

Lopez, Donna

From: Carol O'Hare [c.burchardohare@att.net]
Sent: Sunday, November 24, 2013 2:45 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Rossi, Rich; Lopez, Donna; Murphy, Brian; Dash, Stuart; Paden, Liza
Subject: City Council: Ames Street District - brief follow-up re fast-food caps from 3 to 15!

Importance: High

Dear Mayor Davis, Vice Mayor Simmons and City Councillors:

This supplements my 11/18/13 email, copy below.

It's not surprising* that the developer, Boston Properties, didn't call out their request for a dramatic 5-fold increase (from 3 to 15) of fast-food establishments in the MXD District, including up to 8 in the Ames Street District.

I'm sure you realize that Boston Properties has asked for more fast-food establishments than it wants because they anticipate the inevitable called "compromise"/reduction. I respectfully suggest that, if you decide to increase this cap, you move very gradually. Why? Because the Council can later increase the cap again, if appropriate. But, it will be practically impossible to reduce the number once you've raised the cap.

*It is surprising that the Planning Board's 11/12/13 recommendation memo to the Council didn't even mention the most critical information about this zoning amendment. The first sentence in the Board's discussion could have said something informative like: "Boston Properties seeks to raise the cap on fast order food establishments from 3 to 15 in the MXD District."

Instead, the Planning Board wrote a "concept piece":

Fast Order Food Establishments

The current fast order food limitation in the MXD reflects past concerns that a proliferation of national fast food chains could negatively impact the character of commercial districts. Fast order food establishments require a special permit citywide, and are limited to a specific number in the MXD and the Central Square Overlay District. These regulations have been effective in some ways to serve the desired goals, but the Board also acknowledges that the restrictions on fast order food have been a hindrance to many local establishments as well.

The proposed zoning approach of raising the cap on fast order food establishments, instead of eliminating the cap entirely, is a reasonable approach in this case because it would continue to protect against over-proliferation and would retain the special permit review process to ensure that impacts on the character of the area would be mitigated. A more comprehensive approach to resolving issues around fast order food zoning would require more discussion and may better be approached from a citywide perspective.

Highlighting added.

http://www2.cambridgema.gov/CityOfCambridge_Content/documents/zngamend_amesmxd_pbrec_.pdf

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol O'Hare
172 Magazine St.

P.S. Donna Lopez: Please file this with the Official Record.

P.P.S. Liza Paden: Please distribute copies of this email and mine of 11/18 to the City Council (copy below) to the Planning Board and file it with their Official Record.

From: Carol O'Hare [mailto:cho1066@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 5:19 PM
To: 'Council@Cambridgema.gov'
Cc: Richard Rossi; 'Lopez, Donna'
Subject: City Council: Ames Street District
Importance: High

Dear Mayor Davis, Vice Mayor Simmons and City Councillors:

These are my couple of thoughts after a very quick review of the Ames Street District rezoning petition that you will be considering this evening.

- **.5 Parking Spaces per Dwelling Unit** I think it's wishful thinking, at best, to conclude that .5 parking spaces per dwelling unit will begin to be sufficient and that daytime and nighttime parkers will effectively share spaces, reducing the need for more parking per unit.
- **Fast Food Cap Raised from 3 to 15 in MXD? Wow!** The MXD's zoning currently limits the number of fast-food establishments to 3 in the entire district. Neither Boston Properties nor the Planning Board gives you the specifics about what is proposed. They say that the cap should be raised, but neither of them says by how much in their presentation materials.

Boston Properties Rezoning Petition does specify. They propose that the cap on fast-food establishments in the MXD be raised from 3 to 15, 8 of which would be allocated for the Ames Street District.

That's a 5-fold increase! Will they all be Clover-type fast-food establishments, or will one be Clover and the other 14 be McDonalds, Burger King, Chipotle and the like?

Remember that Boston Properties likely proposed the .5 parking spaces per dwelling unit and the cap of 15 fast-food establishments so it could comfortably negotiate down from there. Before reaching a so-called compromise that is exactly what B.P. is aiming for, the Council should consider seriously whether these two significant concessions are necessary for this project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol O'Hare

Cc: Donna Lopez, City Clerk: Please file this email with the Official Record.