

December 9, 2021

Ms. Jane Fisher Carlson, Chair
Weston Zoning Board of Appeals
11 Town House Road
Weston, MA 02493

Via email: Valerie Geary, Zoning Board Staff Assistant geary.v@westonma.gov

RE: 510- 518-540 South Avenue 40B Development Project
Environmental Concerns

Dear Ms. Carlson and members of the Board,

We have been closely following the Board's discussions regarding the 510-518-540 South Avenue comprehensive permit project. The location of our property directly to the east at 502 South Avenue puts us in a somewhat unique position – we are not only direct abutters to 510 South Avenue (also known as 0 South Avenue), but we share common wetlands with that parcel. The Board's review and consideration of the proposed project's impacts on that wetland system directly impacts us and several neighboring properties.

We are very aware of the numerous environmental and wetlands issues of the entire project raised to date. At this time, we would like to raise two substantial concerns about the wetlands that would have a significant adverse effect on our property and potentially other adjoining properties east of the site that have not been addressed to date. We have attached a portion of a surveyed site plan of our property at 502 South Avenue to help identify the areas of concern.

The westerly and southerly rear areas of our property contain wetlands that are common to both our lot and 510 South Avenue. We often think of our parcel as sitting in a bowl at a lower elevation than surrounding land and subject to water runoff, drainage issues, and flooding. As shown on the attached plan, the low point elevation on our property at the border with 510 South Avenue is elevation 213'.

Flooding is already a major problem on our property under existing conditions, especially during periods of heavy rainfall. We have evidence that considerable flooding on this environmentally sensitive part of the property occurred as early as August 1955 when Hurricane Diane dropped 8.70 inches of rain in the area over a two-day period. According to a surveyed plan prepared at that time by John R. Snelling, Professional Land Surveyor, at the request of Albert Mercuri, my father, the water elevation from that once-in-70-year storm rose to a level of 217.5', an astonishing 4.5' above the ground level. This occurred at a time when the nearby residence at 518 South Avenue, the Pope John Seminary, and the row of houses along South Avenue to the west of our property in front of the project site did not exist. Having grown up at this address, I recall several high-water events and flooding in the rear of the property resulting from large storms in past decades.

Moving to the present, the proposed project would infiltrate a massive amount of stormwater and effluent to these wetlands. This is beyond dispute. Stormwater generated by the project's new impervious surface, combined with the inevitable and more frequent large rainstorms would exacerbate existing flooding on our property, a problem that will only be made worse by tens of thousands of gallons of effluent being pumped into the wetlands. We urge the Board and the peer reviewer to please carefully consider this specific situation and its impacts.

Our second primary concern relates to the potential growth and expansion of the delineated wetlands area over time. According to the applicant, the effect of all the water infiltration into the wetlands at 510 South Avenue will be the creation of new plant species and an enlarged wetlands and flood plain protection district. At present, the 100' wetlands buffer zone extends to the east from the vegetated wetlands boundary to a point where it nearly

intersects with the rear of our existing dwelling, according to the surveyed site plan. In the future, any attempt to create more livable space in the home through an addition or the like in the rear will result in conflict with this setback if the wetlands area expands, thus limiting the usefulness and value of this property. Secondly, the wetlands expansion could overtake the usable open space and existing driveway on the westerly portion of our lot, limiting our ability to use our land. If the proposed project were developed, we are concerned about both the short-term and long-term impact of this wetlands expansion on our property, and we respectfully request that this impact be examined during your consideration.

We understand that the application you are reviewing for this project is large and complex. At the same time, we take note that in the visual presentations to the Board, the applicant has regrettably omitted displaying the wetlands extending onto our property boundaries and other adjoining property boundaries in their plans. Thus, although 502 South Avenue and 510 South Avenue share common wetlands, it is presented as if the only impacts to consider from this project occur only on property the applicant seeks to develop.

In any event, we ask the Board to give strong consideration to the potential impacts to the wetlands and other environmental resource areas on adjacent parcels and those who live there.

Sincerely,

Louis and Rebecca Mercuri
502 South Avenue

cc

John Field, Land Use Coordinator field.j@westonma.gov

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator mccarron.j@westonma.gov

Survey Site Plan, 502 South Avenue, September 2011

