

January 11, 2023

Jessica Rapp Grassetti, Town Councilor, Precinct 7, Cotuit

I thought Monday evening's Twin Brooks presentation was very well done and that both the presentation and the Q & A were eloquent - particularly Rick Presbury, who spoke with authority and from experience. Needless to say, as longtime BLT members and a former trustee, Pieter and I are firmly in support of a solution for this property other than that proposed by the currently engaged developer. We certainly hope that both you and other Town Councilors present at Monday's discussion will work hard to ensure that enough opposition can be raised to the current project to convince at least 5 councilors to vote against it, if the project has not succumbed on its own before it comes to the council.

Some years ago when we were involved in whittling down Stuart Bornstein's attempt to build 22 units under a 40b variance at 671 Main Street, Cotuit, I talked to a former selectman for the Town of Billerica who told me that Billerica had achieved the goal of having over 10% affordable housing in the town by building housing itself, owning it and renting it out entirely at affordable rental prices. He claimed that there had been significant funding available for their projects from gov't sources and that they had succeeded in meeting their goal. It would seem to us that the Town of Barnstable and the Housing Assistance Corporation should study such a method as well, since it is quite obvious that the 40B solution is no solution at all to the type of housing crisis that afflicts Cape Cod, but merely squanders precious land and over burdens our already grievously threatened if not crippled infrastructure. Cape Cod taxpayers want Cape Cod as they have known and loved it, not as a traffic clogged suburban wasteland with fouled fresh and saltwater. If no one else can stand up to this sort of development, perhaps the voters should be left to decide the fate of their own Town?

I was dismayed to hear from Janet Milkman that the APCC's opposition to this project has been what I might describe as tepid and perhaps too tied to their recent map of developable properties. Likewise it seems to me that the Housing Assistance Corporation is clutching at straws here in regard to this project when there could be answers that provide more of what Cape Codders of limited resources need with regard to housing not only in our town but Cape-wide. Given that the fact our nation has awarded over a billion dollars to a hostile entity in Afghanistan for humanitarian assistance and countless more to secure democracy in eastern Europe in the face of aggression, the amount needed on Cape Cod to ensure a livable and attractive environment for all levels of society to live and work would seem but a pittance and not to be left to private developers interested only in profit.

Yours sincerely,

Tom and Pieter Burgess  
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