

Brookline TAB

May 28, 2009

Letter: PAX supports women's clinic move

Brookline PAX, a townwide organization founded in 1962 as a peace group, strongly supports Women's Health Services' special permit for parking and design review. We have long supported women's constitutional rights to reproductive health services as to highly personal decisions about bearing a child. Those services are essential to women's equality and liberty.

PAX has always been sensitive to the concerns of neighbors, including some of (but far from all) WHS neighbors who fear the effects of abortion protesters. However, aside from many neighbors who actually support WHS' move, the opponents' concerns are A) being unintentionally exaggerated, and B) not within the scope of the ZBA's authority. Medical services at that location are allowed "as of right." The actions of third parties cannot be considered an adverse effect on the neighborhood — by the physicians.

Opponents of abortion and contraception often interfere with constitutionally protected services by threatening and placing burdens on physicians. In many places, these threats have severely reduced the number of providers. Brookline should not give in to the threats and/or allow the permit process to be used to burden Dr. Delli-Bovi, a highly respected and valued doctor. It is up to all of us to support the physicians — and also to otherwise assist the neighbors. We're confident that our seasoned Brookline Police will ensure that sidewalks, driveways and entrances are not blocked, and that the rights of those nearby are not violated by protesters.

*Marty Rosenthal, co-chair (with Frank Farlow)*  
*Brookline PAX*