


TOWN OF NEEDHAM

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TOWN MANAGER

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TO: Board of Appeals
FROM: Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager 
CC: Board of Selectmen
Lee Newman, Director of Planning and Community Development
DATE: May 21, 2013
RE: Needham Mews Comprehensive Permit

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, I am providing summary comments on the comprehensive permit application for the Needham Mews project. Under separate cover you will receive documentation of the evaluation of this project by the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments.

The Board of Selectmen is of the unanimous opinion that the development of 300 units of housing on this six acre parcel in a residential neighborhood is inappropriate. The proposed density will significantly alter the character of the neighborhood due to the scale implicit in the number of units concentrated on a small site. The proposed project is vastly denser than both the surrounding neighborhood and the eight to ten units per acre standard that the Town developed and has supported for comprehensive permit development in neighborhood settings.

The Town is committed to achieving an affordable housing goal of 10%, working with private developers to permit and construct projects of different types and sizes. The Selectmen and Planning Board have approved guidelines using a year-long public participatory process. The proposed development is not consistent with the recommendations of those guidelines.

Comprehensive permit projects typically raise concerns about traffic, safety, environmental issues, loss of tree buffer, landscaping, neighborhood communication, affordability, and financial monitoring, all of which will be considered by the ZBA in its review. The Board is convinced that the scale of this proposal in this location will exacerbate and add to all of those issues. The Board believes that there is strong and well founded community opposition to the plan as presented. The Board believes the project will be significantly disruptive to the neighborhood and contrary to the best interests of our citizens.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at 781-455-7500.