

Dear members of the Bristol Historic District Commission,

We are writing to you at this time as concerned neighbors and abutters of the 145 High Street property that you will be further discussing at your next meeting on March 30<sup>th</sup>. We feel that it is important for you to understand our serious concerns and questions regarding what has been proposed for the property as you advance your deliberations regarding the project.

Bristol has been blessed with many historic properties that have been maintained and preserved for decades. We are indeed fortunate that the Historic District was established almost forty years ago to help preserve and assure that the historic nature of the neighborhoods within the District is maintained for future generations. As members of the current HDC, you and all your predecessors can be very proud of the exceptionally positive impact that has been made not only for the Historic District but for the entire town of Bristol.

We understand that the HDC is not responsible for what may be many zoning or planning board variances or approvals that will be needed for the proposed development. However, we do not believe that the HDC should evaluate the proposal for such a massive addition to the property in a vacuum. The 145 High property, based on long standing zoning regulations, is considered of sufficient dimensions to accommodate a single house. The width and street frontage for the 145 High lot is approximately 60 feet. Zoning regulations require a minimum of 80 feet for a two-unit structure and 100 feet for anything more than two housing units. The proposed development of a total of four housing units on the property would require a very significant variance since the lot is only 60% of the required width. In addition, although it was stated in the minutes of the HDC meeting of February 5<sup>th</sup> that only one variance would be needed, that does not appear to be correct. Both Option A and B as proposed include approximately 80 to 100 feet of new construction along the northern property line (between 145 and 149 High) that is less than five feet from the property line, zoning requirements indicate that at least a 10 foot setback would be required. In addition, a zoning variance would be required on the southern property line to accommodate at least part of the proposed driveway area which includes a setback of less than 10 feet for both Option A and B.

As we considered providing our feedback to the HDC we were guided by the "Guidelines for Review" as outlined in the HDC material available on the town website. In particular by item 9 titled "Make alterations and additions compatible". It states "new work shall be differentiated from the old and ***shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment***".

As we have reviewed what was presented by Mr. Ferreira at the February meeting, as well as the proposed option A and B to be discussed at the meeting on March 30<sup>th</sup>, we believe very strongly that the proposed development to include three new townhouses does not meet the intent and spirit of the guidelines outlined above. We believe that the plan fails to preserve the integrity of the District, and in particular the historic nature of the immediate High Street and Union Street neighborhood. Regardless of the construction materials or design of the townhouses, we do not believe that the massive scale of what is proposed is appropriate for a

legal single house lot in the Historic District. We certainly do not have the vast history and knowledge that you have but we assume it is likely that the magnitude of the proposed construction would dwarf what has been approved for any other single unit residential lot in the Historic District. In addition, although the proposed new townhouse construction would be in back of the existing house, the entirety of the new construction would be completely visible from the street and sidewalk view.

Another concern that we have is the status of the 10-bay garage on the property that was discussed at the February HDC meeting and which has been in extreme disrepair for decades. Following recent HDC permission to clear out debris and remove the collapsed roof, what is now remaining of the former garage includes only a handful of partial wall sections. The few remaining unstable walls appear that they could collapse at any time. While we are not construction engineers, it appears that the remaining structure is far beyond any reasonable repair and likely would never qualify as an "existing structure". Assuming that is the case, any replacement structure would need further zoning and planning review as new construction.

One other point, and perhaps Mr. Ferreira will discuss it at the HDC meeting, is his plan to also develop an ADU on the property. Initially he had stated that it might be included in two bays of the garage but there is no mention of an ADU in the plan submitted. The addition of an ADU to the property would result in five housing units in total putting even more pressure on street parking and traffic in the area.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of the issues and concerns we are raising as your evaluation of the proposed plan for 145 High moves forward. Thank you for all that do to help preserve and enhance the wonderful Bristol Historic District.

Respectfully submitted,

June and Chris Bjerregaard  
159 High

Sue and Mike DaPonte  
136 High

\*\*Lenny and Andrew Pansa  
149 High

Susan Walters and Dean Morris  
132 High

Cindy and Mike Fanning  
146 High

\*\*Barbara and Sabastian Wordell  
51 Union and lot adjacent to 145 High

Nina Murphy and Bart Ferris  
142 High

\*\*Laura and Greg Carleu  
45 Union

Jane Stuber  
139 High

\*\*Andrea and Jason Michaels  
41 Union

\*\*145 High Property Abutter

