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Date: Mon, 19 Dec 2022 04:08:58 +0000  
Subject: Testimony for Hearing on Dec. 19 opposing 40B project at 1021-1025 Mass. Av.

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December 18, 2022

Re: Testimony Opposing 40B Project a 1021-1025 Massachusetts Avenue This Testimony is in addition to that which I submitted in October. Please include it in the ZBA testimony opposing the 40B Development at 1021 -1025 Massachusetts Avenue

Dear Chairman Klein and Members of the Board;

**The need for affordable housing is urgent.** Reduction in tragedies resulting from its lack should be a priority for all, but it must not be used as an excuse for irresponsible climate-damaging energy-inefficient buildings with a quarter of barely affordable units and the rest for the well-off. The 40B project proposed at 1021 Mass. Av. is such a project. This project would plunder the site abutting Mill Brook and its resource area in order to benefit hugely the developer's profits and provide no help whatsoever (zero help) for those most in need and in danger of homelessness.

**The best affordable housing projects** are those grant-funded projects that are 100% affordable and netzero in addition to those involving reuse of existing buildings of which Arlington has several. In the world of affordable housing there are good and bad projects. The proposed 40B project at 1021-1025 is a bad project. Some of the supporters of this development may feel that any project which claims to provide "affordability" no matter how defective is worthy of support.

**A very negative result of this project would be the destruction of two houses (one of them historic) which could be ideal for Special Needs Housing** such as the exemplary residential home (the Donnelly House) on Massachusetts Avenue. That one house enables thirteen developmentally disabled adults in need of affordable residences to live normal, productive lives by working and living in the community. It is serviced by the Arlington Housing Authority in cooperation with area state mental health agencies. This effort seeks to strengthen the capacity of special persons and more of this type of accommodation is desperately needed but is in short supply. Residents need to be near to Mass. Av, since they mostly do not have a car. Such a house needs only a few parking places unlike the proposed 40B development which plans to have 50 autos adding to our already overburdened vehicular traffic. Such a convenient site is the only way in which the Town's assets become available to these special needs individuals. If both these houses were to be used for special needs individuals requiring affordable residence that would probably exceed the number allegedly to be accommodated in the proposed 40B project. To destroy these houses would be unconscionable. There are few such remaining on the Avenue. They have been unavailable for too long enabling endangering their existence and enabling speculation by developers hoping for defeat of protective environmental zoning or for lassitude with respect to 40B on the part of Town Leaders.

**One of the alarming proposals of this project is to cut down many of the approximately 80 trees in the rear** of the site in the Mill Brook area causing almost certainly creation of a dangerously unhealthy heat island for the location. Some of these trees would be established Norway Maples which can spread too quickly. However, official advisories in many states discourage cutting down those that are doing well because of their remarkable resistance to the dangers of urban pollution. Instead they advise simply not to plant more. Much of Arlington's tree canopy includes Norway Maples and their destruction, if healthy, would be devastating. Of course, the suggestion to cut down a magnificent Sycamore is beyond belief.

**A glaring outrage in this 40B proposal is that, unlike its chosen site, there are many areas in Arlington where apartments can be built complying with our bylaws. But this project simply plans to ignore that** and build wherever they want despite the Town's protections. In addition the so-called commercial space is likely to be that in name only. If the Town's previously approved Mixed Use projects are of significance for bringing "vibrancy" (e.g. a building management office for commercial space) then vibrancy for this 40B project is a mirage. There are no planned necessary building features necessary for restaurants and there is no published list of any interested tenants. Further I have found no planned fund to help the affordable residence owners with hefty assessments which are almost certain to occur in such a building. The Project as described is paradoxically, perhaps, is likely to contribute to gentrification and school costs contributing to higher taxes and more current residents being forced to leave Arlington since it is becoming more unaffordable. The project's

market rate units and luxury units will likely be much more expensive than current Arlington housing costs and could cause higher taxes.

**Of great importance is the crippling effect this project would have on Arlington's efforts to ameliorate damaging climate effects** and on Arlington's efforts to Electrify Arlington, to help control energy and environmental wastefulness, costs, and maintain sustainability. On the local level I have referred to this in my previous testimony.

The climate threat we must address is existential and it has international, national and local parameters. (see J. Tollefson, *Nature* **599**, 22-24, 2021.) The world's built environment and its energy use accounts for nearly 40% of greenhouse gases. It would be wrong to allow 40B developers to ignore Arlington's dedicated efforts to help control this deteriorating situation and to confuse the situation with tokenism. In my previous testimony I described some of Arlington's initiatives. The recently approved Massachusetts Climate Bill aims to change the carbon landscape in Massachusetts. In Arlington many residents wish to further the goals of the bill (and Arlington Town Meeting has already been working successfully to facilitate them). The use of fossil fuels in new buildings is discouraged. Use of best insulation practices, Passive House technologies and renewable energy electrification for heating and cooling is encouraged together with technologies such as geothermal and air pump systems. Under no circumstances should the 40B Project at 1021-1025 Massachusetts Avenue be approved for a Comprehensive Permit unless it meets the goals and recommendations for new buildings of the recently approved Climate Bill.

Yours very truly,

Patricia Barron Worden, Ph.D.