

August 10, 2021

Dear members of the Weston Zoning Board of Appeals and members of the Weston Select Board,

The Hanover Company's ("Hanover") proposed 40B project at 518 South Avenue ("Weston Whopper") was supposed to provide much needed affordable housing for Weston. From the outset, however, neighbors have been concerned that the Weston Whopper will become a defacto dormitory for Regis College due to the close proximity and ease of walking to Regis through town conservation trails. Neighbors also learned that Cube 3, the architect for the Weston Whopper, specializes in designing student housing for colleges (aka dormitories) and lists Student Housing on their website as one of their primary specialties.

<https://www.cube3.com/our-work/academic/>

When asked about student housing, representatives from Hanover have on numerous occasions denied that they plan to market or rent units to college students. In fact, at the last hearing, Stephen Dazzo from Hanover stated emphatically that Hanover does not market their apartments to college students. However, Mr. Dazzo was either woefully ignorant or purposely misleading about his own company's business practices. A quick search of the internet finds that Hanover proactively and intensively markets their properties to college students. For example, Hanover Alewife, which bears striking physical similarities to the Weston Whopper, is actively and directly marketed to college students at Harvard, MIT, BU, BC, Lesley University and Northeastern on their off-campus housing websites and through Hanover's own marketing efforts. A review of Hanover's online marketing activities reveals the following:

1. FACT: Hanover lists the Hanover Alewife on the Harvard off campus student housing website. <https://www.harvardhousingoffcampus.com/property/view/listingid/387877> "Harvard University Housing has engaged with Off Campus Partners to provide this service to members of the Harvard University community. This site is owned and operated by Off Campus Partners. The listing of rental opportunities on this site is offered as a service to local rental property owners and to Harvard University graduate students, faculty, and staff. Property owners and persons seeking roommates are responsible for reporting information fairly and accurately."
2. FACT: Hanover lists Hanover Alewife on the Boston University off campus student housing website. <https://offcampus.bu.edu/housing/property/hanover-alewife/ocpse5pqx4> "The listing of rental units on this site is a service to local rental property owners and Boston University students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Rental property owners are responsible for reporting information fairly and accurately."
3. FACT: Hanover lists the Hanover Alewife on the Boston College off campus student housing website. <https://offcampushousing.bc.edu/housing/property/hanover-alewife/ocpse5pqx4>
4. FACT: Hanover lists the Hanover Alewife on the Northeastern University off campus student housing website. <https://aptsearch.northeastern.edu/housing/property/hanover-alewife/ocpse5pqx4> "The listing of rental units on the Off Campus Partners website is a service to local rental property owners and Northeastern University (NU) students,

faculty, and staff. Rental property owners are responsible for reporting information fairly and accurately....”

5. FACT: In addition to the above college and university websites, Hanover itself markets Hanover Alewife to college students on several different websites.
 - a. Hanover’s OWN website states: “Hanover Alewife is situated between some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the world such as MIT, Harvard University, Boston University, Boston College and Northeastern University. Whether you are looking for an apartment near Harvard or near MIT....”
<https://www.hanoveralewife.com/cambridge/hanover-alewife/conventional/>
 - b. Hanover lists the Hanover Alewife on ITS OWN website as being proximate to Harvard, MIT and “Tuffs”. “Close to the Squares, Harvard, MIT, Tuffs... plus so much more, these new apartments for rent are where you want to be.”
<https://www.hanoveralewife.com/cambridge/hanover-alewife/map-and-directions/>
 - c. Hanover’s own pdf marketing glossy gives a map with distances from Harvard, MIT and Boston College. https://view.publitas.com/arif-marketing-v9weapvrjgb/alewife_digitalbrochure/page/10-11
6. FACT: On the popular apartments.com website, Hanover describes Hanover Alewife’s neighborhood as follows: “Nestled right above the Cambridge Highlands suburb, Cambridgepark is a tiny neighborhood excellent for commuters and students looking for close off-campus housing. Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Lesley University are all less than 10 miles away....”
<https://www.apartments.com/hanover-alewife-cambridge-ma/qsm8k3z/> And this is the lead, first sentence of the neighborhood description as authored by the Hanover Company or its agents!

Hanover also actively markets other Hanover properties as student housing. Hanover North Cambridge is advertised as "excellent for commuters and students looking for close off-campus housing. Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Lesley University are all less than 10 miles away." <https://www.apartments.com/hanover-north-cambridge-cambridge-ma/jqxyjl7/> In Philadelphia, Hanover North Broad is marketed as near Penn and Temple (aka student housing). <https://www.hanovernorthbroad.com/philadelphia/hanover-north-broad/map-and-directions/> Hanover North Broad is also marketed as near Temple University, Drexel and Community College of Philadelphia. <https://www.apartments.com/hanover-north-broad-philadelphia-pa/540bw8m/>

At the ZBA hearing last Tuesday night, Mr. Dazzo reported specific facts about the small number of college students in several Hanover properties. How did Mr. Dazzo have these numbers so readily available when he also stated that fair housing laws do not allow Hanover to discriminate against students? It was clear that his response was well prepared to thwart discussion of this important issue.

The fact that Hanover designs and markets projects for student housing in Massachusetts and Philadelphia gives context to Weston’s own peer reviewers’ multiple comments about the large

out-size scale of the buildings, the large number of extremely small 1 and 2 bedroom units in comparison to the small number of family-sized 3 bedroom units, and the dark feeling of many of the small units. Several ZBA members have questioned who will be interested in renting these small, dark units? It is clear that it will not be empty nesters or those seeking to enjoy the tranquility and outdoor space of Weston. However, the Weston Whopper is centrally - and strategically – located in close proximity to at least six local colleges including Regis College, Babson College, Wellesley College, Brandeis University, Bentley College and Lasell University. This makes the Weston Whopper an ideal apartment building for college students who don't spend much time in their rooms except for late night or weekends when they are studying, sleeping or partying.

While Hanover attempts to brush away residents' concern about this matter, just a small amount of research on the internet and Hanover's own website reveals that this is a serious consideration for our town and its residents and this issue should be fully reviewed by the ZBA during these hearings. Hanover presented a project that was supposed to provide affordable housing for Weston. It appears, however, that Hanover anticipates this building to be a lucrative rental property for the local college population.

Respectfully,

Lise Revers, 4 Deer Path Lane

Steve and Margie Morris, 2 Di Benedetto Drive

Barbara Fullerton, 3 Winter Street

Tom Goggins, 250 Westerly Road

Anne Grape, 180 Highland Street

Gina Gagliardi and Nick Berardinelli, 10 Di Benedetto Drive

Martin and Fernanda Bourlot, 387 Wellesley Street

Kim and Scott McCourt, 546 South Avenue

Lou and Rebecca Mercuri, 502 South Avenue

Barbara and Richard Gilman, 15 Winter Street

John and Victoria Gifford, 68 Nobscot Road

Steve and Sarah Butera, 534 South Avenue

Jim and Margaret Randall, 326 Highland Street

Amy Silverstein, 40 Winter Street

Paul Nolan, 285 Winter Street

Ernie Balabanis, 751 South Avenue

