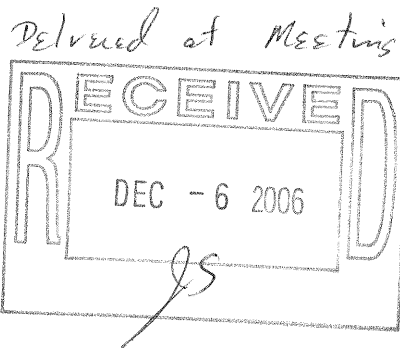




ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

TOWN HALL ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476

TELEPHONE 781-316-3090



December 6, 2006

Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of Belmont
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

RE: Residences at Acorn Park, Belmont Uplands

Dear Zoning Board:

The Arlington Redevelopment Board (Planning Board for the Town of Arlington) has serious concern about the planned 299 unit residential development, technically in Belmont, but accessed only through Arlington or Cambridge. The Redevelopment Board (ARB) has monitored the hearings you have held on the project only to note that the acknowledged adverse impacts of the project have not led the Board to challenge the cause of the impacts: the proposed project is simply too large for the location.

Despite the fact that for all practical purposes one cannot enter or leave the project without using Arlington or Cambridge roads, and that in the traffic analysis prepared by the developer, fourteen of twenty intersections studied were entirely or in part, in Arlington, you have chosen to have your traffic consultant review only the intersections in Belmont. And done this despite Arlington's repeated entreaties to consider the impacts on Arlington streets.

The important fact is that the roadways cannot be improved, and the project cannot limit vehicle usage to any manageable amount. The isolation of the project from services or jobs or other destinations does not make this a project that appeals to people who don't have a car.

The fact that your jurisdiction applies only to land in Belmont does not mean that impacts to neighboring communities are not legitimate concerns of the Zoning Board. More importantly, the developer should not get a free ride because his property has greater impact on neighboring communities.

The Town of Arlington should not have to pay to peer review the impacts and mitigation measures, but we cannot require this of the developer, only the Belmont ZBA may require this of the applicant. We strongly urge you to instruct your peer reviewer to report on the intersections in Arlington

The proposed project has no interior green space and the highly trafficked interior would be very unfriendly to (and unsafe for) pedestrians. While the site is surrounded by open space, most of the units look out over parking lot. The inadequacies mount - two hundred ninety nine units in a sea of asphalt isolated from any services, over a half mile from the Alewife T Station, unable to

connect to schools except by driving, with no place to store snow that is plowed from the large parking areas, and all vehicle access points emptying onto one small roadway which connects only to seriously overburdened secondary streets in Arlington and Belmont - the design flaws make one think the developer is not serious about building such a large and unappealing development (that he then has to market). The design appears to be what one would submit in anticipation of the number of units being reduced in the permit process. We strongly encourage you to suggest a more smaller, more reasonable number of units.

Your truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin J. O'Brien". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "J".

Kevin J. O'Brien,
Secretary ex-officio