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Order 17 is creates a clear opportunity for citizens to be educated about the PB process and to create a process for greater transparency about the special permitting process. This would be very responsive if the heart of the problem was one of communication or understanding. Certainly there have been some exchanges which reflect a sense of disrespect or being left out in the dark many of which have come to a head as neighbors have finally developed the awareness and information to push back. . As I understand from neighborhood groups across the city, one problem is the set of narrow guidelines for the special permit process which can be fulfilled and granted with no respect to a broader picture of the issues (traffic, affordability, quality of neighborhood, parking, and flooding- witness today at fresh Pond). . and the big picture or the needs of the whole. While it is a concern that 5 of the PB members' terms have expired, interested citizens have been turned away from joining and the chair has been in place for 27 years, the structural problem is an unelected body of incredibly hard-working volunteers making decisions which have been heavily shaped by the developers proposing the projects. CDD - the body of city paid staff responsible for providing data, often provide material which support the developers. It has been concerned citizens - deeply informed and learning day by day through thousands and thousands of volunteers hours who have uncovered the <sup>possible</sup> toxic <sup>in</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>city</sup> at New Street, the flood plans for Fresh Pond, documented traffic studies which contradict cursory city plans, tracked the developers building residential buildings as real estate investments only to flip them over to owners farther and farther away from the community. <sup>advocated for affordability</sup> etc. etc. etc. Without citizens, New street would have been approved just as the first building was and and maybe it still will. I am so proud of these people and I also feel that it shouldn't be their/our job.

We don't want a citizen's group to learn about the PB. We want city oversight for development and public officials taking responsibility for these huge decisions. It is the elected officials who love this city and are elected to represent it who need to be weighing in. Passing this proposal may be fine for acknowledging and legitimating some of the community people who have been tireless in this effort. But it does not address the ability for accountability for big development.

(You are voting tonight to one city & support Newst. by widening the st. on City (ord.)

I hope the councilors will also indicate their willingness to put themselves out the way citizens have - if you think these projects have been scrutinized enough and should be passed on, say so. And if you think there needs to be clearer guidelines or more questions answered, then step in and say that. Let's not create a group that discusses communication while the developments are enacted under narrow rules by narrow interests. If you are concerned that this PB does not represent the broader concerns of the neighborhood, then perhaps you want to put on hold on projects being decided by them until there is a legitimate PB.

if the urban ring had been up to the PB perhaps we would not be here at all

I am reminded about the curb cut required for the supermarket (which became Whole Foods). By the time the City council voted on it, the buildings were up and could hardly be taken down. We were behind the time then, but we do not need to be now about the courthouse, New street, Cambridge parkway. Cut throughs - like the openings between buildings which characterize every neighborhood of Cambridge are necessary for new possibilities - build 2 football fields of a solid building like New street proposed and there be no possibility to make adjustments later. Tear down the silver maple forest - a presence which is the foundation of an invisible eco-system keeping our air cleaner, our soil more protected and the floods at bay- and it will be too late to say oh we made a big mistake. The PB not allowed to think about 7 generations. But you can

so thank you for trying to create an approach <sup>emphasis</sup> to citizens. I hope you can craft something which really does.

along with vision & organizing I have been invoking my invisible forces which might give us a sign. I was encouraged today that maybe the arc of the universe does bend to justice