

10/12/21

Walpole Zoning Board of Appeals
135 School Street
Walpole, Massachusetts

Attn: Zoning Board of Appeals

We are writing this letter to express our opposition to the development of the “The Residences at Darwin Commons” project being proposed by Wall Street Development Corp. on the parcel at 32 Darwin Lane.

We would like to firstly state that our opposition is not with regard to Massachusetts Chapter 40B law. We are fully in support of low income housing but feel that as in any well planned town, zoning is paramount. Zoning impacts our safety (traffic), our environment (water aquifer), and the value of our property. The end of a small cul-de-sac is not the proper place for a 28 unit multi-unit housing development. We have supported every expansion in Walpole including for schools, police and fire stations, the library, and many other buildings and projects.

When we bought our home on Darwin Lane in 2003 and we paid a premium to buy in a neighborhood of similar homes on a cul-de-sac. Throughout the years the parcel at 32 Darwin lane has remained vacant. Our understanding is that when this development was originally approved there was to be a single family home at that location. Over the years we have been threatened with 40B over and over again creating constant stress and doubt for all the neighbors and families that bought homes on this street.

As other neighbors have also mentioned, the addition of 28 units would in essence double the population of the neighborhood. The traffic assessment which was done on a Friday during the summer in a pandemic does not even closely resemble reality. During the school year, when playdates, sports and work are occurring in a family oriented neighborhood, we can attest, there is a fair number of cars coming and going. Often cars are parked on both sides of the street and young children are playing and riding their bikes. The addition of construction equipment and extra vehicles will make it impossible to travel down the street and if there were ever a need for emergency vehicles there would be a tremendous safety issue.

Another concern we have with respect to this development is its proximity to the town aquifer. As a member of the town Water and Sewer Commission, the land owner, a longtime resident of Walpole should have more concern over the potential impact of this massive project.

There are so many reasons this development doesn't pass muster and we ask that the Zoning Board deny this project and invoke safe harbor. This project is clearly a misuse of the Massachusetts Chapter 40B law in order for developer to cram a 28 unit eyesore where it doesn't belong.

Sincerely,

Jim and Yasemin Herlihy
3 Darwin Lane