

Letter from Winchester InterFaith Council:

“They were glad when the storm grew calm
and God guided them to safe harbor.”
– Psalm 107:30

As leaders of religious communities in Winchester we believe it is our responsibility to lift our voices in favor of the Waterfield Development Project because of the promise of affordable housing that it offers. Well under 5% of our housing in Winchester is affordable and while this does in fact threaten our “safe harbor” designation under the Massachusetts’ law 40B which helps prevent bad development practices, more importantly it makes living in the safe harbor that is our town the privilege of an ever-narrowing segment of people who can afford it. Elders on fixed income are having a harder time staying in town. The people who teach our children cannot afford to live here. The men and women dedicated to safety on our streets live in more affordable towns. Most young families cannot move here freely. Cultural and racial diversity is stifled by high housing costs. Excluding such people who offer so much to the common good of our community is simply too high a price to pay.

Although we clergy come from distinct traditions and recognize that our congregations are not of one mind on this issue, together we recognize a sacred call to create and serve safe harbor in the world through building communities of equity, inclusion, and fairness. We believe we have much work to do to address the inequities that have resulted from a long history of discriminatory practices and zoning. The Waterfield Development Project creates the potential for a more diverse and inclusive community here in Winchester and is a step in the right direction towards a more generous sharing of our beloved safe harbor town with others. That is why we will be voting for the project to move forward and we hope you will as well.

Sincerely,

Rev. Will Burhans and Rev. Judy Arnold, First Congregational Church, UCC
Rev. Anne Robertson, Crawford Memorial United Methodist Church
Rev. Nick Myers, Parish of the Epiphany, Episcopal Church
Rev. John DeNardo, First Baptist Church of Winchester
Rev. Heather Janules, Winchester Unitarian Society
Rabbi Cari Bricklin-Small and Cantor Beth Levin, Temple Shir Tikvah
Rev. Heather M. Hinton, Second Congregational Church, UCC