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Town of Lexington Planning Board

December 29, 2017

Town Hall

1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Lexington, MA 02420

RE: 6 Eliot Road, Submission for January 10, 2018 Hearing

Dear Board Members:

Submitted with this letter are several engineering site development sheets which support and explain a Balanced Housing Subdivision "sketch plan" which is the subject of a January 10, 2018 hearing before the Board.

We were before the Board on November 19, 2017 and presented the Board with two possible development plans for 6 Eliot Road. The first submitted proposal is a 7 lot conventional subdivision. Reminding us, this site is a fundamentally flat, 2.99 acre piece of land, in the RS Zoning District, fronting on both Eliot Road and Pelham Road. From a development perspective, and engineering perspective, it's a fairly straightforward site to develop.

Currently the site has a single major building on it, formerly used by the Gray Nuns, beginning in 1939, and most recently by the Armenian Sisters, both Catholic Orders. Although at this time the building is subject to a demolition delay of up to

one year, the building will not be preserved. Attached to this letter is an engineering report of this existing building by Sammie Kassis, P.E., Structural Engineer.

In November we also presented a 14 unit Balance Housing Sketch plan. I note, the purpose of this initial November 19 presentation to the Board is first to demonstrate what can be done on the site under the Conventional Subdivision rules and the Balanced Housing rules, and receive design feedback and general feedback from the Board and the public.

Some Board Members did not like the number of units, size of the units or the site design.

This submission addresses those several points:

1 The number of units has been reduced to 12 plus 1 affordable unit. The number of buildings has been reduced to 10. Eight of the 10 structures are single family residences

2 The gross square footage of some of the units has been reduced, the smaller and mid-size units made smaller. Specifically, the smallest units were reduced from 2700 GSF to 2250 GSF, the next 3 units in size were reduced from 3500 GSF to 3200 GSF and six units were left as larger units. The added affordable unit is 1900 GSF. Noting that these units have a one car garages, each of which is approximately 200 GSF.

As the Board is aware, the calculation of dwelling unit size under the now revised Zoning Bylaw rules for gross square footage (GSF) includes finished or finish-able attic space, finish-able basement area, garage space, and covered porches. A direct result of this is to reduce or eliminate covered porches and covered decks and focus on interior space, which means getting the maximum gross square footage inside as livable space. In terms of neighborhood community and outdoor living, this is unfortunate.

3 In our first submission, the units were designed with living space only on the 1st and 2nd floor, unfinished attics, and basements with a floor height less than 6'8".

The new unit design keeps the basement space at 6'8", but finishes part of the attic space. This results in a smaller building footprint by about 15%. It also allows more common outdoor open space.

4 In several ways the Balanced Housing site layout design is similar to the Pelham to Elliot conventional subdivision site design. It provides a pedestrian connection between the two roads and a visual connection. It also allows much more separation in placement of the units on the through central driveway, and the location and access for three buildings with two driveways directly from Pelham. Importantly, this design allows a continuous and connected "open space" that surrounds three sides of the development.

5 We have submitted a visual side by side of the conventional subdivision design and the balanced housing subdivision design. I point out the following:

A The setback from abutters for a conventional housing subdivision is 15' side yard and 30' front yard setbacks. Its impact on abutters and on the viewscape from Elliot and Pelham is immediate. In a Conventional Subdivision, the Perry's may build all or only build some houses and sell lots to other builders or consumers. *Each lot will be used to its maximum, entirely consumed for the dwelling unit, three car garage, and amenities such as pools or basketball courts.*

B Setbacks for the balanced housing subdivision are noticeably greater, 80 feet to 100 feet from abutting properties. The viewscape on Elliot remains the same, and major beech trees and other trees now can be kept and be used as site amenities instead of removed.

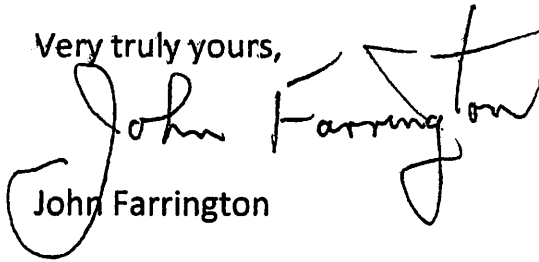
6 There are, I submit, misconceptions about the size and style of the proposed homes in our balanced housing development proposal. Eight are single family detached structures, which certainly are in keeping with the surrounding homes. The two buildings with multiple units, access to which is directly from Pelham Road, will be designed to look like a traditional single family home. They will fit with the medical service and care service facilities locate there.

7 This begs the question of architecture. Every developer builds differently. Two existing balanced housing developments, on Lincoln Street and Robinson Road,

are condominium, townhouse style developments, which is what that developer builds well. The development on East Emerson, Keeler Farm, uses current single family design, the development on Middle Street, Ponybrook, uses architect designed craftsmen style architecture homes (which I add are difficult to build).

The Perry's are long established, high end, single family builders, who build in Lexington, Belmont and Nantucket and whose homes sell at the top of the Lexington market.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Farrington". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Farrington

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Additions

December 11, 2017

Sami E. Kassis, P. E.
President

Subject: Structure Inspection
6 Eliot Road
Lexington, Mass

This report is regarding 6 Eliot Road, Lexington, MA. I conducted a site visit and thorough visual non-destructive inspection of both the inside and outside of the subject property on Friday, December 8, 2017. The purpose of my inspection was to determine the current structural condition of the house. Below is the summary of the observed serious deficiencies:

1. **Foundation walls** – In general foundation walls are in fair conditions with local deterioration especially near the left side entry way to the basement and walls supporting the left porch.
2. **Windows** - ~~are leaking and some windows are missing glass causing water to infiltrate and causing damage to the walls, ceilings, and floors.~~
3. In few locations the ceiling plaster has separated from its supporting elements and fallen to the floor.
4. ~~Mold is growing on the exterior walls in several locations. This is a sign of excessive moisture infiltration. Excessive moisture is the major cause of damage to timber.~~
5. ~~Almost all of the interior and exterior walls are cracked, these cracks occurred for different reasons; some due to settlements, some due to water damage, and some due to expansion and shrinkage; the structure is not heated and open to the weather conditions.~~
6. The attic ceiling plastering has failed in a few locations due to water leaking from the roof.
7. The garage roof is failing with a hole toward the rear right corner. Several roof slates on the garage roof are missing.
8. The garage chimney is missing several bricks near the roof line.

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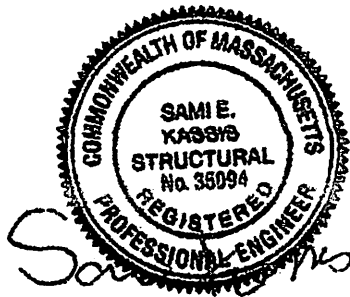
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9. Garage fascia boards are deteriorated and causing the gutters to fall.

The structural components of the home are compromised due to the lack of maintenance and protection from the weather. The structure envelope is in poor conditions and it needs immediate repair to stop the water infiltration and to prevent further damage. In my professional opinion the structure is beyond normal maintenance repair. It needs a major rehabilitation to bring it up to current standards.

If you have any questions or if you need further information, please call me at 617-460-1041.

Sincerely,



Sami Kassis, P.E.
Structure Engineer