

Riley, Kate

From: Wendy Zens [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2020 10:27 AM
To: Riley, Kate
Subject: Tobin Project

City Manager and staff, City Councillors, School Committee Members and Administrators, Architects and Project Managers:

Last night's meeting and new plan had two encouraging changes for the project;

1. preserved openspace
2. downsized scale of building footprint(s) from former designs

It is a start, but there are new problems.

1. The southeast corner 2-way drive off Vassal into drop-off/pick-up area below grade:
 - Safety for pedestrians, mostly the students who are dropped on the Alpine/Vassal corner who will have to cross the 2-way driveway on the sidewalk to get to and from school. Pedestrian injury occurred at the Alpine St. corner just 2 weeks ago in the well-marked crosswalk.
 - More tree health will be compromised.
 - The need for good options for vehicular traffic brings the negotiation for use of the existing Armory driveway to mind.
2. The new plan with it's expansive set of buildings with wings on top of 4 stories jutting across the lot is still unnecessarily large scale, better fitting a suburban lot with less residential density. Your presentation point 'Taller portions are away from neighbors' (page 19) still needs to be addressed at the southeastern corner.
 - Could you consider swapping the pre-school/community building location with the Tobin Upper School building and reducing the height? It is oversized given the reduction of the program.
 - How wide are the ends of these buildings? It looks wider than the old building.
 - From tutoring kids grades 6-8 for the past 5 years, I know they need to move around before settling down to homework. Staircases to run up and down would suit them just fine...but not the preschoolers, who need to be on a first floor for safe evacuation in the case of emergency.

I am vehemently opposed to the right side driveway option and opt for scenario B for cars instead of busses at the front entrance, or C with safer walking path next to the building. I also wish for a simple traditional building (maybe brick) with nice windows, not an office park style building like the cartoon character Dilbert works in.