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Cosgrove, Marybeth

From: Lopez, Donna
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2014 4:33 PM
To: Cosgrove, Marybeth
Subject: FW: Concerns re Planning Board training

From: Jan Devereux [<mailto:jan.devereux@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2014 3:51 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna; Nancy Ryan
Subject: Concerns re Planning Board training

Dear Councillors,

To follow up on Nancy Ryan's email regarding residents' concerns with the Planning Board, I would like to direct your attention to today's article in the *Cambridge Chronicle*, in which the City Manager asserts that the systemic problems we have brought to light can be solved with training sessions and improved communication. While communication issues have been evident at Planning Board meetings when procedures have not been clarified or key documents not shared with the public, they are not the primary focus of our critique.

Quoting the article:

Rossi said he plans to hold training sessions with members of the board to go over ways to improve communication between the committee and the community.

"The Planning Board has laws, which tell them how they operate. I don't accept that the Planning Board is broken," Rossi said. "I accept that people can be frustrated in certain meetings and the way the information may be communicated, but I think that that's the kind of thing I want to work with the Planning Board on."

As someone who works in education and communications, I have a few questions about the training Mr. Rossi envisions, and whether it is designed to address problems other than communication:

- • What is the curriculum and who is developing it?
- • Who is the instructor?
- • What are the learning goals?
- • Will all members including the Chair be required to attend training?
- • When will the training be conducted?
- • What measures will be used to evaluate whether the training has been effective?

Given the groundswell of public frustration with the Planning Board, I would expect the Council to ask these questions and others of the Manager, and not simply to trust that unspecified training will be a cure-all.

Jan Devereux

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cc: Comments section of the related article in the *Cambridge Chronicle*