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**From:** Patrick W Barrett III [<mailto:jbrealtyllc@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Monday, June 30, 2014 10:12 AM

**Cc:** Lopez, Donna

**Subject:** Re: Vote 'No' on Council Petition to make the Cambridge City Council the SPGA

Dear City Council,

I am writing to urge you to vote 'no' on the petition to make the City Council the Special Permit Granting Authority ('SPGA'). As a property owner and developer I have been involved in the special permit granting process long enough to know that designating a political body the SPGA is going to have a much more detrimental effect on development than the motivation that spurred this petition into existence intends.

There is wisdom in keeping the political process separate from the practical application of the legislative body. The planning board exists to interpret the will of the City Council through our ordinance. I shutter to think what the effect would be if the judicial-like process of the planning board became entwined with the heated political aspects of the City Council. I fear the result would equate to a standstill, and while there may be elements at large that would consider that result satisfactory, I know there isn't one among this council that would agree with that point of view.

There is also the practical application of time required and expertise needed that we all in many ways take for granted in our planning board. The time commitment is akin to a full time job in and of itself. I know some of you have legal experience or planning expertise, but this is a minority as the job of the council goes far beyond the realm of zoning. This is yet another reason why the planning board exists and why there is great wisdom in maintaining the current balance of authority.

Further, we have embarked, thanks to Mayor Maher, Councilors Carlone, Benzan, and McGovern, on a great master planning process to help correct an aging ordinance that has in many ways become too great an obstacle to thoughtful development. Through its inception the ordinance has been changed, amended, and through petitions such as the one before you now, been made less and less effective. I urge the author of this petition to retract it and have some faith in the process he and others have helped to initiate. There is no need for further meddling in an ordinance that has been shifted around so many times already to the detriment of all.

Lastly, the city manager has sounded the call for additional members of the planning board, which I know will bring new voice and temper a group of professionals in a positive way that will alleviate some of the negativity that has arisen though the frustration of those who feel their voices haven't been heard. Now is not the time to give in to that frustration, but to rally around the master planning process and work diligently to breath new life into the antiquated zoning ordinance that has stymied the positive growth we all wish to create. Please, for the sake of the process, the positive separation of power, and continued good will among those citizens who are working with CDD, the city, and each other to make this city truly a place for everyone; Please vote 'No' on this petition and let the master planning process go unabated by yet another petition that further contorts what little sense is left in our zoning.

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