

Dear ZBA,

As this hearing comes to a close, there is only so much time left for residents to relay their concern and dismay over a 300 unit campus coming to South Walpole in an area that would not be otherwise allowed except for the fact that Walpole lacks affordable housing.

Over the past year, we have discussed at length our safety concerns not only for us, but also for future residents. We have pleaded for this complex to be downsized. We have been present at meetings, we have written letters, we have been in discussions with our Town Administrator, Ashley Clark, the Select Board, Water and Sewer, Fire, Police, the Boyden School principal, residents of Walpole, our State Rep, and finally our own private lawyer that people from both Walpole and beyond have funded.

We have attended presentations with Judy Barrett on 40B laws and have read her memos, we have attended presentations held by Omni and have constantly reviewed every and all-public documents posted to the Town website.

We haven't done these things because we have too much free time on our hands, or because we lack hobbies. We haven't done these things because we have the time to be overly dramatic. We have done these things because this directly affects our quality of life. We have done these things because this is how passionately we feel that this development is going to have a severely negative impact on our neighborhood, our children, South Walpole, and Walpole as a whole.

It has been an extremely frustrating process to say the least. We have fought hard and strong, and yet we have felt that we haven't been given the support that we need to fight this project as best as possible. We have heard that no Town official wants this Development. We have been told that if something could be done, it would be done. Despite all the conversations we have had and meetings we have attended, we still feel unheard and alone. I am not only speaking for myself. I am speaking on behalf of all the residents in South Walpole, and there are many, who feel defeated, discouraged and upset.

It was frustrating to hear the discussion on the proposed new intersection. The intersection was rated an "F" by the Omni traffic "expert." As residents who live here and experience traffic every single day, we could have saved the thousands of dollars and told everyone that the intersection is an "F." The Town should have fixed it years ago. Now Omni is coming in with deep pockets, building a development that will make the intersection WORSE, and offering to pay 50%. 50% is not only an insult to the Town, it is an insult to residents that the intersection is now only being fixed because of this development, when it is clearly an "F" and has been for years. We are supposed to be grateful that Omni has offered to pay for half of a new intersection? He is making the intersection worse, and then not even offering to fix it in full. We are not grateful for this.

It is frustrating to hear Traffic expert Sean Reardon discuss how much better traffic will be down here with a proposed traffic light, when he hasn't fully taken into account Boyden traffic or the traffic from the South Walpole Preschool. No one has fully taken into account what it's like during Gillette events. This is a SIGNIFICANT part of the problem.

It is frustrating to listen to Hale make comments that abutters are fine with his plans, when in fact, they are NOT fine with his plans; Abutters who have had to listen to meetings where he fabricates the truth and they are unable to speak up.

It is frustrating that we have been told from Day 1 that there's nothing we can do because we are bound by 40B laws. It is frustrating that this development is being treated like any other 40B when it is extremely unique and should be treated as such. There is no other 300-unit complex in the State that is less than 1 mile from a giant Stadium, that also has ONLY 1 usable entrance and exit that abuts a working train track, and is less than ½ mile from 2 schools. There is no other complex in this State that has those strikes against it, and also is being built right next to contaminated land.

It is frustrating to hear nothing can be done even with the severe safety issues that will occur. We have been told that MA Housing doesn't care about any of these safety issues. We have been told that all they care about is jamming in affordable housing. To make the assumption that they don't care is to declare that they are heartless, ignorant and blind, and we do not believe that. We do not feel that this cannot be downsized under the 40B laws. If that means fighting it at the MA Housing level, then fight it. It's worth it. Our safety and that of our children is worth it.

It is time for the Town to fight for what is right. It is time to push to have this development downsized any which way that is legally possible. It is time for the Town to prevent this development from becoming a 40B gone wrong. This is exactly we is going to happen, and when the Developer is long gone, and Walpole is stuck with the problems, they will regret not fighting it before it was built. At least residents will know they have fought as hard as they could, if no one else did.

Please hear us. Please help us.

Thank you,

Erica Burdon