

Evan Lehrer

From: Mary Adams Oleksak <m.adams.oleksak@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 2, 2021 11:49 AM
To: Evan Lehrer; jfulone@comcast.net; Evan Lehrer; John J. Cotton; Andrew Gottlieb; Thomas F. OHara; Carol A. Sherman; David W. Weeden; Rodney C. Collins
Cc: Ryan Spencer
Subject: Let's do our homework on the Mashpee Commons

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Dear Mashpee Planning Board,

Tonight, I will be calling for the suspension of the zoning bylaw discussions until the Town and the Commons have done their homework and entered into an acceptable development agreement.

This letter is written in the spirit of collaboration. The Mashpee Commons is a business with an outsized footprint and influence in our town. As such, the expansion of the Commons presents risks and opportunities on both sides. These notes lay out a few ideas on how such a collaboration could build a brand, economy and environment that benefits both the company and our community.

Cleaning Up the Past: What we didn't know

Just last month, Mashpee voters unanimously approved a \$54 million project which is just the beginning of the solution to severe water quality problems caused by excess nitrogen and phosphorus. These problems are an unintended consequence of 50 years of development. Initially, the potential risks of nitrogen and phosphorus overloading were not scientifically understood or demonstrated. It took decades to identify the problems and solutions. And it will take decades to fully resolve them—with the solutions largely funded by the residents and taxpayers of Mashpee. Let's not add to our problems.

Planning for the Future: What we do know this time

This time, we already know many of the risks of the new development of the Mashpee Commons. Here are a few of the things that we already know and must consider in the planning the next stage of the Commons:

- **We already know that the Cape's fresh, salt and drinking waters are endangered.** So we need to carefully identify the quantity of water use, runoff and wastewater implied by these plans.
- **We already know that Mashpee's streets back up regularly** in the off season and constantly in peak summer months. So we need to understand not only how to handle additional traffic but to turn this new, denser town center into a walkable, bicycle friendly community, something that cities and towns are doing around the world.
- **We already know that there is a crisis of affordable housing on the Cape.** Businesses can't exist without workers but workers cannot afford to live near our businesses. This cannot be ignored in planning for Mashpee's future
- **We already know that Massachusetts aims to be carbon neutral by 2050** (and reach 50% of that goal by 2030). That is well within the life of this new development. Success of this effort is crucial to our state and town since we sit on the edge of rising seas. Energy efficiency and, ideally, net zero standards should be met by this project.

Moving Forward: The responsible course

As we move forward, it is critical to take a step back and ensure we fully consider the risks and opportunities of further development of the Mashpee Commons. We cannot start with a new zoning bylaw before we **think about what Mashpee's future should look like** and how the Commons fits into that.

The only way to do this is to enter into a **process that includes review** of this development:

- As it relates to the Town's current regulations including:
 - **Comprehensive Plan** which was approved by the voters in 1998 and remains the legal foundation for our growth plans
 - **Nitrogen Management Plan** which was approved by the voters in 2015 and has just begun to be implemented and funded
- As it relates to this specific proposal, the developer needs to produce and the Town needs to independently review analyses that include:
 - **Fiscal impact study**
 - **Traffic study**
 - **Environmental impact study**
- Against key standards such as **Net Zero** development and **LEED Platinum** building standards

ONLY after this careful study, we should enter into a development agreement.

THEN, and only then, should we consider adapting Mashpee's zoning bylaws

Mashpee's leaders are elected to represent the interests of our community. This project promises great opportunities but also great risks to Mashpee. Let's do our homework before we make any decisions.

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