

Lee Ferris

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The Carlone petition does not affect all Special Permits, just Project Review Special Permits for very large buildings. There have only been 3 so far in 2014, so I think the Council can handle that effectively until 2016, when we should have a new Master Plan.

The volunteers on the Planning Board would continue to review these large projects in conjunction with the Community Development Department, who would then forward a report to the City Council, where a 2/3rd vote of approval would be required to grant zoning relief.

The City Council would also have the option of hiring independent experts to analyze Special Permit applications (at the applicant's expense).

As a strong advocate of affordable housing, I am glad that the council would be able to impose a wide range of conditions on any given proposal — to encourage affordable and middle-income housing, mitigate against traffic impacts and support alternative modes of transit, apply strong Urban Design guidelines, and more.

More than 290 residents have already signed a petition supporting the petition:
http://www.denniscarlone.org/carlone_petition

More info at http://www.denniscarlone.org/introducing_carlone_petition_project_review

The change would restore a power that the Council has had all along, but had delegated to the Planning Board, volunteers appointed by the City Manager. Unlike a moratorium, which many residents have called for to pause large-scale development during the master planning process, this procedural change would not affect smaller proposals or any “by-right” development.

Councillors, if you don't think the Council should weigh in on these few projects, do you also think the Council should not pass zoning variances?

Do you also question the Council's ability to do city-wide re-zoning? Why are these permits harder than variances or re-zoning?

Would you want to turn all planning over to people hired or selected by the city manager?

Why do you think Cambridge would be worse than the 40 other cities and towns across the Commonwealth, where special permit granting authority is vested in City Councils, Boards of Selectman, and other local legislative bodies?

I would rather end the Council's votes on curb cuts and ask them to vote on expansions of major large buildings over 50,000 Sq.Ft.