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TO: Mayor Maher; City Councilors
FROM: Charlotte Moore, 9 Rutland Street
DATE: 7 April 2014

I am here to support Order #14, to work to develop a new city master plan. I am particularly concerned about the thinking behind the current zoning ordinance and whether it shouldn't be seriously updated. As an example, I'd like briefly to summarize the neighborhood's effort around 15-33 Richdale Avenue, to ensure that the Hathaway Bakery project would not create undo pressures *on the surrounding community*

The issues of concern about the original project were the capacity of the sewerage, the already apparent traffic and parking pressures, and most importantly the enormous presence of the proposed building.

The developers could have replaced the bakery as of right with 54 rental units a good ten feet or more higher than surrounding buildings. It would form a wall both front and back.

The zoning presented a real problem. The property runs along the railroad track and is designated for high-density development. (C1A). ~~On the south side of the property.~~ *At* Virtually the entire neighborhood is much less dense (C1)– with either predominately triple deckers ~~at the southern edge~~ or two-families at the northern.

Why is it designated such? Because planners went along with the theory that more intense development should take place along traffic nodes. They looked only at the railroad line and completely ignored the context of the adjacent residential areas ~~plus~~ *as well as* the city's growth policy.

To quote “Existing residential neighborhoods, or any portions of a neighborhood having an identifiable consistent built character, should be maintained at their prevailing pattern of development and built density and scale.” The Richdale project sits smack in the middle of a triple-decker and two-family neighborhood.

Let me also quote Stuart Dash, from last October's talk on the development of Kendall Square. In a power point labeled “key questions/learning, he asked: How do we best manage the transitions between large scale lab uses and our neighborhood edges? – noise, scale, use?”

We were lucky on Richdale. First and having nothing to do with zoning (although it should have), the Historical Commission saved the day by deeming the bakery preferably preserved. It now has a supervisory role on what can be developed— and only if the entire building were preserved.

We were also lucky in that there was a skillfully managed neighborhood effort and a flexible developer so that a MOU was accomplished and the project can proceed.

But not all projects are so successfully negotiated. It shouldn't have to take the 10 months of meetings to the point of exhaustion if the zoning were appropriate in the first place.

Particularly now with such rapid period of growth and prosperity we need a master plan that recognizes what we have here in our very livable and charming city.

I live in a neighborhood that is constantly aware of the development pressures of both Harvard and Lesley Universities. Six blocks up, Porter Square is major transportation hub - and a traffic nightmare.

Just how such pressures all over the city can be relieved is critical. Thus, I do hope that you will support Item #14 on this evening's agenda.

Thank you

Charlotte Moore