

January 27, 2021

Rogers School Committee and Board of Selectman:

I am writing today to express my concern with the Residences at Rogers School proposal presented to the Town by Arch Communities and Lanagan & Co. As a graduate of Rogers School and Fairhaven High School, I truly believe that the architecture and history of our town buildings had a tremendous impact on my childhood and influenced my perspectives as an adult. When my husband and I moved into our historic 1830 home on Union Street in Fairhaven, I was saddened that my children wouldn't be able to attend our neighborhood elementary school. However, we spend mornings and weekends playing on the playground or playing baseball, soccer, or basketball at the park next to the school. We absolutely love the small-town feel of our little center. I am afraid that the proposed addition would change our village dramatically by dropping a massive "hotel-like" structure right in the middle of our neighborhood.

As an accountant, I completely understand the fiscal challenges that the town faces with the maintenance and rehab of the building. I also understand that in order for a project to be viable, it requires enough revenue to not just break-even, but actually be profitable. However, the proposed structure is too high and too large and just has too many units for our neighborhood. A scaled down version of the proposed structure and some changes to the aesthetics would greatly improve its impact on the center. I was actually a student at Fairhaven High School when the 1930s building was knocked down and the new building was constructed. The exterior of the addition blended well with the high school. It was smaller in scale and coordinated well with the original high school. I'm afraid that the proposal as submitted (even if turned), does not match the existing structure and would be an eyesore.

In addition, to the visual concerns, I am also concerned about the inadequacies of our current infrastructure and its ability to handle the addition of 62 "households." Due to Our Lady's Haven and the lack of large driveways for homes in the area, the streets surrounding Rogers School are already congested enough in that area. Adding 62 units (potentially 124 cars plus visitors) of additional traffic would simply make the congestion unbearable and, honestly, dangerous.

Lastly, I am concerned with the lack of green space in our center if this proposal continues as planned. Now, the Rogers School Park is the only location for young children to throw the football, kick the soccer ball, or hit a baseball without fear of breaking the windows of our neighbors. Cushman Park is used by the High School so the Rogers School is widely used by elementary school kids that live in the neighborhood. The community also uses the green space to walk/run with their dogs. This proposal will significantly cut back the area we currently use and enjoy.

Some outstanding questions... Have we taken recent surveys looking into the possibility that town residents may be willing to see a small property tax increase in order to cover the cost of keeping Rogers as an administration building/community center (removing the

cost of the administration building on Washington Street and leaving the remaining area as a community park? Are we sure it's safe to dig up the property to build a massive structure like that after years of underground contamination just across the street at Atlas Tack? Do we have the data to support the need for 62 housing units for seniors in addition to the additional housing planned at Oxford School? Do we have projections on the impact of property values if this structure is completed? How much of the land will remain the town's property? Have you received any other proposals?

This entire experience has made many in the community want to use our expertise to try to save the property in a way that fits with our neighborhood. I hope you reconsider accepting this proposal.

Thank you for your time,

Elizabeth Delano, JD, CPA, MST

27 Union Street  
Fairhaven, MA