

February 22, 2021

Mr. Chairman and Members,

After reviewing the application for the proposed Amazon Package Fulfillment Center, I would like to share with the Planning Board some concerns.

The Town spent over two years working on a recommendation for South Hingham. As consensus was approached, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the economy to a standstill. I am convinced that, if not for the pandemic, one, perhaps two major landowners would have brought requests for significant land use changes to Town Meeting in 2021. Draft proposals included a village, parks, open space, mixed use, and workforce housing. The South Shore Economic Development Corporation funded an MAPC site readiness study encompassing 4-6 parcels on the Route 3 Corridor focusing on water and wastewater. Two of those sites are in Hingham, A.W Perry and Bristol Brothers. It is my belief that there are regional solutions that would allow uses that, at the end of 2017 seemed unlikely.

South Hingham represents the greatest potential growth area for the town. We are committed to ensuring that the growth that happens in this district is consistent with the storied history of the town. South Hingham contains more land zoned for high-value industrial and commercial development than any other part of town. The availability of developable commercial land in Hingham is a scarce resource, which is why choosing a project and a partner that is invested in the future of Hingham is an important process.

We are concerned that the Amazon application jeopardizes the hard work that has been done over the last eight years by generating a disproportionate amount of traffic with very little return for the Town. What we do not see in their proposal is any consideration of funding traffic mitigation measures that would increase the traffic capacity for South Hingham and lessen the impact of their application. The trips generated by this application will reduce the possibility of creating development in the area that would enhance the quality of life for residents while at the same time increasing and diversifying Hingham's tax revenues.

I am also concerned that their proposal, representing a new concept for Amazon, may not, work in the manner which Amazon believes. I believe that if it is more successful than they believe, traffic impacts will be worse, if less successful, the project will be abandoned. In either case, the long-term consequences to South Hingham are possibly disastrous.

We urge the Planning Board to carefully weigh the impact of this application with the impact on South Hingham and all the work the Town has done on creating a vision for the area. If the Planning Board moves forward with this application, strict conditions need to be created that assure the residents that any variance from the model presented is quickly ameliorated. This would certainly include quarterly traffic reports funded by Amazon, that monitor the impact of this application. I would propose the quarterly reports be provided for four years followed by semi-annual reports. If those traffic studies find that the facility is creating more traffic than anticipated, the use will be called up for review and possible denial.

Regards,
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