

# NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDERS

## PARTICIPATORY POLITICS AND AMERICA'S HOUSING CRISIS

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[www.housingpolitics.com](http://www.housingpolitics.com)

MAPC Inner Core Committee Meeting

September 18, 2019

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN HOUSING POLICY



- Empower small, unrepresentative group to block, delay, or shrink housing proposals

## PARTICIPATORY INEQUALITY

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- Participatory housing processes biased in favor of opposition to new housing

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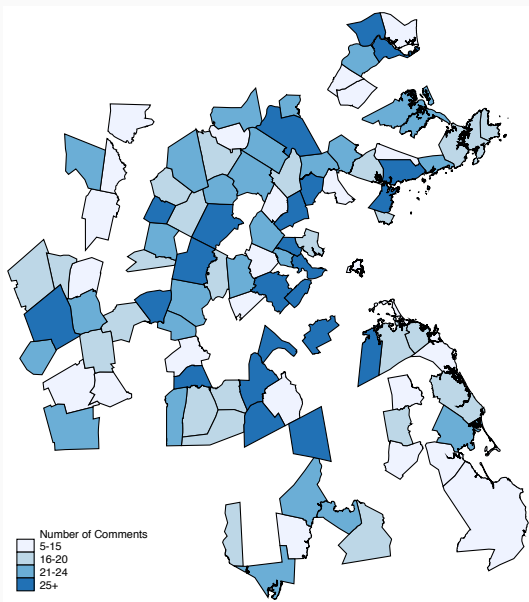
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- $N = 3,327$  commenters and  $N = 4,268$  comments

# TOWNS WITH PUBLIC COMMENTS



Christine Gilbert of 56 Westminster Ave. thanked the board for their efforts and expressed hope for a compromise between the project and the neighbors. She also expressed concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety. Ed Temblay of 76 Wright Street expressed concern about parking and snow removal. Gary Kalajian of 24 Nourse Street is concerned about the height of the building. John Leonard, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 17, 26 Grove Street asked about Deed Restrictions for affordable housing, dumpster location and trash pick-up. Pam Hallett responded that there will be a deed restriction ensuring the units will be affordable to low and moderate income households in perpetuity. Lisa Heinz of Sunset Rd. expressed concern about curb elevation. Bob Levane of 26 Lantern Ln. spoke in support of the project. Michael Vest shared his experience as a tenant with HCA and expressed his support. John Guist, Town Meeting Member, and Neal Mongold, 12 Brattle Place, shared their support for HCA and the project. Dave Berggren of 2 Reservoir Rd. expressed concern about shadow impacts and flooding. Chris Loreti of 56 Adams Street inquired about setbacks, the parking reduction zoning bylaw, and whether the project would go to the Conservation Commission. Jenny Raitt replied that it would. William Thorndike of 1165R Mass Ave spoke in support of the project. Kate Casa of 62 Wollaston Rd. and Patricia O'Connor Prindle of 13 Newport Street supported the project. Tami Kalajian expressed concern about flooding, pedestrian safety and the size of the project. Tom Nee of 76 River Street supported the project. Suzanne McLeod of 61 Mountain Ave. supported the projected but preferred a more unique design. Linnea Berggren of 2 Reservoir Rd. expressed concern about parking overflow on adjacent streets. Tom Mansfield of 11 Lowell Street Place expressed concern about the project size and its shadow impact.

**Atty. Nelson said it will be for speculation. It will be a high quality house for the neighborhood.**

**Frances Hanson, 42 Shannon Road asked, what type of house will be built there?**

**Atty. Nelson said he is not sure at this time.**

**Ms. Hanson asked, if they will be required to finish the road there?**

**Mr. Colantuoni said they will be required to comply with the Department of Public Works road requirements.**

**Alfred Franca, 38 Shannon Road asked, if this house will have a basement, as he has drainage concerns regarding that property?**

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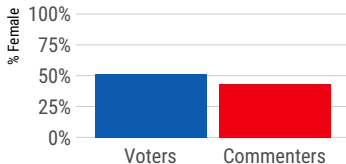
## MEETING MINUTES

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- Names and addresses allow for merge with MA voter file and CoreLogic Property Records
- Demographic variables
  - Homeownership
  - Age
  - Party ID
  - Length of registration at address (proxy for length of residence)
  - Vote history
  - Race (Name matching algorithm)

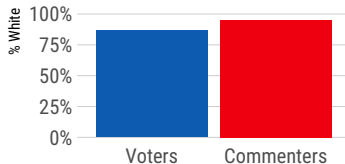


# RESULTS: PARTICIPANTS COMPARED TO VOTER FILE

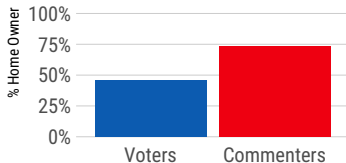
## Gender



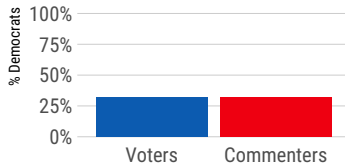
## Race



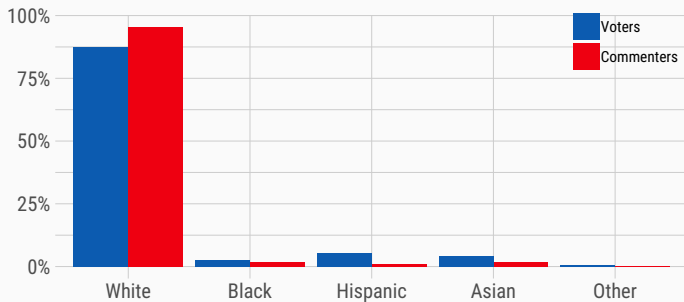
## Home Owners



## Democrats



## RESULTS: PARTICIPANTS COMPARED TO VOTER FILE BY RACE

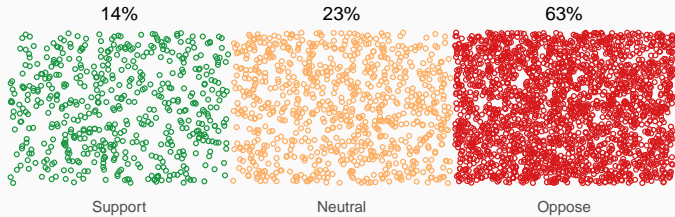


- 3 of 313 commenters in towns that were >10% Latino had a Latino surname

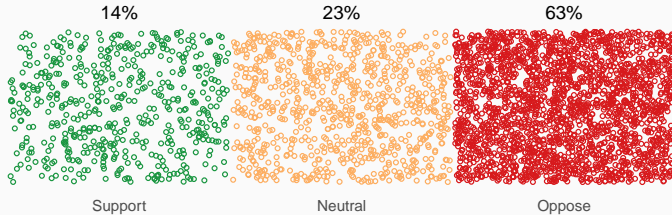
## LATINO SURNAMES

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- 1 of 42 commenters in Lawrence, MA (75% Latino) had a Latino surname

## RESULTS: PARTICIPANTS' POSITIONS

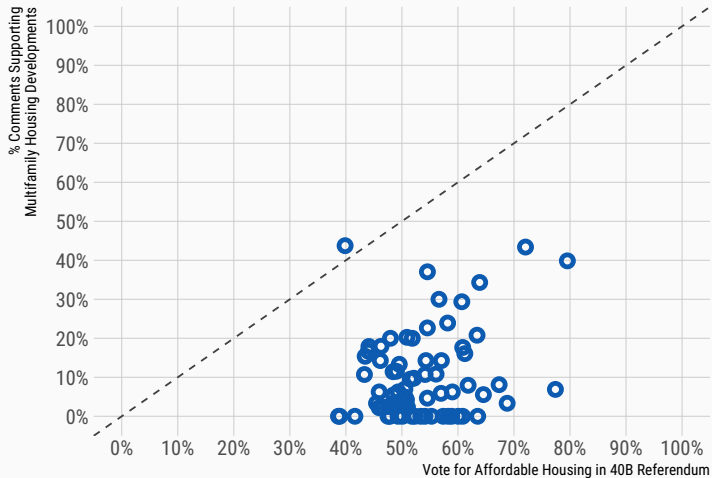


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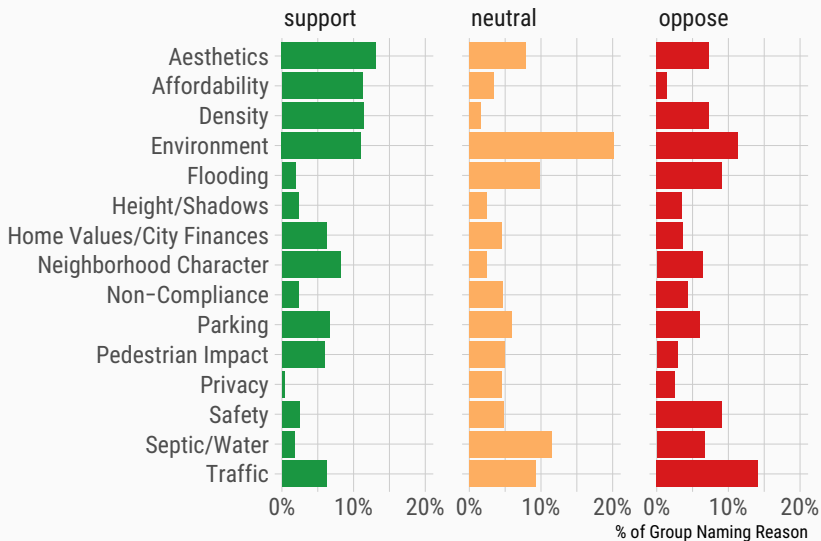


- Predictors of opposition
  - White
  - Homeowner
  - Republican
  - Number of comments
  - Infrequent voting

# MASS PUBLIC GENERALLY MORE SUPPORTIVE OF HOUSING



## TOP 10 REASONS GIVEN BY POSITION TAKEN





## NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENSE STRATEGIES

- High level of expertise (e.g., “He stated that as an engineer he knows what kinds of games can be played with numbers. He gives no credibility to these counts. He added that Merrimack College traffic is not de minimus....He asked for a written report from the DPW on the impacts of proceeding with the facility.”)

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- Importance of neighborhood associations (often empowered and encouraged by local government)

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  - Mobilization efforts may exacerbate rather than address participatory disparities
- Concentrated costs and diffuse benefits of housing developments make it difficult to attract more attitudinally and demographically representative commenters

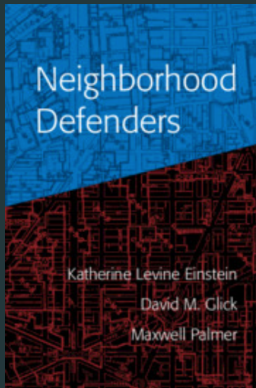
- Waiting period on decision-making



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- Encourage public input on zoning, but then allow developers to build up to the limits of city/town zoning

THANK YOU!



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