

**Thaddeus Thompson**  
**77 West Plain Street, Wayland, Massachusetts 01778**

May 17, 2020

Wayland Planning Board  
C/o Ira Montague, Chair

Dear Mr. Montague,

I wanted to write to share two concerns pertaining to the Planning Board's consideration of the proposed development at 81 West Plain Street and the meeting currently scheduled for May 19, 2020.

***Concern 1 – Inadvisability of conducting the Planning Board meeting on May 19, 2020:***

I would like to request that the Planning Board postpone the meeting scheduled for May 19 to discuss this proposed development. I am aware that the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator issued a protocol in March directing that all non-essential Town meetings and hearings be suspended during the period in which the Governor's Executive Order of March 23, 2020, is in effect. As of today, I believe that the order is still in effect and a decision may be made tomorrow about when and whether to change or lift it.

To quote from the letter: *"Following the Governor's Executive Order of March 23, the Town is only holding essential board and committee meetings. The legislature further enacted special legislation suspending deadlines for permits and hearings. No hearings are being scheduled except to address emergency business."*

I would like to understand why this matter rises to the level of "essential" or "emergency" business. The present circumstances do not permit adequate guarantee of effective and inclusive public comment. This is evidenced by the last meeting of the Planning Board, on April 8, to discuss this topic. During that meeting, Lucia and I phoned in at the conclusion of the meeting to offer public comment. We nearly missed our window of opportunity, as exceedingly little time was offered in which to receive calls between termination of official business and the commencement of public comment. By the time our call was taken and relayed to the Board, several members of the Planning Board had left the virtual meeting and the Board was no longer in quorum, with just three members present. This was difficult to ascertain from the broadcast of the Zoom call and this fact was only elicited when I requested a roll call. The lack of a quorum was confirmed by the Associate of the Board. In addition, Ann Rappaport, another abutter who has tried to as diligently as we have to be involved in the process was unable to attend because the meeting was held midday on a weekday. As she is a college professor, she was unable to make time for that meeting.

Given the difficulty of public participation under the present circumstances and absent a compelling reason why this non-essential business should proceed at this particular time, I therefore formally request that the Planning Board postpone the May 19 meeting to discuss this project until after the conclusion of the state-wide stay-at-home order or until further guidance is provided by the Board of Selectmen and/or Town Administrator, whichever is later.

**Concern 2 - Rationale for an exceptional waiver:**

It is my understanding that a roadway for a residential subdivision requires a forty (40) foot right of way and that “a minimum separation of fifty (50) feet from the subdivision boundary to the right-of-way shall be required.” As I know you are aware, this requirement is laid out in the Town’s Subdivision Rules and Regulations, Section IV (Design Standards), subsection B (Streets), paragraph 1.d (Location and Alignment) and §IV.B.2 (Right-of-Way Width and Street Design Standards).

If my understanding of the Town’s own rules and regulations is correct, it follows that the construction of a street for a residential subdivision requires a **minimum** of 140 of street frontage. The street frontage of 81 West Plain Street is 87.45’ feet. This being the case, the property of 81 West Plain Street possesses **only 62%** of the frontage required to avoid a waiver.

In the meetings of the Planning Board that I have been privy to regarding this project, I have not heard any discussion of why the proposed development at 81 West Plain would merit a waiver of such a magnitude. Perhaps this was discussed at prior meetings, before abutters were notified that discussion of this proposed property development was proceeding, therefore limiting the ability of abutters to raise concerns early in the project’s conceptual development. Nonetheless, to my knowledge, no rationale or compelling public interest has been offered that would justify a waiver of nearly 40% of the required minimum frontage – especially when such a development would have a deleterious impact on the property’s abutters. It leads me to wonder, too, about the utility of regulations for protecting the interests of abutters, if these regulations can be so easily circumvented. As a case in point, at the time Lucia and I purchased our home next door in 2004, we were under the impression that, as a non-conforming lot, future redevelopment of 81 West Plain Street was strictly limited to one residence.

Finally, by resulting in the clearing of one of the last significant stands of woodlands in the Cochituate Village area, the granting of an exceptionally large waiver for this proposed project would not appear to comport with the Planning Board’s stated mission “...to protect, and where possible, enhance our natural resources and preserve the quality of life for the citizens of Wayland” and it’s first guiding value of preserving the semi-rural character of the town.

It is my belief that the proposed project would not only detract from the semi-rural character of the neighborhood and impinge upon abutters, but that it would also have a damaging impact on the property value of adjacent properties. As I described in my first letter of March 8, 2020 and as abutter Ann Rappaport amply detailed in her letter of April 7, 2020, the proposed development would also not be in accordance with the Board’s goal of “enhancing our natural resources.”

I believe I am joined in these sentiments by fellow abutters, as well as others within close proximity to 81 West Plain Street, and I therefore urge the Planning Board to deny this requested waiver.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work on behalf of the Town and its residents.

Sincerely,



Thaddeus Thompson

CC: Louise Miller, Town Administrator