



HOUSING COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Housing Committee will hold a public hearing on May 22, 2024 to continue its May 8, 2024 discussion on allowing multifamily housing in all neighborhoods of the City. POR 2024 #37.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Housing Committee was held on Wednesday, May 22, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Azeem. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via zoom.

At the request of the Co-Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

- Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote
- Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/Remote
- Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Counillor Wilson – Present/Remote

Present – 5. Quorum established.

Co-Chair Azeem offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to continue its May 8, 2024 discussion allowing multifamily housing in all neighborhoods of the City. Present at the meeting in person was Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD), and present via Zoom was Megan Bayer, Acting City Solicitor, Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, and Chris Cotter, Housing Director. Also present at the meeting was Mayor Simmons and Councillor Pickett.

Co-Chair Azeem opened Public Comment.

- Mary Jane Kornacki, 103 Avon Hill Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against Policy Order #62.
- Joe Adiletta, 68 Walker Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against Policy Order #62 and in favor of affordable housing.
- Jack Silversin, 103 Avon Hill Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke against Policy Order #62.
- Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to affordable housing.

Susan Cory, 114 Washington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were for and against the policy order.

Catherine Hoffman, 67 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were for and against the Policy Order.

David Halperin, 14 Valentine Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor for the Policy Order.

Michael Weymouth, 6 Canal Park, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support of Policy Order 2024 #62.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, spoke against Policy Order #62.

Brennan Waters, 888 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of the Policy Order.

Benjamin Honeycutt, 295 Beacon Street,
Sam Kaser, 35 Highland Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke on the importance of affordable housing and in favor of Policy Order #62.

Carolyn Magid, 71 Reed Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were against the Policy Order and proposed suggestions.

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of Policy Order #62.

Alejandro Paz, 69 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of Policy Order #62.

Beverly Reifman, 47 Wendall Street, Cambridge, MA, offered concerns regarding the density of neighborhoods.

Wendy Weiss, 19A Berkeley Street, Cambridge, MA, supports the efforts to build more affordable housing.

Daylan Kelting, 21 Revere Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of support for Policy Order #62.

Ian McGregor, 18 Amory Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of Policy Order #62 and affordable housing.

Henry H. Wortis, 106 Berkshire Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to affordable housing in Cambridge.

Vickey Bestor, 149 Upland Road, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding zoning and the environment.

Jana Odette, 176 Larch Road, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were for and against the Policy Order.

David Hattis, 434 Franklin Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of Policy order #62.

James Zall, 203 Pemberton Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to zoning restrictions.

Daniel Hidalgo, 79 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of Policy Order #62.

Christopher Schmidt, 25 Banks Street, offered comments that were in favor of multifamily housing citywide.

Helen Walker, 43 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments in favor of multifamily housing and the importance of climate goals.

Daniel Mascoop, 37 Speridakis Terrace, Cambridge, MA, offered comments against the Policy Order due to the environmental impact.

Mark Rifkin, 945 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of multifamily housing.

Will Borchard, 166A Elm Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of multifamily housing and affordable housing.

Tal Seibeg, 1600 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, supports building more housing.

Tiancheng Jiang, 100 Landsdowne Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support of Policy Order #62.

Lee Farris, 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions relative to the Policy Order.

Lin Wang, 100 Landsdowne Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of Policy Order #62.

Graeme Hendrickson, 19 Fairmont Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of Policy Order #62.

Ryan Snider, 216 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of Policy Order #62.

Jessica Sheehan, 86 Plymouth Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of Policy Order #62.

Katiti Kironde, 11A Meacham Road, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on affordable housing and development.

Isaac Rockafellow, 66 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of Policy Order #62.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on housing and rezoning.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on housing and rezoning.

Co-Chair Azeem made a motion to close public comment.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 5. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Azeem reviewed what the next steps are moving forward and noted the importance of being about to provide affordable housing. Co-Chair Azeem pointed out that this will be a long process and zoning language will come out of the many future discussions. Co-Chair Azeem shared that as the process continues, there will be additional opportunities for public comment. Co-Chair Siddiqui echoed comments from Co-Chair Azeem and noted that the Co-Chairs are working to schedule additional meetings on this topic. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the Co-Chairs are working with CDD on a timeline and will be transparent throughout the process in the upcoming months. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared she appreciated all of the public comments and communications that have been received and looks forward to future conversations with the Housing Committee.

Co-Chair Azeem made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 5. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:28p.m.

Attachment A – The City Clerk’s Office received 47 communications from the public.

Clerk's Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for these meetings can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/754?view_id=1&redirect=true

That the City Manager is requested to direct the Community Development Department to work with the Co-Chairs of the Housing Committee to turn their vision of multifamily housing citywide into zoning language.

That the City Manager is requested to work with the chairs of the Housing Committee to create zoning language that effectively promotes multi-family housing, including income-restricted affordable housing with the goal of having viable housing for everyone especially lower-income residents. CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR PICKETT IN COUNCIL MARCH 18, 2024

Perez, Lori

From: Shariqah N Hossain <shossain@mit.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 12:08 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily Housing

Hello,

I didn't make the housing committee hearing on Wednesday. However, I would like to express my support for multifamily housing in Cambridge where I live.

Thank you,
Shariqah

Perez, Lori

From: Carolyn Magid <cmagid@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 5:00 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Public Comment at the Housing Committee 5/22

Dear Mayor Simmons, Vice Mayor McGovern and Councillors:
What follows is my public comment at the Housing Committee today.
Best regards,
Carolyn Magid

Comment:

The community members most impacted by the housing crisis are low-income (at or below 50% AMI). *Cambridge should not adopt new zoning unless it will help and won't harm low-income community members.* While I appreciate all the work that the Housing co-Chairs and others have put into developing a zoning vision, I think it needs significant changes to assure that our low-income community members are helped and not harmed by the zoning changes.

My biggest concerns are

- that low-income residents are not eligible for inclusionary housing without vouchers (and 6000 people who live or work in Cambridge are waiting for vouchers)
- That the zoning will drive even more development-driven displacement
- That the zoning will reduce the AHO advantage over the private market
- That there is no explicit provision for mixed-income social housing

Here are my proposed changes:

1. Make inclusionary units accessible to low-income residents by creating a substantial program for deep affordability that subsidizes them down to 30%AMI.
2. Create concrete anti-displacement guardrails including limits of redeveloping tenant-occupied buildings, right of return, strengthening the condo conversion ordinance, expanding legal assistance.
3. Create a social housing revolving fund to create mixed-income housing with a substantial affordable component and ensure that zoning supports it.
4. Assure that any zoning changes don't reduce the AHO advantage over the private market.

Finally, I very much appreciate that the final policy order asked that the co-chairs work with *a group of stakeholders including affordable housing experts, developers and residents to develop a cohesive vision and draft zoning language.* I hope you will include in that group some of the many residents who have ideas about how to assure that zoning changes protect our low-income community members.

Thanks.
Carolyn Magid
71 Reed St.

Perez, Lori

From: Tina Lieu <tinalieu@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 4:03 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Pls support multifamily housing citywide

Dear City Councilors,

I ask you to support the initiative to allow multifamily housing citywide to enable our city to continue to grow and support those who wish to stay in Cambridge, particularly our younger generation. To be the vibrant and progressive city that we espouse, outdated exclusionary zoning needs to go in order to address the ongoing housing crisis. We can't continue under the illusion that we are not an urban city.

Sincerely,
Tina Lieu
37 Huron Ave #1, Cambridge, MA 02138

Perez, Lori

From: Gail Charpentier <gailcharp@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 3:37 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Proposal Multifamily Housing

Dear Cambridge City Councilors,

I write to urge you to join Councilors Siddiqui and Azeem in the process they have started to increase housing by allowing two-family, triple-decker and six-story multifamily buildings throughout Cambridge.

I have lived at 19 Murdock Street (02139) for 25 years and I love Cambridge. But I don't like how exclusive our city has become, with rent and real estate ownership costs allowing, generally, only wealthy people to move here.

Please join these two Councilors in their housing leadership.

Respectfully,

Gail Charpentier
19 Murdock St
gailcharp@verizon.net

Perez, Lori

From: btantony (null) <btantony@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 2:51 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Manager; City Clerk
Subject: Re: Upzoning - POR #37

Dear Councilors,

Please include the paragraph below as part of my submission regarding PO #37:

Sixth, recently the Healey-Driscoll Administration has announced that it has formed a PAC to assist local supporters in pursuing housing initiatives. See, *Boston Globe*, "Healey launches political advocacy group to dive into local housing fights," May 16, 2024, by Jon Chesto. The formation of this PAC is aimed at permitting the state to support local pro-housing efforts issues in a way that may not otherwise be permitted under existing law. And PAC donors do not have to be disclosed under current state law.

While the legal status of such an undertaking is not clear, the fact that state officials through a PAC can donate funds to local housing efforts and the source of said funds does not have to be disclosed is very troubling.

I am requesting that if any Councilor or city office receives funds from this new PAC, that such officials voluntarily disclose to the Cambridge public that they have received such funds in connection with zoning issues in Cambridge. Further, if any City Office or Councilor knowingly works with a local group that is receiving such funding, I request that the City Office disclose publicly that they are working with a group reciting this PAC money.

Thank you,

Barbara Anthony
Mass. Ave.
Cambridge

On May 22, 2024, at 2:21 PM, btantony <btantony@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Councilors,

I write to the Housing Committee and to all of you regarding your hearing on POR #37 that pertains to "allowing multifamily housing in all neighborhoods of the City.' This benign description of this procedure masks what has already become very public information:

Third, upzoning to six stories will not produce appreciable numbers of affordable housing units for low income people.

There are some who in their zealotry will say we cannot take the time to give real notice and obtain input. They will say Cambridge has to build as much housing as possible as quickly as possible, otherwise catastrophe will ensue for the entire region. Some will also argue that anyone anywhere who wants to live in Cambridge has a human right to go so.

I submit, such arguments are a smokescreen to steamroll thoughtful solicitation of input and valid debate. The building envisioned by the six story plan will produce small numbers of affordable housing but large numbers of market rate and luxury units. The building envisioned by the proponents will result in a Cambridge where green space is even scarcer than it currently is, where buildings abut the sidewalk and where the quality of life is not suited to families, seniors, of mature couples or mature singles. It will be a city geared toward living units primarily for sleeping and located close to entertainment

Fourth, who benefits from this direction? Developers? Contractors? and the affluent who can afford rents of \$4k and more for “luxury units?.” We have lots of wonderful young people living in Cambridge who work at high paying tech and bioscience jobs in Cambridge and the Boston area. They are fine and will continue to thrive. If their compatriots can’t live in Cambridge, they live in the Seaport, Downtown or other luxury housing built for them in nearby suburbs. Cambridge is very attractive to young people, it always has been. But their world will not end if their luxury unit has to be elsewhere.

We have a shortage of LOW INCOME and AFFORDABLE housing. Cambridge should be focused and planning on how to generate housing to fill that need rather than simply open up the city to the development of more market rate and luxury units.

Fifth, High density and quality of life are often mutually exclusive unless one has the means to live above it all. There is a balance in each neighborhood that involves green space, quality of life issues, convenient shopping, traffic, schools, recreational opportunities and density. Striking that balance determines the quality of life that residents enjoy. If we only want buildings that will house singles or doubles in a unit, and fit as many units as possible in a structure, where life is lived not at home but in neighborhood entertainment venues, then this upzoning is for your vision of Cambridge.

If on the other hand, you value the discipline of urban planning and a thoughtful approach to providing more affordable units for low income people, including seniors and working couples and families, then you must acknowledge that this direction is wrong for the city and its residents. It’s time to start over and to respect the process and to focus on an outcome that will benefit primarily low income people rather than developers or our tech or bio-science sectors primarily.

Sincerely,
Barbara Anthony
Mass. Ave.,
Cambridge

Perez, Lori

From: Joshua Goodman <jgoodman100@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 2:06 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Allowing Multifamily Citywide and Fixing our Housing Crisis

Dear City Council,

I'm writing to urge your support of the latest proposal to allow multifamily housing citywide. I wish I could attend today's meeting to make a public comment but have work and childcare obligations that prevent this.

I've lived in Cambridge now for almost 20 years and have been a homeowner in Porter Square since 2010. Our 3 kids all attend Cambridge public schools. We hope to stay here long term and hope that our children can afford to live in this city, but the current housing shortage makes that very unlikely. We almost left Cambridge a few years ago when trying to find housing to fit our growing family and, upon failing, struggled with the Planning Board over a simple home renovation (costing us months and thousands of dollars in lawyers' fees). The current state of zoning in Cambridge is a disaster for all but incumbent homeowners who want to keep elevated the price of their homes (their main assets). This is not a way to make public policy for an inclusive community.

The key is using every tool at our disposal to increase housing supply. Removing the current zoning restrictions that artificially restrict this supply should go a long way to lowering the cost of living here. Austin, Texas has had this experience recently, with rents and housing prices dropping substantially after allowing more building of market rate housing. We can do the same here, so that we and our kids can stay here in the long run, rather than flee to parts of the country that allow housing to be built more easily.

The future of Cambridge as a vibrant, diverse and welcoming city heavily depends on us getting this right. I fully support this initiative and will continue to vote in city elections almost exclusively for candidates that make expanding housing supply a priority.

Josh Goodman

4) Because Inclusionary Housing only helps people with income 50% AMI, we need to create a substantial program for deep affordability that subsidizes Inclusionary units down to 30% (AMI), for example by city-funded vouchers.

5) Support social housing by creating a social housing revolving loan fund to create mixed-income housing with a substantial affordable component. Ensure that social housing is explicitly able to take advantage of density and height bonuses and is not inhibited by Inclusionary also getting a density bonus. Consider creating a social housing overlay with an enhanced height bonus compared to Inclusionary.

6) The primary objective of the AHO is to make site acquisition easier, but this zoning would dramatically reduce the AHO advantage and potentially inhibit that goal. We ask that you ensure the AHO continues to have an advantage compared to market housing. Currently the AHO allows four floors in the neighborhoods as of right, where the proposed zoning with Inclusionary would allow 6 floors as of right. (As a reminder, on corridors, the AHO allows 12 floors and 15 floors in the squares.)

For example, the zoning might allow in the neighborhoods, as of right, 4 floors of Inclusionary housing, 5 floors of social housing, and 6 floors of 100% affordable housing. The height and number of units would be related to the proportion of lower-income residents who benefit.

7) I encourage the Council to ask for a public process for people to apply to be in the stakeholder group called for in the recent multi-family policy order.

8) I encourage CDD and the Housing Committee to hold 2 or 3 town hall style discussions, where members of the public can ask questions and discuss these proposals. This was done during the Envision planning process. Public comment at a hearing, while helpful, does not create the kind of dialogue and understanding needed for significant zoning change.

9) It would be helpful if the Council again asks CDD to provide estimates about the likely outcome of this changed zoning, especially with regard to low income people. The Council already asked for that, but it was not included in the CDD presentation.

Sincerely,

Lee Farris, President
Cambridge Residents Alliance: *Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge*
<https://www.cambridgeresidentsalliance.org/>

Perez, Lori

From: Emma K Batson <emmabat@mit.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 1:00 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: In support of multi-family housing in Cambridge

Dear City Council,

I can't make it to today's housing committee meeting, but I wanted to express my strong support for changing zoning laws to allow more multifamily housing to be built. I've lived and rented in Cambridge since 2016 and would love to stay forever, but housing costs are a huge difficulty. Mid-rise, triple decker, and other multi-family housing styles are the main reason myself and my friends have been able to stay as long as we have.

I also feel that dense housing in convenient locations is critical for equity and for climate justice. The ability to live near my friends and place of work allows me to bike, walk, or take public transit most anywhere without needing a car.

Thank you for your efforts in this direction, and please continue to work to make Cambridge affordable and inclusive for all.

Best,
Emma Batson
Inman Square

Perez, Lori

From: Wyatt Berlinic <wyatt.berlinic@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 11:33 AM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: Housing Committee Ronayne Petition

Good morning,

I signed up to give public comment at today's meeting but realized I have a work conflict and can't attend.

I'd like to express that, while I support the changes being suggested w.r.t. the petition, I do not think it goes far enough towards ending exclusionary zoning. I would like to see these changes rolled into the broader, more expensive efforts by the council to end exclusionary zoning as the lack of changes to things like height and setback requirements mean these changes will not create real change.

Thank you,
Wyatt Berlinic

Perez, Lori

From: Diane C Norris <diane@charyknorris.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 10:26 AM
To: City Clerk; City Council; City Manager
Subject: Housing Committee Meeting 5/22 Feedback

21 May 2024

Dear Cambridge City Councilors, and Members of the Housing Committee:

I wrote a letter last week about a concern for visualizing scale and setbacks with the proposed CDD upzoning and included some basic photos. Just to be clear, I am fine with much of the new Alewife and Fresh Pond housing on larger lots that allows space for extensive site planning. I do understand now that 8,000 sf is needed to have any affordable housing included in market rate development. I do have a concern about the implications of the upzoning for smaller lots under 8,000 sf.

I challenge every homeowner to take just one city block where they live. Let's say think about just one project that happens on each street of that block that maximizes what they can do with the proposed CDD zoning depending on the size of their lot, so just 4 projects.

Think about the neighbors you know and their personal stories on that block. There is typically a diverse range of homeowners and ages, especially multigenerational homeowners. Some elderly, quite vulnerable and need support. Some may see a teardown from their backyard just 4 houses away with infill of 2 buildings of 6 storey condos, trees and gardens lost that are shared visually by all the backyards on that city block. Some may have a new house/condos built next door but 2 stories taller and reduced setbacks so all natural light is lost on that side with high fencing added. Others may see a gut renovation for a luxury single family with asphalt parking in the rear and trees lost and replaced with fake turf and private soccer goalies. So, a random domino effect of change that affects far more than adjacent abutters. Much of this is inevitable and happens anyway, that is Cambridge. Some is totally fine, but the issue here is that the proposed CDD upzoning seems primarily driven by market forces and not maintaining existing neighborhood urban fabric.

When walking a city block, it is clear that some sites are better suited for higher density than others. I realize spot zoning is not allowed, but are there nuances like the busier streets and corridors? There can be agreement on some density increases, can there be a neighborhood process for building consensus on where density would go in their neighborhood? How can the City prevent lawsuits by angry homeowners who are uninformed? Although rare, some sites have owners who have abandoned their property, could the City find ways to purchase (One example on Concord Ave near Alewife)?

Is there any way that Cambridge could require that existing multi-families cannot be changed to single family homes because that is a critical existing problem that is currently reducing housing stock? It may be illegal, but are there nuances/incentives? 80 Alpine is a prime example on a small lot - was 2 fam 3,006 living area/3,800 sf lot = .79 FAR, now on market as single fam 4,176 living area/3,800 land = 1.09 FAR, (asked \$5.2 million, now \$4.85 million (could have been 4 units with Ronayne, none affordable, would the developer have done anything differently with proposed zoning?)

The Boston Globe article that compares the Cambridge upzoning proposal to Paris is very misleading. Paris is a great example of extensive social housing to keep lower and middle income residents in the city. A quarter of residents live in government owned housing. Paris social housing is not driven by market forces whereas the Cambridge upzoning is.

Perez, Lori

From: j hannon <marchanthannon@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 10:22 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Multifamily Housing Zoning Policy Order

Dear Councillors,

I strongly urge you to keep moving this PO forward with the Housing Committee Co- Chairs working with CDD to draft appropriate language to advance this zoning change.

Please be mindful that zoning language alone will be insufficient and policies will need to be established to enable tenant protections, anti displacement protections, and tenant legal assistance to name a few. Also and very importantly please protect the AHO in writing this zoning language.

Thank you,

Jean Hannon
7 Woodrow Wilson Ct.

Perez, Lori

From: Mal Malme <mal.malme@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 9:46 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Comment for Today's 3p Multi-Family Hearing

Dear Cambridge City Council Members and City Manager,

I am writing regarding the proposal up for discussion as today's hearing.
Here are my concerns regarding this current proposal:

- Establish specific and concrete anti-displacement guardrails to prevent new zoning from causing substantial redevelopment-driven displacement. This could include limitations on redeveloping tenant-occupied buildings (no density bonus), creating a right of return policy through the inclusionary units, strengthening the condo conversion ordinance, and/or expanding legal assistance.
- Create a substantial program for deep affordability that subsidizes Inclusionary units down to 30% Area Median Income (AMI) so that more people can benefit from any inclusionary units that are created by this zoning. This could be done through a voucher program that subsidizes at least 25% of new inclusionary units down to 30% AMI. In other words, open 25% of new Inclusionary units for people who make at least 30% AMI, and subsidize the rent up to contract rent via a "municipal voucher."
- Create a social housing revolving fund to create mixed-income housing with a substantial affordable component. Ensure that social housing is explicitly able to take advantage of density and height bonuses and is not inhibited by Inclusionary also getting a density bonus. Consider giving social housing an enhanced height bonus compared to Inclusionary.
- Restrict down-conversions; do not allow anyone who takes advantage of this zoning the ability to reduce the number of units that exist on the parcel.

We also have concerns about how this zoning would impact the Affordable Housing Overlay.

In short, we support the goal of ending exclusionary zoning. Cambridge needs more supply, most particularly of affordable housing. But our Councillors must dig deeper to truly address the harms that have been caused by redlining and other exclusionary practices, to create a Cambridge that is affordable to all.

Thank you for listening to these concerns. I have lived in Cambridge, specifically in Central Square for over twenty years, and I love my neighborhood. I want to live in a city that celebrates and welcomes diversity, people from many cultures, ethnicities, backgrounds to continue to make Cambridge a wonderful city. But it needs to be affordable and Cambridge is certainly up for creating a city that welcomes all.

Thank you.

Perez, Lori

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 9:30 AM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Siddiqui, Sumbul; McGovern, Marc; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Wilson, Ayesha; City Clerk
Cc: Simmons, Denise; Pickett, Joan; Nolan, Patricia; Toner, Paul; City Manager; O'Riordan, Owen; Farooq, Iram
Subject: Truly game changer alternative multifamily housing in all neighborhoods of the City. POR 2024 #37.

Dear Cochairs and Members of the Housing Committee,

I am writing to speak against Policy Order (PO) that is without a long-term vision of what we want Cambridge to look like in 25 - 50 years.

Cambridge is like an old, stately house with lots of green space and mature trees that is home to a vibrant multicultural population with tech giants ever pushing the frontiers of technology and universities providing the brain power of these giants. Sure, it needs more space and modernizing for 21 century reality but

1. it needs to be done cost effectively and with future vision, not by chipping away at the foundation that had been holding it up all these years.
2. You don't do it by paving over the driveway and parking area as the Accessory Parking Ordinance Amendment that eliminated minimum parking requirements without alternative transportation infrastructure.
3. You don't do that by building a 6-story building on its garden as of right as Policy Order 24-62 calls for.

The Boston Globe reported "This will be game changing if it passes," said Azeem. "[We would actually see what we can achieve when the prohousing movement wins.](#)" Just look at what [NYC comically did with their derelict tenements in the Bronx.](#)

A true game changer, pro housing policy order would be to reintroduce PO #4 from 4/24/2023 asking Amendment the City Manager to bring "together a working group to conduct outreach through neighborhood groups including the Fresh Pond Residents Alliance, and any other nearby neighborhood groups and city departments, in order to discuss and **review options for use of the BB&N Field.**" It was on the Awaiting Report List of January 8, 2024 City Council Meeting agenda as Awaiting Report 23-28 but was **PLACED ON FILE DUE TO END OF LEGISLATIVE TERM.**

Please recommend replacing POR 24-62 with a Policy Order requesting the City Manager to report back on a **development plan for the BB&N field** that will integrate the "pro-housing" vision of the sponsors of POR 24-62 with a multi-use village that includes among others affordable housing, cultural center and small businesses. A village that has low rise buildings in its perimeter to blend in with its surrounding neighborhood, slowly rising towards the center. Location couldn't be any more ideal with

Perez, Lori

From: Jeff Taylor <jeff.taylor11@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 8:37 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Exclusionary Zoning

Please do not amend the current zoning laws to include 6 story multi-family housing throughout Cambridge.

Jeffrey Taylor
25 Maple Ave

Perez, Lori

From: Annette LaMond <annettelamond@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 8:12 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager; Joe Moore
Subject: Consequences of Zoning Changes Need More Analysis

Dear Housing Committee Members,

We are writing in support of the excellent points in Suzanne Blier's letter.

As a general principle, if a social goal is worthy (and affordable housing is), elected officials should address the goal with direct policy measures. Regulatory changes are an indirect and inefficient policy instrument. In the case of affordable housing, the proposed zoning changes may add some affordable housing, but they will also have negative environmental consequences and facilitate the development of luxury housing.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond & Joe Moore
7 Riedesel Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138



Perez, Lori

From: carol.weinhaus@outlook.com
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 11:39 PM
To: City Council; City Manager
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Comments on the Citywide Upzoning Petition: Housing Committee Meeting on May 22nd

Dear City Council, City Manager, and Members of the Housing Committee,

I strongly urge you not to vote on upzoning the entire City of Cambridge before you take the following points into account.

Please address the following questions:

What are these petitions attempting to do? If it is to bring down housing prices, will the removal of our current sustainable housing to build more expensive market rate housing achieve this, or will it fuel still more housing cost increases?

With the removal of more historic homes, green spaces, and trees, will Cambridge be the kind of city we wish to pass on to the next generation, much less remain of interest to those who want to live here now and in the near future?

With no backyards and side yards, children will have to travel to have a place to play. Wildlife will be forced out of the City.

Of the two current up-zoning initiatives, the Ronayne petition has the benefit of balancing more density with preserving as much of the urban fabric, green spaces and trees, as well as historic neighborhood features and buildings. The Ronayne petition leaves the current requirements for setbacks and private open space, and the 35-foot height limit, unchanged.

If you move forward without discretionary review (BZA) you will remove the ONE way that local residents can see plans for and provide insight into new buildings or additions that go into their neighborhoods.

Allowing greater density in districts A-1, A-2 and B also will lead to a bonanza of teardown activity. While campaigning for City Council last fall, Hao Wang spoke movingly of how, after the fact, people of Beijing regretted tearing down the old historic neighborhoods. CHC Demolition Delay review should be strengthened. And BZA review, including the opportunity for neighborhood input, must be preserved.

BZA and CHC review are really critical in an already dense historic city such as ours, and the Housing Committee proposal seeks a plan that would be “without discretionary review” (page 14 of Housing Chairs’ May 8th slide deck.

Please support the following:

1. Any 5 or 6-story building (or higher) must be located only on the wide corridors with more than 2 lanes of traffic. For narrow corridors, you will create canyons. Also, the leap from 4 stories to higher is massive in many neighborhoods.
2. Green space and trees are critical for both climate, and health/environmental equity. Do not arbitrarily remove them citywide for out-of-scale buildings, resulting in larger expensive single-family housing.

Perez, Lori

From: Phyllis Simpkins <phyllissimpkins52@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 9:30 PM
To: City Manager
Cc: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: Wednesday housing committee meeting; citywide upzoning

Dear Manager Huang and Cambridge City Councilors,

Housing has been and continues to be the issue about which most residents have a passionate opinion. However, more housing will never be a one size fits all program. Please consider the following:
-multi family housing citywide is desirable but with no increased heights, nor decreased green space. And it's essential the BZA maintain review of new housing and additions to avoid both overcrowding and more "McMansions. Further, it's critical to include resident review and perspective regarding new housing in the neighborhood in which they and their families live. Cambridge is not Houston, nor Brooklyn, Raleigh, or Grand Rapids and these cities are not like each other. Hence, copying their formula is not appropriate.

The housing committee needs to understand that all neighborhoods have different characteristics; forget the "slap dash, hurry up" mentality and take a reasonable thoughtful approach. In a city as dense as ours, no proposal without discretionary review (now including no required parking) is bound to have problems. Planning and evaluating today will help avoid future mistakes that can't be changed.

Thank you for your consideration.
Phyllis Simpkins
249 Huron Avenue

Sent from my iPhone

stated aims at the outset -- no such learning can occur. The Cambridge Development Department must do an input-output analysis (with criteria-likely impacts) *and make the provision for a follow-up report.*

I have heard of other proposals to increase subsidized housing in Cambridge (namely the Ronayne and Donovan petitions); however, I am sadly not tremendously familiar with them. What I *do* understand is that a) developers often stop at 9 units in order to avoid having to add inclusionary homes, and b) that market-rate housing developers bid against "public housing" developers. My concern with the proposal currently before the Council is that market-rate housing developers will be able to far outbid public housing developers -- to disastrous, tax-payer subsidized, financial consequences. Additionally, there is the potential erosion of the tax base... which could have extremely long-term, far-reaching consequences.

I thank you, truly, for your attention and efforts.

Sincerely,

Susan Lapidés
451 Huron Ave

Sincerely,

Jana Odette
176 Larch Road ("B")

--

Rick Roth

648 Green Street

Cambridge, MA 02139

cell 617 797 3215

Perez, Lori

From: Masato Kocberber <mkocberber@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 1:26 PM
To: City Council; Planning Board Comment; cddzoning; City Clerk
Subject: Support for multifamily zoning

Hello,

My name is Masato Kocberber, I am a Cambridge resident living in Cambridgeport with my wife and two kids. I intend to spend the rest my life here and strongly support housing that allows as many other people to do the same as possible.

I am particularly supportive of 3 to 6 story housing in the residential neighborhoods because that is the type of housing that has allowed me to stay in the city. Currently I live a condo in a 3 family, and previously I lived in a 4 story 15 unit building, both in Cambridgeport. Had only one and two family homes been available, I would not have been able to afford to stay in Cambridge. If the limit to our ambition is to just divide the existing single families into smaller condos, I don't see how we will get units that can support growing families.

Under the current zoning, basically every construction project in Cambridgeport is creating 2 free standing homes, each around 2500 sqft, for 3 million each. By allowing 3 to 6 story housing, our neighborhoods can remain as vibrant and diverse as we all want them to be.

Thank you,
Masato Kocberber
Allston St, Cambridge

Perez, Lori

From: Jonathan Cohen <jonpcohen@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 12:53 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support for multifamily housing citywide

I am a resident of 22 Water St, Apt 923, Cambridge. I am unable to make the housing committee's meeting tomorrow, so I am writing in strong support of allowing two-family, triple-decker, and apartment buildings up to six stories citywide.

I provided public comment at the previous city council meeting in support of Policy Order #1, and I was encouraged by the consensus to move forward in increasing the availability of housing citywide.

I echo sentiments from city councilors to collect input from a variety of stakeholders and subject matter experts *as quickly as possible*. The housing affordability crisis isn't going to be solved unilaterally by any single policy from any single local government, but any delay contributes to its continuation. I look forward with optimism to the housing committee and city council working boldly, thoughtfully, and quickly to put these ideas into practice.

Best,
Jonathan Cohen

Perez, Lori

From: Mary Jane Kornacki <amicusmjk@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2024 9:06 PM
To: City Clerk; City Manager; Azeem, Burhan; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Toner, Paul; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Pickett, Joan; Wilson, Ayesha; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan
Subject: Citywide up-zoning under consideration

Dear Madame Mayor and Councillors -

I am writing to all of you, not just those on the Housing Committee whose meeting I plan to attend this Wednesday.

While Wednesday's meeting is an important one, I'm sharing my view with the entire council and city manager as you likely will continue to debate this critical zoning petition in the coming weeks, if not months.

I am a proponent of additional density. The need is for more housing esp for elderly, low-income households and those previously discriminated against for whatever reason.

That said, this petition could add density that I believe has not been fully debated or planned for. The AHO2 overlay potentially adds density - no one can honestly say how many units will become built and occupied in the near and longer term future. But if 12 or 15 story buildings spring up in the next few years, that alone will dramatically impact life here.

At the candidate's night I attended last fall, each was asked how many people Cambridge could/should grow by. Answers ranged widely. There was no consensus.

I don't believe the council has had a full and transparent (to the public) debate about your **collective** answer to that question that can be backed up with accurate, reliable data on the tradeoffs and costs involved. Have you?

So...how many can the city absorb.. and still be liveable... and what data do you base that on? How many more people 5 years from now? A decade from now? Twenty-five years from now? Do you all share a common definition of "livable?"

Given your consensus answer, what plans and budgets do you propose? What timeline do you agree to? What infrastructure will need to be in place? How much (or little) green space do you plan to maintain? How will cars - yes...there will be cars - move on narrowed avenues and streets without gridlock most of the day? Revenue will be generated through additional taxes. Do you assume that money will fund all additional needs?

And while it is important to welcome newcomers to the city, what concern do you hold for those already living here? Are you tuned in to the needs and views of those already here and paying taxes? Do their view of a liveable city carry any weight with you as you focus on adding more residents?

Perez, Lori

From: Dan Phillips <danlphillips234@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2024 8:44 PM
To: City Council; Planning Board Comment
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: In continued support of bold multi-family housing reform

To the Cambridge City Council and Planning Board:

In advance of this week's Planning Board and Housing Committee hearings, I would like to reiterate my continued support for bold, broad-based zoning reform that promotes multi-family housing, by right, city-wide.

I do not support fixes that seem to end exclusionary zoning by allowing multi-family housing in name, but without enough adjustments to dimensional standards to actually result in meaningful amounts of new housing built. To that end, I urge the city to stay focused on the work being done through the Housing Committee and not to be distracted by the Ronayne petition.

Thank you for your work on the most important issue facing Cambridge

Dan Phillips

Broadway St.

Perez, Lori

From: Singer, Judith D. <judith_singer@harvard.edu>
Sent: Sunday, May 19, 2024 9:41 PM
To: City Clerk; City Manager; City Council
Cc: Singer, Judith D.
Subject: Please reject the petition for citywide up-zoning

Dear Council Members, CCD Committee Members, City Manager and City Clerk:

I have lived in Cambridge for nearly 50 years. What is going on in this city in recent years is of great concern.

With this email, I write about the crazy—and I mean crazy—plan to allow up-zoning city-wide. I agree that allowing multi-family housing city-wide makes good sense, but this policy order needs data-related changes to ensure community participation throughout the process.

I strongly urge the City Council to support the following in the current City Council housing committee proposal:

- Any 5 or 6-story building (or higher) should be located on a main corridor, and not on residential side streets. The leap from 4 stories to higher would be a huge change in scale for most of our city's neighborhoods.
- Green space and trees are essential for health, environmental equity, and climate considerations. Do not arbitrarily remove them citywide for out-of-scale buildings, resulting in larger expensive single-family housing.
- Front setbacks must be maintained, back yards (private space) are critical for tree growth, shade, addressing heat island impacts and the climate crisis.
- Before changing current zoning requirements, CDD must first complete an input-output analysis (criteria-likely impacts) as well as a follow-up 5 year report. What is the purported aim for this zoning petition? If it is to bring down housing costs citywide, will it do this? What data elements, and whose voices are reflected in the current zoning petition?
- Require developer carbon offset report for demolitions and contribution to an offset fund to be shared with nearest active neighborhood advisory groups and city fund to establish new green spaces elsewhere.
- Require CDD to speak with Cambridge specific individuals and groups for their perspectives on this. Too few residents are even aware of this city-wide up-zoning petition.

Perez, Lori

From: Mark Goodman <mdgoodman@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 19, 2024 5:44 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Proposed zoning change to allow construction of multi-family housing citywide

Dear Councilors and City Manager,

I am writing to urge you to reject the proposed zoning changes that would allow higher density of housing, less parking, and reduced setbacks across the entire city. This proposal ignores the specific character of each neighborhood—their distinct configurations, density and appeal. One size does not fit all. The proposal also unfairly restricts the ability of residents to have a say in how their neighborhoods are developed. I understand the good intentions behind this proposal, but it is a heavy-handed approach that should be seriously modified so the uniqueness of each neighborhood and the desires of its residents are respected.

Sincerely,

Mark Goodman
78 Lakeview Ave

Perez, Lori

From: Diana Yousef <dyousef@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 18, 2024 5:39 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Please support the following Housing Committee Proposals

Dear City Council:

I strongly urge City Council to support the following in the current City Council housing committee proposal:

- 1. Any 5 or 6-story building (or higher) must be located on a corridor. The leap from 4 stories to higher is massive in many neighborhoods.**
- 2. Green space and trees are critical for both climate, and health/environmental equity. Do not arbitrarily remove them citywide for out-of-scale buildings, resulting in larger expensive single-family housing.**
- 3. Front setbacks must be maintained, back yards (private space) are critical for tree growth, shade, addressing heat island impacts and the climate crisis.**
- 4. CDD must do an input-output analysis (criteria-likely impacts) first and a follow-up 5 year report. What is the purported aim for this zoning petition? If it is to bring down housing costs citywide, will it do this?**
- 5. Require developer carbon offset report for demolitions and contribution to an offset fund to be shared with nearest active neighborhood advisory groups and city fund to establish new green spaces elsewhere.**
- 6. Require CDD to speak with Cambridge specific individuals and groups for their perspectives on this. Few people even know about this city-wide up-zoning.**
- 7. Require BZA-alternative neighborhood review platform -advisory committee (like HSAC, CSAC), neighborhood group, CHC, or other. Residents lose rights to be informed and to provide insight and expertise in this zoning proposal.**

**Thank you
Diana Yousef**

- Require developer carbon offset report for demolitions and contribution to an offset fund to be shared with nearest active neighborhood advisory groups and city fund to establish new green spaces elsewhere.
- Require CDD to speak with Cambridge specific individuals and groups for their perspectives on this. Too few residents are even aware of this city-wide up-zoning petition.
- Require BZA-alternative neighborhood review platform - whether it be an advisory committee (like HSAC, CSAC), neighborhood group, CHC, or other community body to have a voice. Under the current proposed petition, residents lose rights to be informed and to provide insight and expertise in this zoning proposal.
- In our immediate neighborhood, on a small residential side street where the majority of homes are 2- and 3-family dwellings, 6-story structures would dwarf current 2 & 3-story homes, and exacerbate insufficient parking and pedestrian safety concerns on already congested streets.

Beth Gamse & Judy Singer
14 Walker St

Perez, Lori

From: Katiti Kironde <kkironde@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, May 18, 2024 2:17 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: NO to allowing multifamily housing everywhere

This will result in a city that is unwieldy and ugly, overcrowded, unliveable and unpleaseant to be in. We did not sign up for this when we came here and this is something that should be rejected out of hand. A city must maintain its history and character in order to be special and Cambridge is special. This is not the way to solve the housing crisis. And by the way, the more you build the more you will have to build, because there will always be more people than housing in a small city like ours. Also what about the infrastructure? Can it support the wild development that this move will spurn?? Our water source surely cannot support this,nor can our electric grid and ageing sewer system. This is too much.

Katiti Kironde 11/11A Meacham Road

worsening our divide between wealthy and poor. You need a large property for a building with 10 units (and the 20% required inclusionary public housing units) . Developers today often stop at 9 units, so they do not need to add inclusionary homes. And, 20% of the whole citywide upzoning to address housing affordability is very little compared to this specific need. We also fear that these market rate housing investors/developers will be able to far outbid public housing developers if this passes.

CDD needs to report on input and output (intention/inputs and likely results/outcomes). It's hard to believe this hasn't been included in the process. As written this will allow more teardowns (for McMansions and others) , thus adding to our carbon footprint. CDD must explain how to preclude teardowns or massive additions (over 20%) in single family homes.

Limiting demolitions: Excerpts from a smart article on environmental cost of demolitions ("Understanding the carbon cost of demolition," published by Restore Oregon):

- "Conservatively speaking, residential and commercial demolitions in the City of Portland are responsible for 124,741 metric tons of CO2 emissions per year, which amounts to approximately 4.5 percent of the City's total annual reduction goal."
- "This study finds that it takes 10 to 80 years for a new building that is 30 percent more efficient than an average-performing existing building to overcome, through efficient operations, the negative climate change impacts related to the construction process."
- "calls upon policy makers to acknowledge the environmental impact of sending usable buildings to landfills; strive for density without demolition; provide meaningful incentives for retention and reuse; and maintain or strengthen demolition review requirements for designated historic properties."

This massive change needs much more study and nuanced consideration, based on Cambridge-specific discussions. Cambridge is very different from the other cities you have consulted and studied, in terms of existing size, density, and historic areas, so we need local (or at a minimum *more comparable*) professional and resident input. Please don't overlook the city's unique needs, assets, and qualities.

Keep BZA or add a substitute. If BZA process is removed, we lose serious resident input and voice. CDD – what other judiciary review bodies can take this up? Please consider city run review groups like Harvard Square Advisory or Central Square Advisory (earlier the city supported NCSC, &ECPT) . We need a forum where residents and professionals (architects, engineers, neighbors) can have some input in what their neighborhood impacts will be. CDD how will you achieve this?

Thank you,
K. Gormley
Holworthy Street

My name is Susan Cory. I've practiced architecture in Cambridge for 40 years and I've lived in (3) 2-family houses here.

I'll leave it to other speakers to explain why this proposal, as drafted, won't lower housing costs or increase the no. of affordable units significantly. I'll let others address the environmental impact of eliminating green spaces and trees.

I do support upzoning single-family neighborhoods and building more affordable housing. There are opportunities in the squares + along the corridors near public transportation to make housing denser. Scattering more multi-family units throughout the neighborhoods also makes sense if it's done in a nuanced manner, maintaining current height limits to match the setting.

But here's what I don't support in this proposal. Cambridge is already one of the densest cities in the country. There is little to no undeveloped land to build on. How do we protect the existing buildings that give our city character, history and scale and make it distinct from most other cities? Allowing a developer free rein to buy or aggregate houses, then tear them down, regardless of historical significance is a mistake that can't be undone. In its place, we would get generic 6-story boxes with no setbacks, green space, trees, or parking and without any input from residents, the CHC or the BZA.

Frost Terrace is an ironic example for this proposal to use because it was only due to extensive input from residents, the CHC, and the BZA that it was downsized and redesigned to how it looks now. Most examples shown in their slide show are three-to-four story apartment buildings, a significant difference from the six story ones with no courtyards, trees, setbacks, that they are actually proposing.

So yes, let's eliminate single-family zoning. But no, don't eliminate any design review or scale guidelines. This shouldn't be a blunt-force, one-size-fits-all policy.