



A call to action to make Roslindale Boston's most walkable neighborhood.

November 21, 2018

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY (zba@boston.gov)

Boston Board of Appeal
1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02118

**RE: Comment Letter
Proposed Project at 3-7 Poplar Street (aka, 732 South Street), Roslindale
BOA Number 871140**

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Appeal:

I write on behalf of WalkUP Roslindale to comment on the referenced Proposed Project, which is being proposed by the property's owner, Russell C. Flynne (Proponent). The Proposed Project is a 2-story 8-unit residential addition to be built above the existing 1-story commercial building at 3-7 Poplar Street (aka, 732 South Street) in Roslindale that currently houses Wallpaper City, a long-standing neighborhood business. We understand that the Proposed Project is not proposing any off-street parking and will require a variance from the minimum parking and other dimensional standards applicable to the CC-2 (Community Commercial Subdistrict) zoning under the Roslindale Neighborhood District of the Boston Zoning Code.

In general, WalkUP Roslindale supports the Proposed Project's program and supports the referenced appeal for zoning relief from the Board because the Proposed Project fits well within WalkUP Roslindale's goal of fostering a more walkable, cyclable, and transit-accessible neighborhood:

- The Proposed Project is directly located in the heart of Roslindale Square, and therefore easily accessible to its services, restaurants, and shops, providing both a benefit to the new residents who will occupy these units and an expanded base of customers for businesses in the neighborhood, which benefits all Roslindale residents. While the absence of off-street parking within the Proposed Project might be viewed by some as its most significant drawback, we view this is exactly the right choice in effectively and wisely using land in our neighborhood's main business district. There is a wide range of sustainable travel choices available in Roslindale

Square, including walking (recently improved with a variety of Vision Zero-based improvements to slow drivers and improve safety), cycling, and both bus (recently improved by the inbound Washington Street bus/bike lane) and rail transit (on the Needham Line).

- Providing off-street parking necessarily drives up the cost of badly-needed new housing in our neighborhood and simultaneously biases motor vehicle use. Emissions from automobile use contributes to the global threat of climate change, the effects of which Boston is already starting to experience in storm-related flooding. By not providing off-street parking, the Proposed Project will accordingly discourage motor vehicle use and allow for more space on the site to be allocated to the units' living area.
- Because the Proposed Project is being built above an existing, single-story commercial establishment and the existing business will continue operating, neither businesses nor residents will be displaced during construction or on an ongoing basis.
- The smaller units proposed for the Proposed Project are designed to accommodate younger people and smaller households, thereby diverting what would otherwise be competition for existing, larger units in our neighborhood resulting from the Boston region's growing economy and expanding population.
- We understand that the proponent of the Proposed Project recently contributed \$1,000 to a crowd-funding campaign led by Roslindale Village Main Street for improvements to Poplar Street. We applaud this contribution.

These are all positive aspects of the Proposed Project and are collectively the reason we write to support it.

However, we want to state on the record that transit-oriented development projects like the Proposed Project, especially those without off-street parking, necessitate the safest possible conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. These projects are most successful with Vision Zero improvements such as those that the city has recently implemented in Roslindale Square, for which we and many of our neighbors advocated over several years. These improvements are the essential background context for the location of the Proposed Project. Unfortunately, the Proponent has called for a reversal of those improvements, claiming that parking is being unnecessarily restricted and that vehicles are being unnecessarily slowed. We fundamentally disagree with the Proponent and are deeply disappointed by their counter-advocacy on these efforts. Essentially, if given their way, the public's quality of life, including their safety, would be subsidizing the Proposed Project.

The Proponent's viewpoint gives us great concern about how the critical Poplar/South corner will be treated during construction of the Proposed Project. We therefore respectfully request that, in addition to BPDA Design Review, the Board condition its zoning relief approval on a construction management plan that maintains bike and pedestrian access at all times during construction and that a copy of this plan be provided to WalkUP Roslindale before the commencement of construction of the Proposed Project.

Thank you for the work you do for our city.

Sincerely,



Matthew Lawlor, 15 Basto Terrace

On behalf of the WalkUP Roslindale Steering Committee, including:

Ricardo R. Austrich, 843 South Street
Lisa Beatman, 180 Mount Hope Street
Ben Bruno, 27 Colgate Road
Lucy Bullock-Sieger, 33 Brookdale Street
Steve Gag, 631 South Street
Liz Graham-Meredith, 6 Crandall Street
Margaux Leonard, 35 Harding Road
Sarah Lee, 65 Cornell Street
Mandana Moshtaghi, 12 Arborough Road
Robert Orthman, 31 Mendelssohn Street, #2

Rebecca Phillips, 10 Tappan Street
Adam Rogoff, 28 Ashfield Street
Adam Rosi-Kessel, 36 Taft Hill Terrace
Rachele Rosi-Kessel, 36 Taft Hill Terrace
Mark Tedrow, 169 Sycamore Street, #1
Mark Theiss, 55 Prospect Avenue
Greg Tobin, 1 Sheldon Street
Nick Ward, 35 Harding Road
Alan Wright, 98 Birch Street
Rick Yoder, 180 Mount Hope Street

Copy to: Timothy McCarthy, City Councilor – District 5
Michelle Wu, City Councilor – At-Large
Annissa Essaibi-George, City Councilor – At-Large
Michael Flaherty, City Councilor – At-Large
Ayanna Pressley, City Councilor – At-Large
Joseph Coppinger, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services - Roslindale

About WalkUP Roslindale:

WalkUP Roslindale, which takes its name from the international movement to foster “Walkable Urban Places,” is a collaborative group of residents dedicated to making Roslindale the most walkable neighborhood in Boston. We advocate for a dynamic, livable streetscape and we support positive changes to our public and private built environment that strengthen walkability and other forms of active mobility as means toward better personal and public health, safety, social capital, economic development, and environmental sustainability. We are led by a steering group of about 25 residents and have over 500 additional supporters. More information about WalkUP Roslindale and our initiatives can be found at walkuproslindale.org.