

Lopez, Donna

From: George Verghese [verghese@MIT.EDU]
Sent: Saturday, March 16, 2013 5:54 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: MITIMCo concerns

Dear Cambridge City Councilors,

I write as a faculty member of 34 years at MIT, as a Cambridge resident for over a decade (though not currently), and as a current owner of residential property in Cambridge. I also presently serve as Secretary of the Editorial Board of the MIT Faculty Newsletter (FNL). The FNL has provided a voice for those on the faculty (as well as academic staff and graduate students) who are concerned about the MITIMCo plans for development in Kendall Square and the related up-zoning petition.

In response to the voicing of concerns in the FNL and other settings, the MIT Provost last fall set up a Task Force chaired by Professor Thomas Kochan to look into the issues surrounding this matter. The Task Force report provides a very clear articulation of the issues and concerns, and suggests a path forward. Despite this, however, there has not been a full presentation to or discussion with the faculty at large of what exactly is being proposed for MIT in Kendall Square. I urge you to delay final decisions on the up-zoning petition till such a presentation and discussion have happened at MIT, to avoid coming to decisions that may end up being passionately opposed within the MIT community, as this would be very counterproductive in the long run.

From what I understand (and this is all from dribs and drabs of hearsay, not from any forthright presentation by MITIMCo and the administration to the faculty), an important part of the MITIMCo proposal is to construct two large commercial buildings within the campus area in Kendall Square. To the extent that there is any truth to this, I find the proposal very disturbing. To me, this represents invaluable campus land --- and essentially the last bit of it that is enclosed within the main built campus --- and should be developed for academic purposes, including research space and potentially graduate student housing. Commercial research space in this area, leased to outside companies, will grievously undermine the sense of a unified campus extending from the main cluster to the Sloan School. I expect that the response of the MIT community to such development will be fundamentally different --- and quite likely much more negative --- than to long-term leases of land north of the railway tracks.

Respectfully,

George Verghese

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