

July 27, 2026
Hingham Planning Board
210 Central Street
Hingham, MA 02043

Re: Public Comment — Proposed Development at 709 Main Street

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

We live at 703 Main Street, directly next door to the north of 709 Main Street, and we are writing as concerned neighbors about the project proposed there. We want to be honest up front: we are not engineers, architects, or land-use experts — just a family trying to understand a very large change proposed right beside our home. We are hoping the Board can help us understand it and make sure it is the right fit for the neighborhood.

We have done our best to read the applicant's materials, and a good deal of it is over our heads. But a few things stood out as questions we cannot answer on our own, and we would be grateful if the Board could help get them clarified before any decisions are made. We trust the Board to weigh them on behalf of the neighborhood and the town.

How big is the finished project, and does it fit the neighborhood? The applicant's Floor Area Ratio study reports 709 at about 7,952 square feet — but that is the Town Assessor's figure for the existing property, not the finished project. On top of the existing house, the plans add a new pool house with an apartment (about 1,650 square feet) and a new second unit above the new attached garage — yet the study never states the finished square footage or the Floor Area Ratio that goes with it. Could the Board ask the applicant to calculate the Floor Area Ratio for the finished project, measured the same way the study measured the surrounding homes, so the comparison is fair? Beyond the numbers, the plans change the property from a single home with a one-story garage and a shed into a very large mass including two separate two-story buildings, each with a residence and an existing shed. Could the Board consider whether that fits the character and scale of the neighborhood, and confirm how many dwelling units the finished project will have? The design of the pool house/ADU combo structure is curiously similar to a very nice single-family home. We would also note the study seems to leave out several nearby houses, including our own.

Is this correctly being treated as a "minor" project? The disturbance plan lists 19,311 square feet — just under the 20,000 that, as we understand it, would trigger a fuller "major" review. That plan is dated back in May, and the applicant seems to have added things since (underground utilities, a trench drain, changes after the town's engineer commented). Could the Board confirm the disturbance figure is still accurate with the latest changes, and whether the project should be reviewed as major rather than minor?

Where does the water go ? The project adds a lot of new hard surface, and all of that stormwater is meant to soak into the ground through an underground system. As best we can tell, the system depends on the homeowner maintaining it indefinitely, and we could not find where the water goes if it backs up

or fills in a big storm. Since we sit uphill, we are also concerned about groundwater and the digging along our shared line. Could the Board ask the applicant to explain, in plain terms, where the water goes if the system fills or fails, whether there is any assurance it will be maintained, and whether that much water in the ground could affect neighbors like us?

Does the maintenance plan match the project? The maintenance plan still mentions equipment we do not think is part of this project — a “water quality unit,” and in places “two” underground systems (an earlier version mentioned “concrete galleys”). We understand the town’s engineer flagged this and the applicant said it was fixed, but the version we saw still includes some of it. Could the Board make sure the final maintenance plan matches what is actually built?

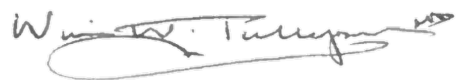
Can the neighbors be protected during construction? Because we are right next door, we are concerned about the excavation, soil stockpiling, dust, tree protection, and erosion control along our shared boundary. Could the Board make sure there are clear conditions to protect the abutting properties during construction?

Does what is proposed still match the Historic approval? We understand the project received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Districts Commission. Could the Board confirm the plans in front of it now are the same as what Historic approved, and have not grown or changed since? One of the proposed drawings lays out sites and infrastructure for solar panels.

We know the Board has a great deal to consider, and we are grateful for your time and for the work you do for the town. We are not trying to prevent our neighbor from improving their property — we simply want to understand what is proposed and feel confident it is the right fit for our neighborhood, and we trust the Board to help make sure the right questions get answered. We plan to attend the upcoming meetings and would welcome any guidance on how best to stay involved.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Will & Kylie Tollefsen", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Will and Kylie Tollefsen
703 Main Street
Hingham, MA 02043