

Good evening Board of Selectmen and thank you for allowing us the opportunity to address our concerns with the proposed repeal of the small estates Historic bylaw.

By way of introduction, my husband Joel Valentin I are residents of this town. We are private schools owners and my husband has been working as a network administrator for the town of Natick for over 20 years. We are also residents and tax payers of this town. We enjoy being a part of this community for many reasons especially its historic value.

As you know, we are the owners of the property located at 50 Pleasant Street, which was unanimously voted as historic by the Natick Historic Commission.

In late summer of 2018, we approached Community Development Department regarding our property and sought their advice on working with the existing historic bylaw at that time with the intent to convert our property into condominiums. Shortly thereafter, together with the planning board, it was agreed that the existed bylaw benefited only small properties and therefore it needed to be amended for smaller estates.

Selectmen, in my hand, I hold a drive that contains 2.5 hours of public hearings during which this bylaw was crafted with the full collaboration of the planning board. The making of this bylaw took months to develop with countless hearings and a large budget at my family's sole expense. The board embraced the bylaw and in the end decided to be its sole sponsor. I use the word embrace because of their comments during public hearings.

The bylaw's content was fully discussed during public hearings amongst all board members. They agreed with the language and most of it was their ideas. The 200 percent language referring to a pre-existing structure was amply discussed and agreed because 15% of the project is dedicated to affordable housing, therefore allowing the project's feasibility. Moreover, the single ownership language was also discussed during the making of this bylaw to allow reconstruction of previous structures that sat on sites prior to their subdivisions which is all in this drive. The bylaw was passed and sent to the attorney General's office who approved it this past September.

Accordingly, we presented the board with our project. The first proposed plan was supported by the Historic Commission Board. We also sought directions from planning board members with design and they seemed at that time to be in agreement with us.

Within our first public hearing for the special permit, the neighbors came in droves, they created a website known as stop50pleasant street.org where my husband and I have been publicly denigrated. We were called, not too intelligent to come up with this idea alone, greedy and most recently monkeys, amongst other racial insults. An email was also published by the owner of the website in which he stated" that we need to show him proof of funding to build a school and the like of us could not be successful as school owners. Mr. Peterson one of the neighbors also told us that our project, neither the school nor the condos are welcome in this neighborhood and if we needed permission we would need to go through them.

Moreover In 2007, we were told by this neighborhood that we would not come from wherever we come from thinking that we can change their neighborhood when we sought to erect an 8 foot fence on our property. This statement was made during a public hearing.

On January 15, my husband and I unselfishly withdrew our application for the condos with the hope that this bylaw could save other historic homes.

Why is it being repealed? Why are they seeking your support? No bylaws in Natick has ever been repealed in the history of this town? In order for a bylaw to be repealed it needs to be inconsistent with the law. This bylaw is consistent with the first historic bylaw which was sponsored by Mr. Randy Johnson whom later obtained a permit from the Planning board for his development. To our knowledge only the section that we crafted is being repealed. We only have one question here, WHY?

Ladies and gentlemen, we can assure you that the repeal of this bylaw is solely based on hate, prejudice and discrimination. According to the Planning board statement, they sponsored this bylaw because it was well needed for the town. The proposed repeal is not about the bylaw, its validity nor its affect in our communities. This neighborhood simply does not welcome diversity and will at all cost diminish or eradicate our achievements.

This prejudiced opposition goes beyond the norm; it is terrifying and unconscionable. Nevertheless, murky politics should not be used in lieu of fairness and laws. As good citizens, we believe that our duty is to work collectively to set examples for this town especially with matters involving disdainful behaviors, prejudice and discrimination. As stated repeatedly, this unfair opposition is abhorrent and

with the power vested in you, you should demonstrate that prejudice and hate are not tolerated in our town. This statement can be found on your website and I "Each individual should be treated with dignity and respect, and we oppose all expressions of hatred, intolerance and discrimination". As we all know, it takes courage to take a stand, and hope that you would do just that.

The proposed repeal of the bylaw is a personal vendetta with an attempt to nullify the start of a legacy. Just like the opposition, we have rights and they should be equally applied. I am a fierce advocate of justice and equal rights for all and I will fight this preposterous repeal ideology 'till my last breath. If I give up, we will become putty in their hands and we will lose our voice. Let us not forget that our freedom stops where someone else's begin. After all I believe that we are all another of the same kind, the human kind. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully Yours,

Joel and Linda Valentin