

# Livable Newton

## Coalition for inclusive, sustainable development

*Bike Newton • CAN-DO • Engine 6 • Green Newton*

*JALSA (Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action) • League of Women Voters of Newton*

*Newton-Needham Chamber • Newton Villages • Progressive Newton • U-CHAN*

Dolores Acevedo-Garcia  
 Karla Armenoff  
 Katherine Ballou  
 Pia Bertelli  
 John Bliss  
 Tamara Bliss  
 Alicia Bowman  
 Nanci Ginty Butler  
 Nadine Cohen  
 Matt Cuddy  
 Bill Dain  
 Ruth Dain  
 Susan Davidoff  
 Sheila Decter  
 Patrick Dober  
 Andreae Downs  
 Sarah Ecker  
 Regina Eliot-Ramsey  
 Shawn Fitzgibbons  
 Louise Freedman  
 Josh Gahm  
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 Rob Gifford  
 Tom Gloria  
 Fran Godine  
 Laurie Gould  
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 Candace Havens  
 Rev. Howard Haywood  
 Philip Herr  
 Susie Heyman  
 Mary Ann Hill  
 Kathleen Hobson  
 Bill Holland  
 Meg Holland  
 Paul Holtzman  
 Bill Humphrey  
 Judy Jacobson  
 Marcia Johnson  
 Jonathan Kantar  
 Rep. Kay Khan  
 Marian Knapp  
 David Koven  
 Kathy Laufer  
 Frank Laski  
 Sarah Laski  
 Lois Levin

January 11, 2017

Newton City Council  
 Newton Planning and Development Board  
 1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
 Newton, MA 02459

Dear City Councilors and Planning Board members:

Livable Newton strongly supports the Washington Place development. It is consistent with the Newton Comprehensive Plan and with our own mission and goals. We wholeheartedly support rezoning the site for Mixed Use 4—an option created in 2012 for just such a project and location—and urge you to grant the necessary special permit, so that more current and future residents may live, work, and play here.

We are committed to promoting housing diversity and affordability in Newton, where choices are few and beyond the reach of many who want to keep or find a home. We appreciate that, of the 25% of Washington Place units affordable in perpetuity, two-fifths will be reserved for households in the middle-income range (80–120% AMI), just beyond eligibility for affordable housing by state definition but still not enough to cover current market rents. We hope preference is given to Newton residents for the affordable units, to the extent allowed by fair housing laws.

This multi-level approach to creating affordable housing is something we hope other developers will pursue in future projects. It will enable more current members of our community, such as teachers, police officers, fire fighters, and other city employees, to live in Newton. It will also make convenient, one-floor, accessible living available to more residents across a range of incomes and ability levels. This is especially critical for seniors.

We commend the inclusion of six three-bedroom units, which addresses a need often ignored by developers. This will give families with children and those who want to downsize additional housing opportunities in Newtonville's commercial center.

Bart Lloyd  
 Andrea Kelley  
 Peter Mahoney  
 Wat Matsuyasu  
 Josephine McNeil  
 Joanne Mead  
 Tatjana Meschede  
 James O'Connell  
 Eric Olson  
 Susan Paley  
 Sue Parsons  
 John Pelletier Nathan  
 Phillips  
 Jim Purdy  
 John Reichenbach  
 Helen Rittenberg  
 Dan Ruben  
 Jeff Sacks  
 Risa Shames  
 Carol Ann Shea  
 John Sisson  
 Marc Slotnick  
 Claire Sokoloff  
 Doris Ann Sweet  
 Doris Tennant  
 Marya Van't Hul  
 Jay Walter  
 Judy Weber  
 Lynn Weissberg  
 Marianne Ulcickas Yood  
 Steven Yood  
 Nancy Zollers  
 Ernie Zupancic

*(continued on p.2)*

Regarding the design, we appreciate the variation in sidewalk widths, building heights, step-backs, and façades, which help create a sense of place and are respectful of the adjacent historic district. We are pleased to see increased greenery in the final design, including rooftop and vertical gardens.

We also appreciate the steps the developer has taken to make this a “green” project: pursuing LEED Gold certification, decoupling rents from parking, offering to subsidize MBTA passes for tenants, including Zip Car spaces and adequate short- and long-term bicycle accommodations, widening sidewalks and reconfiguring the Washington–Walnut intersection to make it more walkable and safe. We think the developer could go even further in this direction, however, by including rooftop solar panels, charging a premium for a second parking space, and subsidizing Zip Car membership.

Washington Place is the kind of development that strengthens village vitality and supports public transportation. It will help make Newton more inclusive, integrated, and sustainable. We urge you to approve both the zone change and the special permit.

Sincerely,

Marcia Johnson  
on behalf of Livable Newton

Cc: Mayor Setti Warren  
Barney Heath  
Alexandra Ananth  
Rachel Powers  
David Olson  
Robert Korff  
Stephen Buchbinder  
Andy Levin, Newton TAB

## Livable Newton

**Mission:** *We are a coalition of Newton organizations and individuals who advocate for planning and development that makes our city more inclusive, integrated, healthy, and sustainable.*

**Vision:** *We want a Newton where anyone can find a safe, affordable home in a walkable neighborhood close to public transportation, schools, shops, services, and recreational open space.*

**Origins:** *We first came together as Friends of Austin Street, which we all understood to be a model of modern, sustainable, mixed-use development, and something worth fighting for. Newton needs to be able to grow and evolve, even as we try to conserve our natural and communal resources. Thoughtful planning and development is how this should happen. Austin Street was a great example. We hope it was just a start.*