

July 30, 2019

**BY EMAIL**

Newton City Council  
Newton City Hall  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, Massachusetts 02459-1449

Dear Councilors,

I write today to share an update on plans for a proposed mixed-use development on Washington Street in West Newton, comprised of a number of properties to the east of Dunstan Street, including the present site of The Barn (see attached aerial view). Mark Development is eager to play a role in transforming underutilized parcels on Washington Street into active, dynamic locations for housing, retail, and community enjoyment. Our hope is to achieve exactly that goal on this site.

The current plans call for 243 units of housing and 12,150 square feet of ground floor retail.

The project design – in terms of height, massing, and setbacks – is consistent, for the most part, with the zoning proposals advanced by The Principle Group. Recognizing that these recommendations resulted from an exhaustive community process led by highly regarded land use planners, we believe that this design offers a much improved streetscape experience and supports the larger goals of the Hello Washington Street effort.

Although we assembled the subject properties some time ago and have been anxious to proceed since the summer of 2017, we have waited to see how the Hello Washington Street Vision Plan and its accompanying zoning proposals played out. We agree with the majority of the recommendations set forth in the Vision Plan and its related zoning proposals. At the same time, we note that neither the Vision Plan nor the accompanying zoning proposals have been adopted by the City Council as yet, and we foresee that at least several more months of review and debate remain prior to enactment, with no certainty as to the final result.

Therefore, we have decided to move forward with the project as a 40B proposal. Time and time again, we have heard how important affordable housing is to our community. A 40B project at this site allows us to maximize affordability – offering 61 permanently affordable units. At the same time, we are confident that we are putting forward a proposal which overall is consistent with future zoning for this site, and a design that the City can embrace.

The certainty provided by state regulations, and a well-established review process, gives us confidence that the time will be well spent and an important project can move forward on this site. As someone who cares enormously about the City, I want to create a development on this site which is not only a high quality project, but one that meets Newton's stated goals.

We hope that you can understand our decision, and we look forward to continued transparency and dialogue as our team moves forward with a 40B proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Koff', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Koff

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