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Lopez, Donna

From: Bill Mcavinney [bmcavin@mit.edu]
Sent: Monday, November 24, 2014 5:53 PM
To: Lopez, Donna
Cc: Bill Mcavinney
Subject: Bill McAvinney's 11/24/14 City Council Statement

Dear Councilors, Neighbors & Friends,

I'm Bill McAvinney and I'm here to address the Twining zoning petition. I live at 12 Douglass St., the only owner occupied home that abuts this project.

When I look out my 3rd floor back window I see two large projects under construction, Novartis and the All Asia block. This means a lot more lab benches and cubicles are coming to my neighborhood very soon.

If we sit by and do nothing to provide housing for these soon to arrive workers what will happen? Either many of our neighbors will be displaced, or our streets will be clogged with people commuting from the suburbs. Most likely both.

We need new housing. So I support the broad outlines of this petition.

When I first moved to Cambridge I was an enthusiastic 19 year old from Dorchester who came to love this city very quickly. I remember going to the Election Commission to register to vote and being told I couldn't because I was a student. The message was clear: We don't want you in this city.

Today the shoe is on the other foot. I'm the long time Cantabrigian looking at an influx of young people into my neighborhood. I have some of the feeling I imagine the people behind the voter registration counter did when I came in: Will these people destroy my neighborhood?

My belief is the choice is ours. If we curtail residential development, we will inadvertently destroy our neighborhoods because only the richest of the next generation will be able to move here, and they will force out a large percentage of our existing neighbors. If we work together to encourage housing development and work as hard as we possibly can to maintain an income mix in our housing stock, our neighborhoods will grow and change, and they will still be our neighborhoods.

To my neighbors: I ask that you look beyond what appears to be developers looking to make a buck at our expense and see our children's generation knocking at our door looking for space. I ask that you give them some space and support development that creates housing and oppose walls of office and lab space that don't meet either our or our children's needs.

Also consider that a few tall buildings cost less per unit and cast thinner shadows than a wall of much lower same height buildings.

To our councilors, I ask that you make housing at transit hubs the priority and take all necessary steps to stop the displacement of our neighbors. Building housing is necessary, but not sufficient. You'll need to use every means at your disposal, and then some, to ensure that we still have housing available for all income levels.

17% is not enough. We need this project and especially lab/office development to support a greater percentage of affordable housing.

Thank you.