

Town of



AMHERST

Massachusetts

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Housing and Sheltering Committee

August 8th, 2016

Attn: Matthew Seadale
Department of Housing and Community Development
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Seadale,

We are writing in support of Beacon Communities Development's ("BCD") Site Eligibility application for their proposed 130-apartment mixed-income project in Amherst, MA, including 10% three bedroom apartments and 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. We were pleased to hear BCD's presentation for *North Square at the Mill District* at our recent meeting. The presentation described a 130-unit project with 20% of units affordable to households earning under 50% of AMI (26 apartments), and 10% of affordable units restricted to households earning under 30% of AMI. We understand that Beacon will also apply for 8 project-based Section 8 certificates as part of its application to DHCD for 9% Low-income Housing Tax Credits. This will enable Beacon to serve some of Amherst's lowest income households. We understand that the project will also include some ancillary 1st floor retail space which will offer new economic development opportunities in North Amherst and some open space.

Beacon's proposed plan is consistent with Amherst's Master Plan and Housing Production plans. The plans encourage the creation of new sustainably designed housing, new economic development opportunities, open space, and the goal of creating 200 new rental apartment for households earning up to 50% AMI. Amherst's Housing Production Plan emphasizes provision of a mix of housing that meets broad demand and will reenergize a vacant former industrial site. The program for *North Square at the Mill District* does just that—it offers housing appropriate to a range of household sizes and income levels.

We are also pleased to be working with a developer who has had success providing solutions to the pressing issue of homelessness in our communities. Beacon has done so through their New Lease program, and we encourage them to consider similarly providing housing and support services for homeless individuals in Amherst. The proposed development is located just a short distance from one excellent community resource, the Amherst Survival Center. Collaboration

between Beacon and ASC- as well as other groups in town working on issues of homelessness- would be much welcomed.

We are excited to see Beacon Communities' vision implemented, and for this site to relieve housing demand pressure while serving economically diverse households.

Sincerely,

Greg Stutsman

on behalf of the Amherst Housing & Sheltering Committee

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'G. Stutsman', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned below the typed name and title.