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From: Quinton Zondervan [<mailto:qyz915@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2014 1:18 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Letter in support of Applications & Petitions #5: Petition Regarding Special Permit Project Review

Dear City Councilors,

I'm writing in support of this petition, which I signed, requesting that the city council take on special permit granting authority for special permits requiring project review: http://www2.cambridgema.gov/cityClerk/AppsPetitionsOrder.cfm?item_id=9885

Like many residents I'm deeply concerned about the current pace of development in our city, which seems to proceed without proper regard for the major challenges we are grappling with, including climate change, wealth inequality and environmental ecosystem destruction. The processes and procedures that we have used thus far to adjudicate between competing interests in the city are simply inadequate when we are faced with these much larger forces that literally threaten to destroy our city.

In the recent past, when citizens have done our part and attended, in large numbers, planning board meetings to bring these issues to the attention of the planning board, we have been rebuffed with the quite reasonable claim by the planning board that they are simply not equipped to grapple with such huge issues as climate change, greenhouse gas emissions and the seemingly intractable problem of providing sufficient affordable housing in the city. Minor design decisions that come before the planning board are really all they can handle, and it is indeed unfair to ask them, as unpaid volunteers, to try to address these much bigger issues facing our city.

We cannot simply continue doing what we've always done and expect, somehow, that these huge problems will go away on their own. We must take on these challenges head on, and that means providing you, our elected representatives, with the necessary authority to make final decisions on these major development projects in our city. Of course the planning board and city planning staff can and would continue to provide you with input and technical assistance in evaluating these projects. But ultimately you would be directly responsible, as our elected representatives, to decide, on our behalf, how to proceed.

I hope you will agree to accept this responsibility, and that you will use it to better safeguard our health and safety, which are under severe threat. If we do not take the proper actions to protect ourselves from a rapidly changing climate, a rapidly disappearing natural world that provides us with irreplaceable ecosystem services, and a rapidly worsening state of inequality between the few who can spend at will and the many who can afford almost nothing, we will inevitably suffer the very dire consequences of our inaction.

Thank you very much for your attention to this extremely important matter.

Sincerely,

Quinton Y. Zondervan
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