

Dear Senator and Representatives –

I am urging you for help.

Last night the Walpole ZBA heard testimony from the developers who are pushing the 300 unit project on Summer St. in Walpole. The Developer is pushing for the hearing to be closed on 11/10. There has been very little time allowed for the public to give comments, and we have not had the chance to hear from all peer reviewers. This Development is horrendous, does not fit into the character of South Walpole and poses a number of severe safety issues for both current and future residents.

The current 40B law requires that if the applicant is no longer willing to grant on a time extension for testimony to be heard the ZBA, the ZBA must close the hearing and begin the process of deliberating and issuing a decision. The ZBA would have 40 days to issue the extension in normal circumstances however with the current COVID guidelines we are operating under the ZBA would have 45 days after the termination of the state of emergency to issue a decision.

The attached legislation that is pending at the state house, would amend the 45 day requirement and insert the following words:- December 1, 2020, unless such date is extended by a waiver from the secretary of housing and economic development (Section 19). I am begging you PLEASE do not allow this language to move forward. This language is signaling to developers that they can take advantage of the situation created by the pandemic and skirt local processes by creating a fast track option for review at the Housing Appeals Committee, effectively removing local review from these projects.

We are Walpole residents. It was completely out of our control that Covid happened and the State shut down for 3 months preventing any hearings.

We need assurance that this language will not become law. We, as citizens, should not be taken advantage of.

Thank you

Fergal Gildea