2

Lopez, Donna

From: Joseph Collins [josephscollins@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2013 5:19 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Thoughts in opposition to MIT plan for kendall Square

Dear Councillors,
After reviewing the MIT Plan at an Open House the other evening, I offer the following comments. I am a retired MIT Staff member, a17 year resident of 100 Memorial Drive, and a Registered Cambridge voter.
"Here is my take on the MIT Open House this past week.The models shown highlight a glittery exterior view from Main St., and the verbiage emphasized retail potential, with no renderings of what high rise commercial buildings will do to the neighborhood. Plus, no sign of any MIT East campus. The Open House called for dialogue but, mostly, it seemed the MIT reps. wanted to "tell" not "listen".
I write as a 17 year resident of 100 memorial Drive, enjoying the proximity to campus, the T and great view of the Charles. But, there are no basic amenities like a grocery store or Pharmacy. Presumably, lack of population density among Kendall Square residents is a factor in this and the current plan calling for commercial space will bring more "workers' on scene with little increase in 7/25/365 residents which would induce retailers to see a profitable setting. Of course, daily workers bring restaurants of which there are many in the area. But for groceries or pharmacy products, one needs to travel to Central Square, the Galleria or up Mem. Drive, beyond the BU bridge. While many workers use the "T", many more come by auto and this will increase with more commercial space available.
Leaving the amenities issue for the moment, I reflect on what MIT's East campus is at present. Non-descript is too kind an appelation than the area calls for, but along Amherst St. almost all the foot traffic comes from MIT related individuals--students @ Senior House & Eastgate; Faculty & students proceeding to Media Lab., Sloan, Tang, Muckley, etc. Also, Faculty,students, Staff & Retirees at the Health Services Center. For vehicle traffic, except for those coming from Memorial Drive racing along Amherst. St to Ames St. to elsewhere, the other autos. represent MIT folks seeking parking @ the Hayward Lot. Thus, despite it's lack of beauty, this is a significant portion of the Institute.
Now, look at the Institute's academic needs. The Graduate Student population of some 6.000 far exceeds the Undergraduates [~4500], who are promised a residental experience on campus. For years, Graduate housing has been available to only ~ 1/3 of the students. In addition the number of Post-Docs. has grown and many of them have families and could use housing near campus. Indeed, some live at 100 Memorial Drive. Thus, from an academic perspective or that of a "100" resident more student housing would increase the population density encouraging retailers to see "opportunity' in Kendall Square.
So, what was shown at the Open House? Commercial development alluded to [but not shown in its potential density on the existing parking lot between Carleton & Hayward Streets], with a glittering rendering of potential retail views from Main St., back long Carleton St. There was no sign that this is MIT. And, we all know that visitors emerge from the T station and ask "Where is MIT" As presented at the Open House, there isn't an obvious answer.

Finally, again from a Kendall residents perspective, commercial property, will add to traffic and autos from people whose interests will be aligned with their business. [Just for a possibility, J & J might wish to occupy a building there, closer to campus than Pfizer or Novartis]. These folks won't be part of the MIT community in any meaningful way, nor should they be. Instead they'll be competition for the MIT community. Nothing will be added for Graduate student housing; no 7/24/365 residents to add to population density which might bring needed shopping within reasonable walking distance.

So, the MIT Management and it's Real Estate operation will benefit as will the Institute's Endowment, a good outcome. But, overall, what could be a real enhanced East campus will be marred by a commercial enterprise in its heart. From this long time MIT advocate's view the plan as proposed is deeply flawed."

Based on the above, I urge the City Council not to approve the MIT plan as proposed.

Sincerely,

Joe Collins
100 Memorial Drive, Apt 11-23A
Cambridge, MA 02142
617-497-8994

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100 Memorial Drive, Apt 11-23A
Cambridge, MA 02142
617-497-8994