

TO: Cape Cod Commission c/o Jeffrey Ribeiro
FROM: Leslie McDonald, 96 Queen Street, Falmouth, 508-540-0401
RE: Marriott/Springhill Suites, 556 East Main, Falmouth Village



Last night I read the "revised" plans for the Spring Hill Suites proposed for the heart of East Main Street in Falmouth. I could not see any changes that enhanced our east main neighborhood. The proposed building isn't smaller or any less faux than it was at the commission's last hearing. There still are no affordable housing units. There will be no commercial/retail space there to become part of our neighborhood. There will be plenty of **private** parking (visible) in the front and the back overlooking the pond and spilling across Route 28 to another neighborhood.

The "revised" plans show the tall tree outlines to project how the buildings will nestle into the neighborhood. And in the winter???? And the green screen?!? There's no vegetative protection from mother nature and big machinery.

This proposal reflects a blatant disregard for our redevelopment bylaw. It's hard to understand how town meeting could have approved such a weak, ineffective bylaw. It's even harder to understand how our planner would have let us approve it. I think we need the Commission to save us from ourselves. I know your charge is regional impact and perhaps you can view this project as I do.

These developers did not come here as friends. Quite frankly, I think they are opportunists who found a way to bully through the civic process. They have made a claim to a section of road that was laid out in mid 20th century as a legal subdivision by the same family who now has changed their mind! They were within inches of not being allowed to cross Route 28 (big, regional road) for their spillover parking.

This project certainly has a regional impact for the Cape. They will have set a precedent that most here would not welcome. The proponents have shredded the intent of our decade new bylaw. Now they're introducing a character change to two residential neighborhoods and a commercial neighborhood. You don't want to be degrading neighborhoods. All over the cape, the in-town neighborhoods are the heartbeat of the towns. They are very much a part of what keeps Cape Cod special.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. Please read on.

Below I've commented on each of the "benefits" part of the staff memo.

1. this is not a good redevelopment...it's more like any old redevelopment will do.
2. blighted landscape, maybe...but chock-a-block full of new, synthetic building at the cost of three sturdy old buildings with affordable housing and commerce is **not** a benefit to our town.
3. it will be difficult to blend in the new access and sidewalk infrastructure with the existing grassy strips and our remaining street trees and old granite.
4. there was testimony from the operators of existing tourist accommodations that this project will hurt their businesses...we did not hear from the mariner motel across the street which has a new owner who used to work for the Marriott.
5. there's no guarantee of trading locally or even hiring locally.
6. I don't know a lot about water but the Horsley Whitten analysis of that neighborhood caused one project to dramatically alter its plan and another not to pursue. It must be persuasive.
7. there will be those 5 or 6 above average pay, full time jobs. I doubt these will be hired out locally. The other 30 jobs will be low-paying, part time jobs with no security.
8. the business community does seem to favor this project...but not many have written to you declaring so.
9. consistency with the goals of the redevelopment bylaw would involve mixed use "integrating retail, office, restaurant and community service uses with housing"... fostering "pedestrian friendly streetscapes" and "on-site greenspace". The bylaw "encourages sidewalk development and pedestrian friendly storefronts". This proposal only simulates some of this...a faux plan for a real part of the village..

Leslie McDonald

22 July 2015