

10/19/18 9

Dear Honorable City Council,

I am here today to ask that you consider the petition brought forth by Kiril and Catherine regarding the expansion of the BA-3 zone along Western Avenue. More so I am here to advocate for local business. Over the past two years we've lost eight commercial spaces in BA districts due to the lucrative nature of residential development and low monetary value of local retail space. Mixed use development will save Cambridge, whether we have to be brought kicking and screaming into this reality, it is local businesses, run by residents within in mixed districts that will assist in limiting traffic congestion, increase local employment, help retain Cambridge's brain trust, and create economic opportunity for all. We need to allow people to use their land more flexibly and stop limiting our creativity. "Commercial" means too many things and we should clarify the distinction between Genezyme, McDonalds, a startup, or home office. We should live with the door at least halfway open to the limits of our own ingenuity to determine what uses work in which zone, not a document whose use table reflects how we lived more than a half a century ago. Please let this petition run its natural course through the planning board and ordinance committee and let's keep Cambridge businesses in Cambridge.

I would also like to address the financing of 3.3M for the Master Plan. Cambridge has a master plan. This latest endeavor is nothing more than a smokescreen that came about to block development in Central Square, namely the C2 Zoning that has been on this legislative body's table for over two years. Further it exists to create the basis for a de-facto moratorium on development in this city. Central Square has not had a single residential development since the ill conceived Holmes Building nearly 15 years ago. Once adopted you will effectively be closing the door to any meaningful development of Central Square for the next five years and possibly more, extending the existing moratoria to potentially span two decades. If Mass & Main actually gets built that will thankfully change, but you will have only addressed a fraction of the issues that plague the area, while ignoring the majority of property owners, businesses, residents, and students that desperately need the area to step into the 21st century. While we in Central Square wait, interest rates go up, property values go up, construction cost go up, and the opportunity for private ownership goes down. Corporate consolidation will seem increasingly more attractive to small developers like myself who simply can't afford to exist. Essentially this is a great victory for political activist groups like the CRA and other anti-development groups that have owned this debate for decades. The Holmes building stands as a monument to the destruction and chaos a group like the CRA spurned on by councilors like Carlone and Mazen can bring about; half baked ideas, with half baked implementation. I urge you to reject this acquiescence, or at least bring C2 back to a vote and implement the zoning now ... not a decade from now when only the largest corporations can afford the debt service and our dreams are further limited by the realities of cost. Do let them win again.

Lastly, Candidate Ilan Levy should publicly apologize for his frivolous and politically motivated open meeting law inquiry. We all lose when candidates jockey for position making baseless claims without proof. Baseless accusation has been the hallmark of this election season with already seated councilors making accusation of impropriety without a shred of evidence and when their own records leave much to be desired. You all need to be leaders, and thus above such petty and obvious tricks.



PATRICK BARRETT