

55 Summer St. Submission- Omni
Erica burdon ericaaburdon@gmail.com
Sent: Fri 3/19/21 2:26 PM
To: Zoning Board of Appeals
Cc: Ashley Clark; Jim Johnson

Dear ZBA,

I am writing this letter not only as an RTM (Precinct 5), but as someone who has followed this project diligently for over a year, and have put a lot of time and effort into saving South Walpole. Saving South Walpole is truly what comes to mind when residents think of this project.

I, amongst many residents all over Walpole, would like ZBA to fully deny the 6 story height waiver requested by Omni. I would like ZBA to demand 4 stories as opposed to compromising to 5 stories. I understand that the risk of denying the waiver is for David Hale to appeal, that the case would go to HAC, and that we could potentially lose. I understand that the risk of losing is that we lose all other conditions. Downsizing to 4 stories seems like our best legal way to have this Project permanently downsized, and I would like for the ZBA to deny this waiver. No other condition that David Hale has presented to us is worth it. The only condition that is going to help the residents of South Walpole is for him to downsize this Project. He can change the intersection, have every Police officer provide detail all days of the week but all that is NOT solving the problem. His development is worsening the problem. The problems of this Development will only be fixed if he downsizes. It's worth the fight at the HAC level because literally South Walpole residents have nothing to lose. We have been given nothing from Hale, and we have nothing to lose.

I am an RTM for Precinct 5. I became an RTM so that I could represent the voices in my neighborhood. As an RTM, I should not be voting solely for myself, I should be voting on my Precinct's needs. Residents in Town vote for Selectmen, and ZBA is appointed. We are relying on you to voice our concerns. I am a Mom of two children at Boyden School. I also lead two Girlscout Troops in South Walpole and am on the Walpole Girlscout Service Unit helping through their busiest season, I coach the Boyden School running club along with my husband, I am an RTM, I have a job, I have children who for the last year have been home remote learning. I am involved because I want to be involved. Unfortunately due to the demands of my other obligations, I could not be a member of the ZBA, although I had seen there was an open position in the past. I mention these things because it reiterates how much we are relying on you to speak for us. I represent not only myself, but hundreds of other citizens who cannot be on the ZBA due to commitments, struggles, jobs, children, families, other Town obligations. We are all relying on you to be our voice.

Watching the ZBA meetings over the past year have been both enlightening and and at times disappointing. Enlightening to hear all of the residents speak out, knowing that they truly care about their neighborhood. When we are at home watching the meetings from our screens, and ZBA makes a strong comment on our behalf, we cheer. When certain ZBA members, I won't call them out by name, make certain jokes/comments or funny remarks toward Omni, we laugh; we feel proud that these are the members who we have representing us. You cannot see us at home but we are there, and we are listening and observing. We know that the Board members are struggling to make this difficult decision. We know the legalities of 40B, however, as residents who live here, we also know that we have already lost with this Development coming. This is why we feel the fight at the HAC level is worth it. We cannot lose anything else, there is nothing left that is worth it.

I do want to point out that Sean Reardon said in a meeting that if the traffic circle in South Walpole isn't fixed by Omni, then eventually it will need to be fixed regardless, as the intersection won't be able to handle the amount of traffic. We hope that the fact Omni has offered to pay 50% of the traffic intersection isn't a deterrent for ZBA to deny the height waiver. We know that we could lose Omni's money to fix the intersection, but we also know that this should have been fixed years ago. Millions of dollars have been spent by the Town on new fields, and millions will be spent by the Town on the new middle school. I will be advocating for this as well when the time comes, and I was also an advocate for the fields. We hope that Omni offering money should not factor in when making decisions toward this Development, when that isn't fair to residents. We pay high taxes to live here, volunteer our time and services, have voted pro fields, will

vote pro middle school, and hope that the Town would give back by fighting their hardest against the size of this Development.

I have been approached by an abutter who is interested in learning more in regards to pursuing the appeal process. We do not want to have to appeal. We have spent so much time and energy on this Development and we feel heartbroken and defeated, yet we have and will continue to fight. Although we do not want to appeal, we feel we are being left with no choice. We have already started to raise funds should we have to go this route. Residents all over Walpole have contributed and keep contributing to our legal fund; we have raised thousands of dollars. This is how strongly we feel that we know this Project needs to be downsized. This is how we know that it is worth the fight to deny this waiver. As Mr. Hale stated himself in the last zoning board meeting, he doesn't want this Project prolonged any longer. He doesn't want to appeal. He wants to fly across the country to visit his grandkids. I know exactly how Mr. Hale feels. My husband, who is a Canadian citizen, hasn't seen his family in Canada for over a year. We literally cannot cross the border. My children haven't seen their grandfather, their cousins, or their Aunts and Uncles, since February 2020. No one wants this Project to go on any longer. However, if we need to appeal, then we are prepared to do that. We care that much about our families, our homes, and South Walpole.

Finally, I would like to assure David Hale, that South Walpole, does in fact, exist. He has lost all chances to be neighborly, only insulting us time and time again. We are not willing to compromise with a person who doesn't even recognize the area of Town in which he's building.

Thank you for hearing me once again,

Erica Burdon