



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWTON

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November 17, 2011

Mayor Setti Warren
and
Ald. Leonard Gentile, Chairman
Finance Committee
Board of Aldermen
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

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Dear Mayor Warren, Chairman Gentile, and Finance Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Newton urges the Mayor and Finance Committee of the Board of Aldermen to promptly initiate and approve an independent peer review of the traffic planning for the Normandy proposal at Riverside.

The most complicated and potentially troubling result from this proposed development is the traffic that will be generated. The neighborhood and others have been asking for an authoritative review of this part of the proposal, which seeks to intensify the use of this site and completely change vehicular access and egress. As area residents in Waban, Auburndale and Lower Falls have requested, the review ought to include the entire Route 128 corridor from Route 9 up to and including Route 30 and the Massachusetts Turnpike, and as far east as Washington Street in West Newton.

The developer, Normandy, has offered to pay for a peer review of its traffic planning for this project. The city would select and oversee a qualified consultant to conduct this review of Normandy's traffic plans.

Peer review is customary in proposals as large and as complicated as this, and gives local government important, independent information for judging the accuracy of a developer's claims. But in order to do this, the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor must agree to contract with a traffic planner and to accept the grant from the developer to pay for the study.

The Board of Aldermen needs the information from an independent peer review soon in order to consider this proposal in a thoughtful and thorough manner.

Sincerely,

Anne Borg and Sue Flicop
Co-Presidents, League of Women Voters Newton

cc: David Olson, Newton City Clerk