Arlington has consistently identified the parcel as a top priority for Open Space; that Town Meeting in 2000 and again in 2001 voted to direct the Select Board to negotiate with the owner to acquire the site; and that the Trust for Public Land was engaged to assist with negotiation, repeated efforts at which were unsuccessful.

It has received evidence of the Town’s policy that the parcel is needed for Open Space, which has been consistently articulated in its planning documents. The Town’s Master Plan names the parcel “a high priority for preservation”.<sup>7</sup> Arlington’s Open Space and Recreation Plan (2015-2022), adopted as a Town policy document by the Arlington Redevelopment Board acting as the Town’s planning board,<sup>8</sup> states that “The 17-acre Mugar property in East Arlington remains the highest priority goal for acquisition and protection as open space and floodwater storage.”<sup>9</sup>

The Board has addressed these concerns by the imposition of appropriate conditions and finds ...

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<sup>1</sup> Nover-Armstrong to Town Counsel, 10 August 2015

<sup>2</sup> Arlington Conservation Commission, 6 August 2015

<sup>3</sup> Arlington Conservation Commission, 6 August 2015

<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan District Commission Land Acquisition Program, 1992

<sup>5</sup> MDC to Secretary of EOE, 19 Oct 2000

<sup>6</sup> DCR Commissioner to Sen. Donnelly et al, 21 July 2015

<sup>7</sup> Master Plan adopted 4 Feb 2015, pp12 and 44

<sup>8</sup> Arlington Redevelopment Board, 30 March 2015

<sup>9</sup> Open Space & Recreation Plan 2015-2022, p10