

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

2014 JUL -2 PM 2: 24

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June 30,2014

Mr. William Chin, Chairman
Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals
Belmont Town Hall
455 Concord Avenue - 2nd Floor
Belmont, MA 02478

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2014 JUN 32 PM 2: 21~~

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Although I live in Watertown, I am an abutter in the case dealing with the move of Starbucks to 6-8 Belmont St.

I oppose this move based on the following considerations:

- a. I strongly object to turning the MBTA turn-around which is at the foot of my driveway into a paved parking area. Desecration of this area is irreparable! One need only drive by to see eight young Dogwood trees in bloom, along with a growing fir tree.
- b. Several years ago, the Belmont ZBA allowed about thirty condominiums to be built on the Belmont-Watertown line across the street, representing very intensive use of a relatively small area. To now take away neighboring green space on a permanent basis makes both your Town and my Town less desirable places to live.
- c. If the island is converted to a parking area, traffic will become much more congested, because cars leaving via the bus lane will be trying to merge into heavy oncoming traffic which often runs the light at the intersection of Belmont Street and Trapelo Road. The speeding is such that my wife, returning home on Belmont St., often puts on her hazard lights to warn cars behind her to slow down so that she can make a right turn up our driveway which is probably less than fifty feet from the egress proposed in the Starr Plan.

d. I suggest you ask the Belmont Police who often park in that area (to catch motorist who run that light) whether cars emerging at an acute right angle into heavy on-coming traffic do not increase the likelihood of accidents at that intersection and endanger pedestrians crossing Belmont St or Trapelo Road to catch the MBTA bus.

It is hard for me to have sympathy for Starbucks since they have known this move was coming for the past several years. (Almost all other occupants of the Cushing Square property were forced to vacate three or four years ago.) Starbucks ignored the opportunity to pick up (1) the site where Giustazo's located, (2) the property vacated by Shore Drug, the properties uphill and downhill from CVS. (Proximity to that retail operation would I suspect be worth an extra 10 -20 % in traffic to Starbucks, and there is ample parking in the rear.

Instead, the character of an established residential neighborhood is being sacrificed so that Mr. Starr can keep this important tenant as a renter in property he owns. Moreover, he no longer masks it as a temporary move, but seeks a permanent variance so that a restaurant can operate there on a continuing basis.

This is different from what originally appeared on your website when developer Starr implied that Starbucks would vacate the premises by the end of 2015 and the property would revert to a more subdued use.

I ask you to share my objections with the other members of the Board.

Thank you for your consideration. As a former member of the Newton School Committee, I appreciate the long hours you and your Board put in, solely in the interests of good government. I hope your spouse has forgiven you for sacrificing a wedding anniversary dinner for this purpose!

Sincerely,

Vincent P. Stanton