

Gretchen and Dan Donohue
7 Padden Road
Franklin, MA 02038

October 31, 2022

Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA)
Town of Franklin
Franklin, MA 02038

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
TOWN CLERK

2022 NOV -1 P 1:40

RECEIVED

Submitted by email to: ZBA Board members and Town Council members

RE: Subdivision of land and 64-unit multi-family development proposed at 237 Pleasant Street

Dear Chairman Hunchard and ZBA Board members,

As residents of the Padden and Philomena neighborhood who can see St. John's, from the end of our driveway, we are writing to express our concern about the proposed subdivision of land and development of multi-family housing at 237 Pleasant Street. The number of waivers being requested in the application is also an indication that this is not a feasible spot for this type of development.

While we recognize the need for affordable housing in Franklin, and we do feel the church is being thoughtful in terms of aligning their values with their choice in potential developers and the scope of the project, we feel there are many concerns that need to be addressed before the process moves forward. In reviewing the 2022 Housing Production Plan for the Town of Franklin, we understand there is a need for affordable housing; however, this parcel is not an appropriate location for this development. The proposed development is outside the scope of the Franklin for All 40R Smart Growth Overlay District initiative which strives to revitalize the downtown Franklin area. This initiative is looking to create an inclusionary district for areas currently zoned as Commercial I, General Residential V, and potentially some zoned in the Single-Family IV district by special permit. The 2022 Housing Production Plan supports this overlay in order to maintain Subsidized Housing Inventory over the 10% threshold through 2030.

Our primary concerns are zoning areas, safety (traffic, sidewalks, fire trucks), and potential negative impact on the environment.

SFRIII Zoning Area- The parcel of land is in this zone, and multi-family units are not generally allowed in this zone, and we imagine for good reason. The proposal is for 64 dwelling units to be built in this area, and the proposal includes the fact that there is abutting that has multi-family dwellings (Station 117) as reason to approve the requested buildings. We do not find this argument to be persuasive, as the point of zones is that they are thoughtfully created; there will always be space abutting multi-family zones, and this doesn't mean that the land in SFRIII should then suddenly be determined to also allow a different type of dwelling. If this was true, then there wouldn't seem to be a reason for building zones at all.

Safety (Traffic)- The traffic study (completed by a company hired by Community Builders) that was submitted, failed to acknowledge what is on the "other side" of the street. The mention of two driveways for church property did not mention that Padden Road is across the street and poses hazardous driving conditions as it is. The two driveways for St. John's and Paden Road intersect with Pleasant Street where sight lines are currently limited on Pleasant Street. We are concerned about the additional traffic that this proposed development would generate, and we believe this will cause less safe conditions in that area of Pleasant Street. Our concern is not only more cars (which is somewhat inevitable in a growing town), but more cars in an area that is already concerning from a safety

standpoint. Additionally, a bus stop is located at the corner of Padden and Pleasant Streets, and this would make an already unsafe bus stop even less safe.

Safety (Sidewalks)- The traffic study also seemed to not note there is no sidewalk on the church side of Pleasant Street between St. John's and Hillside Road. The sidewalk that is on that side of the street ends at Hillside Road when traveling from the town common. There is a sidewalk across the street from St. John's, but this is not a safe location to cross given the speed limit on Pleasant street and the increase in pedestrian traffic from this development. In addition, this section of sidewalk from Padden Road towards Main Street is not part of the Town of Franklin's sidewalk plowing route, and neither is the street of sidewalk on Dean Avenue between Pleasant Street and Hillside Road (the main route for ped traffic from proposed development to the downtown area and Dean commuter rail station).

Safety (Fire Trucks)- The proposed development doesn't seem like it has the space for a fire truck to turn around if they get called to the proposed development for an emergency.

Environmental Impact - As this proposed development abuts wetlands and the DelCarte conservation area, we wonder about the overall impact on the water table and wildlife in the area. We have already seen an increase in wildlife sightings on Padden Road, and we worry about the impact of even less space for animal habitats and increased people. For the parcels on the other side of DelCarte, we worry about where the extra water might end up.

We also wonder if the town, via the Community Preservation Act, is interested in working with the church to buy this property (and to keep in line with the church's view of stewardship towards the environment).

Sincerely,

Gretchen M. Coyle Donohue

Daniel W. Donohue

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