

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Comments received, as of 3:00PM on Tuesday, June 23, 2020:

1. Amherst College Student, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 2, 2020;
2. Amherst College Student, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 2, 2020
3. Amherst College Student, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 4, 2020;
4. Anonymous, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 8, 2020;
5. Amherst Resident Maura Keene, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 9, 2020;
6. Amherst Resident Connie Kruger, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 10, 2020;
7. Adrienne Terizzi on behalf of League of Women Voters of Amherst, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 15, 2020;
8. Amherst Resident Walt Kohler, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 15, 2020;
9. Amherst Resident Priscilla White, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 17, 2020;
10. Amherst Resident Lee Edwards, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 17, 2020;
11. Rebecca Fricke, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 17, 2020;
12. Amherst Resident Mike Giles, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 18, 2020;
13. Executive Director Kevin Noonan of Craig's Doors, Comment and Letter Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 18, 2020;
14. Adrienne Terizzi on behalf of League of Women Voters of Amherst, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 21, 2020;
15. Amherst Resident Rebecca Lindsey, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 22, 2020;
16. Amherst Resident Audrey Smith, Comment Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 22, 2020;
17. Amherst Resident Yanik Nichols, Comment and Letter Submitted via Town Website, Dated June 22, 2020;
18. Amherst Resident Nicola Usher, Email Correspondence, Dated June 14, 2020;
19. Executive Director Lev Ben-Ezra on behalf of the Amherst Survivor Center Board of Directors, Email Correspondence, Dated June 15, 2020;
20. Founder & Executive Director Hwei-Ling Greeney of Amherst Community Connections, Email and Memo, Dated June 15, 2020;
21. Amherst Resident Charles Fuller III, Email Correspondence, Dated June 15, 2020;
22. Amherst Resident Gazit Chaya, Email Correspondence, Dated June 16, 2020;
23. Amherst Resident Nancy Schroeder, Email Correspondence, Dated June 16, 2020;
24. Amherst Resident Pippa Comfort, Email Correspondence, Dated June 16, 2020;
25. Amherst Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Email Correspondence, Dated June 16, 2020;
26. Anonymous Amherst Resident, Phone call, Dated June 17, 2020;
27. Amherst Resident Jeff Mazur, Email Correspondence, Dated June 17, 2020
28. Amherst Resident Michael Chernoff, Email Correspondence, June 17, 2020;
29. President of the Board of Directors Demetria Shabazz of Amherst Media, Memo, Dated June 20, 2020;
30. Hillary Wilbur Ferro, Email Correspondence, Dated June 23, 2020
31. Shirley (Thompson) Kurtulus, Memo, Dated June 23, 2020;

Print

Submitted Public Comments, as of June 23, 2020, 3:00PM

132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15219

Date Submitted: 6/2/2020

Comment Form

I am an Amherst College student and I am strongly in support of this. The town of Amherst needs more affordable housing. This project would be a much needed contribution to our community.

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

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Please upload attachments above

132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15220

Date Submitted: 6/2/2020

Comment Form

I am a student at Amherst College. I grew up in Southern California, where the population of homeless people is immense, and where affordable housing is in short supply. I cannot tell you how strongly I support this proposal. It is imperative that we devote ourselves to affordable housing, so that all members of our community have an opportunity to succeed.

Some may say that this will raise crime rates, or put students in danger. This is not true! All this will do is allow the homeless and low income populations that already exist in our area to live in high quality homes. They deserve that.

I grew up visiting Amherst every summer. My dad went to UMass, so we always went back to visit his friends. My childhood memories of Amherst are full of love and tolerance. Keep it that way.

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

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132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15224

Date Submitted: 6/4/2020

Comment Form

As an Amherst College student, I strongly support the Valley CDC proposal to develop affordable housing units on Northampton Road. Affordable housing for low-income families is badly needed in Amherst, and it is our job as a community to support those in the community in the greatest need of assistance. As a student who places great value in racial and economic diversity in a community as an essential aspect of education, as does Amherst College, I know it is imperative to support the Valley CDC project. Amherst cannot welcome students of all income levels from around the country and world into its community, placing great value in their varied experiences and cultures, while simultaneously neglecting to support the low-income families already living in Amherst.

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15238

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Please upload attachments above

Date Submitted: 6/8/2020

Comment Form

I sent random concerns based on being a tenant in a similar venture. And where just one tenant who needed support as jts called ruined mybtrnancy at both aots. The support they get is anotjer alcoholic who moves in for a trade usually getting the booze. People who need ti be awake in day cannot be forced to as their full time job be highky impacted by poor tenants and then hafta recover by day and tey to no avail to get kustice because its too hard to keep people in line and the tenanta do not haft cause agencies bring them all they need ebabkibg them to ve able to afford to drink stay ubdressed and be allowed live in guests. There needs ti be a place where people can live high denaity without beig fired to breathe 247 the stink of liwuid laundry products and dryer sheets. Mixing those needy protected by law high impact tenants that are planned to be in the mix should be taken seriously as the closest neighbors pay the cost as well as all the taxpayers to subsidize the drunks who are not reauired to begave nor get help and the victim can only get hrlp if they also go to mentalnhealth services. Hmmmm. Be prepared for nip bottles .thin walls no privacy and perma perfume

Please type comments in the box above.

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132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15239

Date Submitted: 6/8/2020

132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15240

Date Submitted: 6/9/2020

Comment Form

Forgot to add the lucky adjacent tenants more often with a support tenant. Will be subject to often endless chronic noise as many support tenants stay home all the time and noise is one of many pacifiers and noise enforcement is left for tenants to call cops or mt will warn. its a great idea but people who were concerned and were told only eight apts are for support needing tenants but just one bad tenant can make a problem for a group but def for the closest or adjoining neighbors. Low income apts give people visible privacy but thats about it. Fresh air will be hard to find and reading with tv well u hafta go elsewhere for peace in most affordable apts. The highest impact people run the vibe whether noise odor or behavior. however cdc is a good group unlike a major prop mgr and theres one in amherst and one in hamp that seem to get away with ruining many a life. They almost or tried to entrap me but failed. It is not sustainable that the largest prop mgr forces tenants to choose between driving a rent check in or mailing it knowing how often they lose things and then post notice to quit and then find or dont find check. Standard for them. Cdc is not one of these disreputable agencies so thats great. But the cdc apt and wayfinders lumberyard perma smell like laundry and the last tenant told me its a hispanic thing. Its totally smelly and tozoc and should be banned from high density apts also dryer sheets. Unnecessary and poison and it is not personal use when i. Stays in the halls bldg apt and comes in window and perma smells outside as well as halls. Its a fire hazard also and a know horrible unregulated poison. I can send a stack of scientific proof

Please type comments in the box above.

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132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15244

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Date Submitted: 6/9/2020

Comment Form

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Comment Form

I have been impressed by the work of Valley CDC in modifying this proposal in response to feedback from neighbors and townspeople. Their representatives have been thorough and clear in answering concerns.

That said, this is a badly needed project. Amherst has lots of expensive one bedroom apartments being built, but few that are affordable for low income and none for very low income people. We know from the long waiting list for affordable housing and for the near capacity of guests at Craig's Doors that there are many who live and work in Amherst who need housing like this. I strongly support this project on this location and hope it can be built as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for your attention
Sincerely,
Maura Keene
25 Dennis Drive
Amherst

Please type comments in the box above.

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132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15246

Date Submitted: 6/10/2020

Comment Form

To: Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals
From: Connie Kruger
Re: 132 Northampton Road proposed Affordable Housing
Date: June 10, 2020

I'm writing in support of the granting of the 40B permit for the proposed development of affordable housing at 132 Northampton Road.

I support this project because: 1) it is an appropriate location for this type of housing development; 2) the sponsor, Valley Community Development Corporation (VCDC), is a reputable housing developer and manager with a proven track record working with the population for which this housing is intended; and 3) Amherst has a demonstrated need for the type of housing being proposed. My remarks are directed at the issue of site suitability and location.

My support for the proposed use of the site comes from 16 years in Amherst as a Senior Planner (1986-2002), 8 years as a Project Manager for the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (2002-2010) and 2 years on the MA Housing Appeals Committee (2014-2017). I have had the opportunity to review many locations and properties across the state to determine the appropriateness of their use for affordable housing. I bring that experience to my endorsement of VCDC's proposal for 132 Northampton Road.

I am aware that there is community resistance from some neighbors. This is not uncommon for affordable housing developments with different densities and configurations from what is nearby. Neighbors can offer an important perspective and raise legitimate concerns about how a development will impact them. However, I've found from my own experience, which includes the development of 24 units of affordable housing at Butternut Farm on Longmeadow Drive in Amherst (a notoriously controversial development almost 20 years ago) that once an affordable housing development is completed and occupied, it becomes accepted as part of the fabric of the neighborhood.

Amherst has a proud history of supporting the funding and the development of affordable housing. This reflects our community's commitment to racial and social equity for all. The development proposed for 132 Northampton Road is in keeping with our community values and I look forward to seeing the completion and occupancy of the newest addition to Amherst's portfolio of affordable housing options.

Connie Kruger
15 Hop Brook Rd.
Amherst, MA

Please type comments in the box above.

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132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15260

Date Submitted: 6/15/2020

Comment Form

I am writing on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Amherst (LWV) to urge your support for a Comprehensive Permit for Valley CDC's project at 132 Northampton Road. The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization that has a long history of supporting policies and legislation that provide provisions for low-and-moderate income housing and a suitable living environment affordable for all. We have carefully followed the project at 132 since its inception. The approximately 28 unit affordable housing and related services project will provide stability of place to our lowest income individuals, the working poor, and be a source for local housing needs heretofore unavailable in Amherst. A positive rendering by the Zoning Board of Appeals for 132 Northampton Road will advance our town's critical housing needs and be consistent with our community values. We urge your approval.

Thank you for taking these comments into your consideration.
Adrienne Terrizzi
LWVA Spokesperson.

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15262

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Date Submitted: 6/15/2020

Comment Form

I strongly support the 132 Northampton Road project and encourage the ZBA to support the 40B Comprehensive Permit application.

Sincerely,

Walt Kohler
15 Ash Lane
Amherst

Please type comments in the box above.

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132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15263

Date Submitted: 6/16/2020

132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission #15264

Date Submitted: 6/17/2020

Comment Form

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

I am writing to share my experience of working with residents of single room occupancies for many years.

At the time, in Northampton, there were a number of single room occupancy (SRO) residences that provided very bare bones rooms to single men and women who were of limited financial means. I provided outreach to the residents of SRO's, offering support services to ensure that they would maintain stability in their housing. From this inside experience of working with SRO residents, I would like to give a sense of who these people are.

Like some of the current residents of the Northampton Street Studio Apartments, I was fearful and nervous about what it would be like to interact with the SRO residents. The reality, however, proved my concerns to be unfounded and my stereotypes were replaced with great respect for the tenants and for their ability to live within such limited means and resources.

If I had to describe a typical resident, I would say that they are overall, a quiet and introverted people. Rather than causing trouble, they keep to themselves and were very grateful to have someone checking in on them. Mostly, their needs were like the problems of everyday life that we all face -- how to get our health care need addressed, budgeting and learning about community resources that are available to deal with any problems that might arise.

When I heard about the Northampton Street Studio Apartments, I felt that it was good news and long overdue for Amherst to have studio apartments that would provide affordable and decent housing for many who are unable to afford the very high rents of Amherst. I also feel certain that residents will be very grateful to have the stability of decent housing and the added support of someone checking in with them and helping them to solve the issues of daily life.

I volunteered for Habitat recently and met someone who was also volunteering at the work site. I happened to sit next to him at lunch time and asked him about his connection to Habitat. He told me that he currently was living in and SRO in Northampton and and SRO outreach worker had helped him find an apartment that he could afford. He decided to volunteer with Habitat as a way of paying back the support he received to find decent, stable housing. It's hard to imagine how grateful people are when they finally find safe and stable long term housing.

So, I make a sincere and informed request to you members of the ZBA Board of Appeals, to give your support and approval of this worthy project. It embodies the goals of our Master Plan and will create safe, supportive housing for residents with limited incomes.

Sincerely,
Priscilla White

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

**132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit
Application - Submission #15265**

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attachments above

Date Submitted: 6/17/2020

Comment Form

I'm writing in support of this project. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, it seemed clear to me that too many people in Amherst were homeless or at risk of being unable to pay their rent. The economic consequences of the pandemic are only likely to make this situation worse. Amherst also has a population of single people working or studying in town but unable to afford to live here. This project is a worthy attempt to provide living space to people who are presently vulnerable and underserved. In addition, undertaking any building/construction project at this time will in itself boost the town's economy. It's a good project and a good time to move forward. It would be good for the Town Council to make it happen now!
Lee Edwards/5 Wildwood Lane

Please type comments in the box above.

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Comment Form

Please type comments in the box above.

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Zoning Board of

**132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit
Application - Submission #15268**

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Date Submitted: 6/17/2020

Comment Form

I am writing to urge your support for a Comprehensive Permit for Valley CDC's project at 132 Northampton Road. I believe that Amherst needs to provide much more low-and-moderate income housing and this project will certainly help Amherst increase its affordable housing stock. I have followed the project at 132 since the CDC began working on it. The CDC has worked tirelessly to address neighbors' concerns and has made several important changes to its plan such as the increasing the height of the fence, moving the outdoor bike racks, increasing the parking, adding more plantings, reducing the height of the building, etc. It should also be pointed out that the building is incredibly energy efficient and this too is in alignment with the Town's priorities. In this time of Covid19 it is essential for the safety of the home insecure and the larger community that we move people into safe living conditions.

I hope that the Zoning Board of Appeals for 132 Northampton Road will advance our critical Town housing needs. Please approve this project.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Fricke

Please type comments in the box above.

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**132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission
#15270**

Date Submitted: 6/18/2020

**132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission
#15272**

Date Submitted: 6/18/2020

Comment Form

As a near abutter to the proposed SRO housing at 132 Northampton Rd, I wanted to write to you to clarify that, while there are people who are scared of what it might lead to, not all of the folks on Lincoln, Dana and Blue Hills think this is a dangerous idea. Some of us think it's wonderful!

As a past member of Town Meeting and the Committee on Homeless, I'm quite familiar with the topics at play here (the actual lot in question, affordable housing, Valley CDC and concerns from abutters). But when I heard about the proposed project (which I walk past every morning) my first thoughts were, "Hooray for Valley CDC!" and "That has to be nearly the perfect location for SRO housing."

"Hooray for CDC" because I know how long they've been working to bring more SRO housing back to our area. And I know the effect that the loss of this form of housing nationwide has had on individuals who are struggling to find housing that they can afford on limited and fixed incomes. Especially in an area with such high rental costs, SRO housing is a critical rung on the ladder that keeps roofs over all of our citizens heads. And having stable housing is foundational to building a healthy life.

"That has to be nearly the perfect location for SRO housing" because it's directly on Rt 9, walking distance to the downtown bus stops (including Peter Pan) as well as the stops, shops (and jobs) along Rt 9 in Hadley. And perfect because, while there are near abutters like myself, there are very few direct abutters. It is very difficult to think of another such parcel near bus lines, in Amherst (maybe Amherst Motel?).

As I'm sure the Valley CDC will tell you, there is no place you can build transitional housing that won't meet resistance from the existing residents who live nearby. But they can also tell you how few (if any) of the feared problems ever materialize and to the contrary, how many lives get changed for the better with the opportunity to live independently in their community of choice. I encourage you to listen to the experiences of those who came before us.

And trust me, I'm not all sunshine and rainbows here. I live nearby and I acknowledge that there is uncertainty and surely some amount of risk. But I want to live in a town that truly cares for all of its citizens. And that includes individuals from all walks of life. And if I'm not willing to stand up and support that in my own neighborhood, then I'm really only paying lip service to my purported goal.

I also think that this is a perfect representation of the type of issue where I am hopeful that the town government of Amherst can take a more thoughtful and deliberative approach than the Town Meeting was able to in recent years. And by that I mean, taking the time to actually look into the facts, talk to the experts, visit similar sites, and consider the motivations of the speakers so that you are not swayed by the natural, emotional conviction of the voices of NIMBY fear and uncertainty that accompany every new project. Well founded or not, the felt fears and concerns are real. But you can weigh those appropriately so that we needn't act up them collectively.

Yes, this is new, yes there are always some risks, but it is also exactly the type of change that is desperately needed in our town and broader society at this point in time. I hope the ZBA can take the long, town-wide view here and support the project moving forward, without the typical death by a thousand delays.

-Mike Giles
57 Blue Hills Rd

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit

Application - Submission #15276

Please upload
attachments above

Date Submitted: 6/21/2020

Comment Form

Please see a letter from Craig's Doors, in support of Valley CDC, attached.

Thank you.

Kevin J. Noonan
Executive Director
Craig's Doors - A Home Association, Inc.

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

CD Ltr for Valley CDC.pdf

Please upload
attachments above

**132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit
Application - Submission #15277**

Comment Form

I am writing on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Amherst (LWV) to add to our earlier letter in support of a Comprehensive Permit for Valley CDC's project (Amherst Studio Apartments) at 132 Northampton Road.

This project is a well-designed response to a well-documented need in this area. When Valley CDC recently solicited applications for a similar project in Northampton, they received 250 applications for 31 apartments.

Amherst Studio Apartments will include 28 studio apartments, each with its own bathroom and kitchenette. The project will be close to services, on a 0.88-acre lot that can easily accommodate the proposed building. Abutters include both single and multi-family residential buildings (including a 6-unit condominium, which is currently all rental), and institutional buildings including college residences. The 28 studio apartments will all be for a variety of single adults, so it will not create a building that concentrates extreme poverty.

In response to concerns expressed at earlier stages of the process, Valley CDC has made several changes to the original proposal. The new building will be farther from the property line than the house that is currently on the property. A Resident Services Coordinator will be there between 27.5 and 30 hours per week, and the property manager will be on site about 20 hours a week. The smoking area outside has been moved, there are fewer parking spaces than originally proposed, and more plantings to shield neighboring properties.

Valley CDC has significant experience with this kind of project and with serving this population within our community. It is vitally important that their proposal be approved substantially as written in order for it to work. Specifically, it is not possible to reduce the number of units and still meet the project's goals.

The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization that has a long history of supporting policies and legislation that provide provisions for low-and-moderate income housing and a suitable living environment affordable for all. We have carefully followed the project at 132 since its inception. A positive decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals for 132 Northampton Road will advance critical Town housing needs in a way that is consistent with both our community values and our League's position in support of housing for low- and moderate-income residents. We urge your approval.

Thank you again for taking these comments into your consideration.
Adrienne Terrizzi
LWVA Spokesperson

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

Date Submitted: 6/21/2020

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**132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit Application - Submission
#15279**

Date Submitted: 6/22/2020

Comment Form

I urge the ZBA to establish a 70/30 local preference for residents of 132 Northampton Rd. Preference in the lottery should be given to:

- Current residents of Amherst
- Individuals employed in Amherst

Additionally, town officials could consider including in the local preference:

- Non-residents of Amherst who attended Amherst (K-12) public schools (ex. a person who grew up in Amherst but currently, probably due to cost, lives in Greenfield, Holyoke, etc.).

Amherst taxpayers have put a substantial amount of funding toward this project. A 70/30 local preference will achieve the goal of expanding affordable housing for town residents, including those who are currently homeless. Without a local preference, we may bring new, deserving people into the community but our vulnerable Amherst residents remain unhoused.

Local money, local preference.

Rebecca Lindsey
56 Dana Street

Please type comments in the box above.

Attachments

**132 Northampton Road - Comments on 40B Comprehensive Permit
Application - Submission #15281**

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Date Submitted: 6/22/2020

Comment Form

I would like to offer my thoughts on who should be given priority for occupancy at 132 Northampton road when it is completed. It is my understanding that in the lottery for apartments, priority for the local population can be assigned to up to 70% of the units. Since a large part of the justification for this project is the unmet needs of our local population of homeless and low income individuals who need affordable housing, I would strongly urge the ZBA to apply a local preference which could include current individuals in Amherst who are homeless, individuals who work in Amherst but cannot afford to live here, or individuals who grew up in the community (perhaps having attended the public schools) who are currently residing in the local area but due to financial constraints, not in Amherst.

Thank you for considering my views.

Best,

Audrey Smith
45 Dana Street, Amherst

Please type comments in the box above.

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Comment Form

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

On April 23 2019 Nate Budington (Chair), in the CPA committee proposal for funding for fiscal year 2020 to the Town Council wrote:

"Valley CDC Studio Apartments: Few projects in recent memory will so dramatically improve the lives of our most vulnerable citizens than the studio apartment project.

In our deliberations, the committee was vigilant about protecting the interests of Amherst's taxpayers, without whom there would not be a CPA..."

In the absence of the Town planners, the Town Council, or members of the Planning Board requiring a local preference (70%) for the studio apartment tenants, this project does not appear to serve to the fullest extent the most vulnerable citizens of the town of Amherst, or its taxpayers.

If affordable housing is an Amherst problem, the bulk of these units (70%) should be reserved for struggling Amherst residents. This should be a stringent requirement for issuance of the special permit to Valley CDC. This local preference should be for the first round of tenants, as well as subsequent tenants.

The CPAC recommends that the town of Amherst borrow \$500,000 for this project. Concurrently we are defunding our local elementary schools. A significant proportion of our elementary school children utilize the free or reduced lunch program arguably making them our most vulnerable Amherst citizens. (31% classified as economically disadvantaged in the Amherst school district. <http://reportcards.doe.mass.edu/2019/00080009>)

The Town of Amherst, particularly given our current grave financial crisis, needs to be certain our increasingly limited taxpayer dollars are spent on our own "most vulnerable citizens." Please establish a 70/30 local preference restriction as a condition of approval for 132 Northampton Rd.

Thank you for your time.

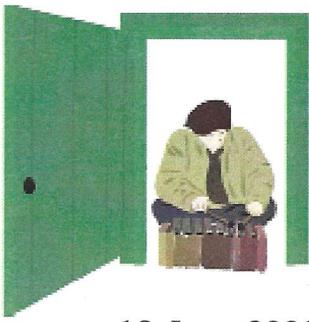
Yanik Nichols
48 Dana Street

Please type comments in the box above.

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Craig's Doors - A Home Association, Inc.

434 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01002-1735

P.O. Box 101, Amherst, Massachusetts 01004-0101

www.craigdoors.org • Phone: (413) 256-0704

18 June 2020

Christine Brestrup, Planning Director
Town Hall
4 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002

Dear Ms. Brestrup,

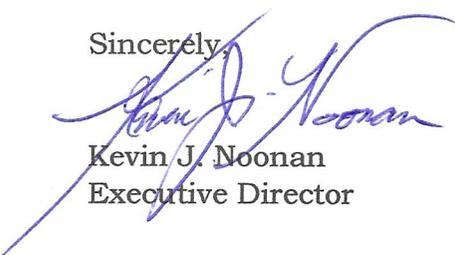
I am writing to support the application of Valley Community Development Corporation (CDC) in its request for a Comprehensive Permit under the State's Chapter 40-B which will be considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals on 25 June 2020. We welcome and fully support Valley CDC's project to develop a residential program with twenty-eight (28) Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units at 132 Northampton Rd. in Amherst. Valley CDC is a leader in the development of safe, affordable housing and we are confident they will manage this program in a supportive and professional manner.

Craig's Doors operates a seasonal, emergency shelter for individuals each year. As a result, we know how difficult it is for people to find safe, affordable housing so we are extremely enthusiastic that ten (10) of the proposed units will be reserved for people who are homeless as it will bring a positive asset to our community. In conjunction with the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst we serve a weekly community breakfast which serves as point of engagement for representatives from SNAP, MassHealth, the Food Bank of Western Mass, Health Services for the Homeless and Tapestry Health. We also operate a Resource Center, behind First Baptist Church, where we serve lunch four days per week. Since we continue to support our former guests, we fully expect to assist the good people who will be placed into these units.

I do not believe there are other projects currently being planned for individual adults in Amherst, so this project is extremely important. It also demonstrates our commitment as a community to provide housing to a diverse group of citizens, not just those who can afford extremely high rents or mortgages.

We commend Valley CDC for their foresight and perseverance. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Noonan
Executive Director

Dear members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

I ask you to note the following points underscoring that the proposed project requires an enormous zoning departure (35 waivers) for this predominantly residential neighborhood.

In its application Valley CDC writes:

This project is consistent with the Town's CDS which states: "The focus of many in the community is the extreme need for housing for the non-student population, in particular, low- and moderate-income households and permanent supportive housing, including enhanced single room occupancy (ESRO) units, for extremely low-income (ELI) people and those transitioning out of homelessness."

- This statement points to the urgent need for more affordable housing in town, and extol 132 Northampton Rd's unbeatable location for services. However, the town recently bypassed multiple opportunities to include affordable units in both newly completed and upcoming construction downtown. These buildings are closer to required services and transportation. (Kendrick Place, One East Pleasant Street, Spring Street, University Drive)
- A 28-unit apartment building does not belong in **any** residential neighborhood. The John Nutting apartment model which serves families who have a member with a disability, or family housing units for low-income families would be welcome additions. **Affordable family apartments** are the key for this area to remain a viable and vibrant neighborhood.
- Valley CDC suggests that 7 apartments, each with 4 inhabitants, would amount to the same volume as 28 single units. That is like comparing a home to a hotel room, and by making that comparison they are missing the point of this housing development integrating successfully with the surrounding residential community.
- Valley CDC's statement that the area has a high volume of rental properties suggests that the population is inherently transient. My family lived in Amherst College rental housing (Woodside and Lincoln Ave.) for 12 years. Amherst College rental housing in this neighborhood is NOT college student housing with residents turning over every year, nor is it the general public renting these spaces.
- If this is a perceived Amherst problem, the bulk of these units (70%) should be reserved for Amherst residents. This should be a requirement for Valley CDC moving forward. They should be held accountable for this beyond the first round of tenants.

Thank you very much for your time.

Yanik Nichols

From: [Nicola Mare Usher](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Subject: Support for comprehensive permit for 132 Northampton Road
Date: Sunday, June 14, 2020 2:39:09 PM

Dear Zoning Board of Appeals,

Amherst has a rare opportunity to combat homelessness, provide much needed affordable housing, and encourage an inclusive community with the Valley CDC Studio Apartment Supportive Housing project proposed for 132 Northampton Road. This project has received broad support from the community and elected officials.

It has been disheartening to hear some of the unfounded concerns from area residents about the project and its potential impact on the neighborhood. I encourage the ZBA to support the comprehensive permit and allow this project to move forward.

I appreciate the challenge to serve the needs of a diverse community and support affordable housing while balancing the concerns of residents, but concerns aren't valid just because they exist and leadership means standing up for what is right. This development is right for our community.

Thank you.

--

Nicola Usher
Amherst Resident

From: [Amherst Community Connections](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Subject: Support for Valley CDC 232 Northampton Road project
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 12:42:08 PM
Attachments: [Letter to ZBA-6-15-20-signed.pdf](#)

Dear Ms.Pollock,

Warm greetings from Amherst Community Connections.

Attached is a support letter for the Valley CDC 132 Northampton Road project. Please enter it as a public document.

Our agency serves primarily the homeless and low income families in Amherst. We understand the hardship participants have with regard to lack of affordable housing. We want to lend our strong support for the Project building more affordable housing for the homeless and low income households.

Kind Regards,

Hwei-Ling Greeney

Founder & Executive Director, Amherst Community Connections

236 N. Pleasant Street, PO Box 141 Amherst, MA 01004

413-345-0737

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Website](#)

To: The Zoning Board of Appeals, Amherst, MA

From: Hwei-Ling Greeney, Executive Director and Founder of Amherst Community

Connections 

Date: 6/15/2020

Re: Support for Valley CDC's 132 Northampton Road Project

At Amherst Community Connections, our mission is to tackle homelessness through housing. We identify housing as the solution, because a stable home provides the bare foundation, allowing us to secure basic necessities and nutrition, seek education and employment, and to strive for self-reliance. The home offers privacy and security, nurturance and protection. Without a stable shelter, all else falls apart, and even small obstacles become mountains.

Day after day, we see countless participants coming into our office with a need for housing. Almost all housing in Amherst is inaccessible for those who are low-income, due to the skyrocketing demand and competition coming from the thousands of students seeking off-campus housing. It is not surprising, then, that many individuals are left homeless. This is why Valley CDC's project at 132 Northampton Road is crucial to help alleviate the housing shortage problem facing our community.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to approve and support this project. Housing is a fundamental human right, and if approved, this project will provide this support to so many vulnerable individuals and families in our community.

From: [Lev Ben-Ezra](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Cc: [Hornik, John](#)
Subject: Amherst Survival Center Support for 132 Northampton Rd.
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 9:00:44 AM

Ms. Pollock and review committee,

As Executive Director of the Amherst Survival Center, I am writing on behalf of myself and the Board of Directors to express our strong support for the development of additional affordable housing in our community. We join the Amherst's Affordable Housing Coalition and Valley Community Development Corporation to voice support of developing new affordable housing in Amherst, including the 132 Northampton Road project.

Affordable housing is the foundation upon which a stable and thriving life can be built. At the Amherst Survival Center, we see on a daily basis the capacity for community contribution that people have when their basic needs are met. A man who is currently homeless is a critical volunteer on our COVID response team. A regular guest at the Amherst Survival Center speaks over lunch about the active role she plays volunteering with her child's school. A participant using our copier and fax to submit housing applications talks about her hopes to simplify the process for others. Without stable and safe housing, people must focus all of their energy, intelligence, and emotional bandwidth on this most fundamental need. Once living in stable housing, people have the opportunity to focus on health, work, family, and community. This benefits us all.

Affordable housing is a key factor in maintaining food security in addition to mitigating the current housing crisis in Amherst. As we support the use of public funds to assist our neighbors with the distribution of food, we also support its use to assist our neighbors to secure affordable housing in our community.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the Amherst Supportive Housing proposal for Community Preservation Act funds.

Sincerely,

Lev Ben-Ezra

Executive Director

Amherst Survival Center

P.O. Box 9629 * 138 Sunderland Road * North Amherst, MA 01059

Office: 413-549-3968 x107

Mobile: 413-238-1321

www.amherstsurvival.org

www.facebook.com/amherstsurvival

For up to date information about our services, hours, and response to COVID-19, please see www.amherstsurvival.org/COVID19

My pronouns are: She/Her/Hers. Don't know what that means? Ask! I'm happy to explain!

From: [C. Fuller](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Subject: 132 Northampton Rd
Date: Monday, June 15, 2020 10:58:58 PM

I wanted to write in support of the Valley CDC plan currently in review. My belief is there are real unmet needs concerning housing across the spectrum within our town. My hope is that further efforts begin to show resolve as soon as possible. For me those in most stress need the most immediate attention. Our homeless and those with extremely low income are the most vulnerable. Last summer one a month died. Earlier this year the town had another death. These folks should be accommodated first to prevent further catastrophe.

I commend Valley CDC for the speed with which they were able to secure a possible spot showing compassion to this need. Competition for properties is high here (one of the issues w/affordability through out the affordability span) funding precarious and varied for the needy. As soon as a home is offered for sale it is converted into student housing before an agency like CDC or Town entity like AAMHT can coordinate to purchase. They have located a great area for such a project. I hope you can support this effort as nothing exists (beyond a singular & distant facsimile, "the Perry") and as designed - appropriate. It will have a community room, staff area and local 'housing first' familiar staff will serve the portion of residents in need. Other residents will serve as models for stability. It all looks like a project we can finally point to with pride as our Town's response to a problem we have not addressed within our borders otherwise.

Thank you for your time, and attention to this matter.

Cordially
Charles Fuller 3rd
22 Chestnut Ct
Amherst, MA

From: [Gazit Chaya Nkosi](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Cc: [Brestrup, Christine](#); [Hornik, John](#)
Subject: 123 Northampton apartments
Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 7:30:51 PM

Dear Christine,

I am writing in response to the new apartment plans for 123 Northampton Road. As we have seen with the coronavirus and the recent response to ongoing police violence, those in our community who do not have access to affordable housing are the most vulnerable. Amherst is a beautiful city but it should not just be accessible to those who for historical reasons related to racism have had access to land ownership and secure housing. We can be a town that is beautiful and is open to all, and the first step in ensuring that and to addressing historical inequities is through increasing affordable housing. This complex would support the most vulnerable among us, and specifically be an option for those who are unhoused, the most vulnerable to covid and who are policed the most brutally. As a longtime resident of Amherst, I am confident that creating more secure and welcoming places will only enhance our community.

Thank you,
Gazit Chaya

From: [nancy.schroeder](mailto:nancy.schroeder@aha.org)
To: Pollock, Maureen
Subject: 132 Northampton Rd.
Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 4:25:31 PM

To the Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

I am writing in support of the Valley Community Development Corporation's plan to develop a Single Room Occupancy apartment building at 132 Northampton Rd in Amherst.

I worked at the Amherst Housing Authority for 30 years and currently serve on the AHA Board of Commissioners. In my various positions at the Housing Authority I became aware of the people that the Authority does not serve: single individuals who need an apartment in town that they can afford. The AHA owns properties for families and elderly and disabled people, but nothing specifically for single individuals. The AHA's voucher programs are not that helpful either. The vouchers enable families to live in Amherst, but people with vouchers looking for a one bedroom apartment are historically priced out of Amherst. If single voucher holders want an apartment, they take their AHA voucher to a community with cheaper rental housing.

Over the years at the Authority, I also experienced the fierce opposition that Amherst residents exerted when we planned to build low income family housing in their neighborhoods. For example, in the 1980's we proposed building 8 duplexes in 3 sites throughout town. We attended numerous meetings with neighborhoods and with town boards. Neighbors voiced their concerns about neighborhood safety, increased traffic, loss of open space and our management capacity. I'm happy to say that none of these problems materialized. In fact, the duplexes and their occupants fit right into the neighborhoods. Mostly the neighborhood concerns reflected the worst fears of the Amherst residents, not the possibilities that new housing brings.

The Valley CDC proposes housing 8 people whose annual incomes are in the 50% AMI (area median income) range of \$28,000 and 8 people whose annual incomes are in the 80% AMI range of \$45,000. These are individuals who work in our area's stores, restaurants, schools, and town services. Surely they deserve decent and affordable housing in town.

The CDC also proposed to house 2 people who are clients of the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and 10 people who have been homeless. My experience with DMH clients is that they are often family members of Amherst residents who need to live independently and who receive support services from DMH workers. In my work as Housing Manager at the AHA, I often wished that our families could receive the quality of service that DMH gave to individual tenants. And the 10 homeless people? I'm afraid that our collective visions of homeless people are the panhandlers who sit on the sidewalk with signs. In my experience in housing for the last 30 years, people who are without a place to stay are practically invisible to the general public. They are resourceful and independent and do not call attention to themselves. They stay with friends or relatives, rest in public buildings, camp in the woods, and sleep in their cars and in hallways.

Early one morning I drove out of the Hadley Mall and noticed an elderly woman getting out of her car, stretching, and rearranging her bedding. She, like most of the homeless people I have known, probably has a story of cascading misfortunes that has brought her to a mall parking lot. I'm confident that Amherst has the goodwill and resources to make room for people like her who struggle for a place to live.

Sincerely,

Nancy Schroeder
168 High Street
Amherst, MA 01002
June 16, 2020

From: [PC](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Subject: Valley community Development
Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 5:31:31 PM

Dear Ms. Pollock,

On the face of it and based in principle, I support for the Valley Community Development proposal for studio apartments with supportive services at [132 Northampton Road](#). I believe this is an important opportunity to expand affordable housing options in Amherst.

Can you tell me the cons in your opinion?

Thank you,

Pippa Comfort

From: [Michael Burkart](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Cc: [Nancy Schroeder](#); [David Williams](#); [Pamela Rogers](#)
Subject: Letter of support for the Valley CDC SRO development at 132 Northampton Road
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 10:38:06 AM

June 17, 2020

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

The Amherst Housing Authority Board of Commissioners enthusiastically supports the Valley CDC's plan to develop an affordable Single Room Occupancy project at 132 Northampton Rd. The Valley CDC has an excellent track record as a developer of affordable family housing and of housing for low income and for homeless individuals.

In 2008, the Amherst Housing Authority worked with the Valley CDC to build eleven units of affordable housing on Main Street on property that the AHA owned. The apartments are an attractive addition to the neighborhood, designed to meet the needs of the tenants living in them, well maintained, and energy efficient. The three apartment buildings for low income and for homeless individuals in Northampton that the Valley CDC bought and rehabilitated are a testament to their mission to create high quality housing for low income people. We are confident that the Valley CDC will create an SRO in Amherst that meets these same high standards.

The Valley CDC's plan to build an enhanced SRO is a wonderful opportunity for low income and homeless individuals to live in high quality housing in Amherst. We applaud the CDC's efforts to bring this housing to Amherst and urge the ZBA to approve this project.

Thank you,

Michael Burkart, Chair

Amherst Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

From: [Brestrup, Christine](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Cc: [Malloy, Nathaniel](#)
Subject: ZBA - 132 Northampton Road
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 4:48:56 PM

Maureen,

I just spoke with one of the residents of the neighborhood west of the project. She would like to see some screening around the smoking bench, to screen it from the view of people walking on the Amherst College property.

Can you pass this along to the ZBA – either in your Project Application Report or in some other way?

Thanks,

Chris

Christine M. Brestrup, Planning Director
Planning Department Town of Amherst

Town Hall 4 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst Massachusetts 01002
413-259-3145 brestrupc@amherstma.gov

From: [Jeffrey Mazur](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Cc: Jhornick123@gmail.com; [Brestrup, Christine](#)
Subject: 123 Northampton Rd
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 9:00:49 PM

Dear Maureen,

I am writing in response to the new apartment plans for 123 Northampton Road. I am very supportive of the project and believe that more affordable housing is needed in Amherst.

This complex would provide the chance for more people of different social economic backgrounds to be able to live in Amherst. With all that is going on in the world, whether it be the pandemic or systemic oppressions to people of color, and those with lower incomes, having affordable housing would serve the most vulnerable in our community. When I was part of town meeting, I voted for developments that had affordable housing as a component, and am excited to see this project as a possibility in our town.

In community,
Jeff Mazur
49 Ridgecrest Rd

From: [Michael Chernoff](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#)
Subject: 132 Northampton Road project
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 9:11:36 AM

Good morning, Ms. Pollock--

I am writing to support the use of 132 Northampton Road for low-cost housing. This is a step the town needs to take to expand the supply of housing. I hope you will support moving ahead. Thank you.

Michael Chernoff
97 Gray St, Amherst, Ma 01002

Saturday, June 20, 2020

Dear Maureen Pollock, ZBA Planner and staff liaison,

As the President of the Board Directors at Amherst Media, I am writing to support the Valley CDC plan under review. We are a 501C3 representing democratic governance, transparency, civic-engagement, and fostering education and services to the most vulnerable in our community. We also value housing and building strong communities for residents in Amherst and have honored those committed to such work like past Jean Haggerty Award recipients. In 2014, we honored Judy Brooks who served on the Housing Authority, and in 2015 Jerry Gates, who helped to establish Craig's Place, a homeless emergency shelter.

Housing and meeting the needs of the most underserved continues to be an area of concern for Amherst Media and the members of the board. We recognize, that on average, housing costs in Amherst are exceptionally high making it difficult for individuals and families to begin solid and stable lives in the area. We believe that the most vulnerable residents of Amherst deserve shelter and a safe place to live.

Few homes let alone apartments, exist in Amherst for low-income residents especially for those families with children. Helping to bring affordable housing to Amherst represents the best of who we are as a community sheltering those in need close to the town center for accessibility to jobs, and near public transportation. Uniquely the Valley CDC is a great project that attempts to correct these economic and historically rooted challenges of development and growth and provide badly needed housing for low income residents.

The board of Amherst Media supports the use of public funds to assist our residents to secure affordable housing in our community bringing much needed diversity to our town. I hope you can support this effort which promises to be well designed providing potentially a healthy thriving community where residents can interact share and thrive. It will have a gathering room, and staff area and will serve the portion of residents in need.

The most appropriate use of public funds and the Community Preservation Act is to house those who are the most in need. Thank you for considering the Amherst Supportive Housing proposal which will strengthen our community.



Demetria Rougeaux Shabazz, PhD
President, Board of Directors
Amherst Media
246 College St.
Amherst, MA 01002
dshabazz@me.com



From: [Hillary Wilbur-Ferro](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#); [Brestrup, Christine](#)
Subject: 132 Northampton rd
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 7:10:02 AM

I am in support of affordable housing and I agree that Amherst needs it. That being said, I am not in support of changing zoning laws that allow the building of a monstrosity in a small neighborhood, the majority of which is owner occupied, single family homes. This project would significantly alter the neighborhood in which families have spent decades building into the community that it now is. I strongly believe that the proposed project size and location are inappropriate for 132 Northampton Road.

My family's home at 126 Northampton Rd, the immediate neighbor to 132, was built in 1880 and my parents have lived there since 1973. Their home is part of the historical district of Amherst. The proposed project site was the original carriage house to our historic home. Their home hosts a private backyard with gardens and grass and a patio. The proposed 28 unit project would greatly impact what has been their home for the last 48 years. It would take a one family home, increase its footprint size and increase occupancy by 460%. Adding a large 28 unit complex to any neighborhood is going to permanently alter the landscape and neighborhood. It's disheartening to know that an aging couple who have invested their life and their assets into the improvement of this neighborhood and their home can quickly get their home altered so greatly by the erection of a 28 unit apartment complex.

While my first choice would be for relocation to a more appropriate site that could better accommodate the town's need for affordable housing, one alternative is to decrease the number of units proposed. The number of single room occupancy units in this proposal is 4 times what is normally allowed on a lot of that size in the RG zone. To increase the number of units to 28 is an increase in occupancy by 460%. This is an unreasonable amount to subject existing neighbors who have lived in their quiet homes for almost 50 years. Affordable housing for families would make much greater sense and would mesh with the existing neighborhood.

My mother and I have met with Valley CDc and expressed our concerns and made recommendations to the construction that would lessen the disruption this project places upon their home. This has included moving the driveway and parking lot to the western side of the construction site, cutting down the existing tall trees and erecting a large fence barrier and plating around the fence. My mother has also included a number of notes and requests on this and I ask you to please carefully read and honor those requests.

Valley CDc's description of the neighborhood to support their project greatly mis-represents the actual neighborhood surrounding 132 Northampton Road. Valley CDC defines the rte 9 strip as the neighborhood to 132 Northampton Road. As someone who grew up in this neighborhood, I can assure you, while many homes on rte 9 are a part of our

neighborhood, the rte 9 strip is not our neighborhood. A more accurate description includes the many side streets of Orchard, Woodside, Dana, Blue Hills and Amity. As a child, we would venture off into the neighborhood to knock on friends and neighbors doors and gather kids to play games at the football field. While I agree that rte 9 is a busy road, the surrounding side roads are not and are filled with family friendly quiet backyards to play in. This inaccurate description of the neighborhood should be modified before considering the approval of this project and making unnecessary zoning changes.

Valley CDC proposes a small parking lot claiming many occupants will not have cars and therefore will not need a lot of parking. If this is the case, transportation would be by foot, or bike. The proposed site is on a very busy road with no crosswalk and a 10-15 minute walk to the nearest bus stop or shopping plaza. To go west and reach a sidewalk, one would need to cross rte 9 to reach the shopping plaza .6-.8 miles away. A long journey on the way back up the hill. I know from years of experience this is a dangerous road to cross. The lack of crosswalk to reach the sidewalk, poor lighting and speed at which vehicles travel this state highway, will remain hazardous for pedestrians and should not be encouraged.

I do not support this project moving forward and ask that you too consider this. Please do not approve this project.

Respectfully,

Hillary Wilbur Ferro

From: [Hillary Wilbur-Ferro](#)
To: [Pollock, Maureen](#); [Brestrup, Christine](#)
Subject: 132 Northampton rd
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 7:10:02 AM

I am in support of affordable housing and I agree that Amherst needs it. That being said, I am not in support of changing zoning laws that allow the building of a monstrosity in a small neighborhood, the majority of which is owner occupied, single family homes. This project would significantly alter the neighborhood in which families have spent decades building into the community that it now is. I strongly believe that the proposed project size and location are inappropriate for 132 Northampton Road.

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My mother and I have met with Valley CDc and expressed our concerns and made recommendations to the construction that would lessen the disruption this project places upon their home. This has included moving the driveway and parking lot to the western side of the construction site, cutting down the existing tall trees and erecting a large fence barrier and plating around the fence. My mother has also included a number of notes and requests on this and I ask you to please carefully read and honor those requests.

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neighborhood, the rte 9 strip is not our neighborhood. A more accurate description includes the many side streets of Orchard, Woodside, Dana, Blue Hills and Amity. As a child, we would venture off into the neighborhood to knock on friends and neighbors doors and gather kids to play games at the football field. While I agree that rte 9 is a busy road, the surrounding side roads are not and are filled with family friendly quiet backyards to play in. This inaccurate description of the neighborhood should be modified before considering the approval of this project and making unnecessary zoning changes.

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I do not support this project moving forward and ask that you too consider this. Please do not approve this project.

Respectfully,

Hillary Wilbur Ferro

June 22, 2020
105 Dana St., Amherst

Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals
4 Boltwood Ave
Amherst, Massachusetts

Subject: Senior (75 yrs) home owner neighbor (abutter within 300 ft) **Appealing Your Decision** to locate a Half-Way House for a large group of men, ZBA FY2020-39

Dear Amherst Administrators,

. Thank you for your letter recently received regarding your decision to have a developer build subject house for a large number of transient men in place of the family house at 132 Russell St, across the street from my home. (Please excuse my delay in responding due to having to keep the envelope unopened iaw COVID virus guidance.) I am writing to express my family's vehement opposition to this "multifamily"(so-called) building in close proximity to our home. My husband, 82, spends time in Istanbul, and, like our lovely neighbors, is also vehemently opposed, and asked me to write.

. I do not get around much, so permit me to briefly introduce us. My husband and I bought this home years ago because we fell in love with Amherst and sing its praises (1) inside and outside of the U.S. and chose this street carefully for its good neighbors and safety (2), intending it to be our dream-forever home (3) (with a large yard and play house) after our daughter began her first position as a Professor at the University of Massachusetts. She is now a full Professor and has two angels, John 4 and Charlie 2 (4). My husband and I were well-placed professionals (he is from Georgetown U and George Washington U) and was Director of the National Budget of Turkey and Undersecretary of Culture and Tourism. We have always been very liberal, you could say "DO GOODERS", but not in the way of those who are pushing this Half-Way House down our throats. We always chose our positions, not on the highest paying, but on whether we could be beneficial to our country and the world. For example, before graduating from the University of Chicago(political science) I was a Social Worker trainee in a Chicago Public Housing Project (5), I chose my first full-time job with a liberal U.S. Senator, Walter Mondale (later Vice President) (6), then the U.S. Presidential Commission on Civil Rights, Chicago Public School Teacher at a housing project school, teacher of English at a school in Turkey established by Ataturk, a civilian administrator with the U.S. Navy, Army and Air Force in Turkey, and an international development project auditor helping the United Nations, World Bank, USAID in many countries, and, most importantly, a founding member of the only Turkish national NGO for transparency and good governance. In Amherst I have tried to give back - be a "DO GOODER" with UMass Round the World Women, teaching English as a Second Language at Jones Library, and the Chaplain at our local DAR (Daughter of the American Revolution Chapter; my ancestors were from the Boston area since the early 1700s and fought in that war).

My objections are from the heart, but they are based on practical experience (see numbers above):

(1) PLEASE DO NOT LOCATE THIS FACILITY HERE. While you can assume that we are all in favor of helping such men who have been in trouble, try to get a second chance, this is a very family-oriented small neighborhood. I have and others of us have had close practical experience of the REAL POSSIBILITY (HIGH RISK) of such a facility. My neighbor directly across the street has for years worked with men who have been in trouble and are repeat offenders (troubled men),but apparently you do not listen to our practical experience. I myself as a Chicago Housing Project Social Worker could not go into the projects without a burly man accompanying me and was repeatedly warned never to use the

elevator – thankfully the projects were torn down. Believe me, I personally have experience (5) that the risks are high. And we have had one other horrible experience where the police were not able to protect our home (which is too frightening to explain). **As an old lady often alone in this house, I will be very afraid IF you go through with this plan and I will do what I say in the last paragraph.**

(3) We have loved and praised Amherst and our neighborhood and therefore we put our retirement money into this house (and thoroughly refurbished it). If I had any inkling that you would put our little neighborhood at risk and ruin our feelings of safety (no matter that YOU THINK it is perfectly safe, we know how high the risk is), I would never have bought our forever home here. Since I hope to stay here, I will have to take matters into my own hands to feel safe. (*Please see the last sentence of this letter and do not put your guess of the risk over our experience of the risk, thinking that I am emotional.)

. Having worked in D.C. (6) and internationally in the Ministries of Finance helping developing countries to modernize their budgets after independence from the Soviet Union, etc., I know how plans get proposed, passed and budgeted for on the national and international level. But, we see that ZBA FY2020-39 was decided before taking us seriously, and is being pushed down our throats, so I obviously do not know about it here on the local level (although I was born, reared and educated in Chicago (and worked to ensure Transparency against Mayor Daley).

. Other objections: - There are many risky inhabitants going to be in this house project : 28 single men. They are not families. When I first came to Amherst, I lived with my daughter for awhile in a complex in North Amherst where there were Title 8 families (mothers with children). Although the children were sometimes unmonitored, I was not afraid.

- I understand that one of the reasons given for the siting of this project is so that inhabitants can walk to shopping on Russell Street, Hadley. This is specious. No one walks to any of them, especially not to the furthest one – Aldi's, where especially bread, milk, eggs are the very least expensive anywhere, which would be attractive to such men inhabitants. Besides, I and other neighbors would be worried having single men walking around like that, besides that it is not good for the area reputation. If your goal really is closeness to shops, locate the site near the shops.

- The living space is listed in your letter as SMALL studio apartments. At **239** sq ft, it is smaller than my living room – and that tiny space is to include kitchen, dining, living room, bedroom, bathroom. Squeezing so many men in like that is hardly conducive to basic comfort and it will never be possible for families. Actually, it is only conducive to the spread of COVID.

. Again, please finally take our objections into serious consideration; do not just say you have done so. Kindly understand that we are not against ZBA FY2020-39 per se, but want it located in a more appropriate location. Apparently, however, you are far beyond such considerations and are already finalizing parking, transportation and “lottery”. Therefore, I respectfully, strongly wish you to STOP and STEP BACK and take the wishes of me and my neighbors seriously, especially abutters under 300 ft. – we do not want it here; it should be in a more appropriate, less family, place.

. If you go through with this plan I will have to buy a revolver for my safety and that of my toddler grandsons (2) who, even during this COVID time my daughter brings them to see me through the glass, have the meal I've prepared on the deck for them, and they play in the yard and playhouse. Maybe my neighbors with two little girls, born in their house, will decide on this too. If anything goes wrong, the sin will be on your head.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Shirley (Thompson) Kurtulus

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