

Comment on Normandy/Twining

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City Clerk Agenda

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Hon. Mayor David P. Maher, Vice-Mayor Dennis Benzan, and members of the City Council,

This is a statement on the Normandy/Twining (N/T) up-zoning request which I understand may come before the Council tonight. Unfortunately I am traveling and will not be able to attend the meeting, but wanted to strongly express my hope that you vote down the requested changes. A huge highrise tower of luxury apartments is the last thing Central Square needs at this moment. The developer is asking you to give them an enormous amount of additional profit without considering the needs of the broader community. In response to the public outrage they have conceded a few units of affordable housing will be included in the tower.

I believe affordable housing is among the most important needs we face. I am convinced that this development will actually have the effect of reducing rather than increasing affordable housing. I say this for two reasons. First the market force of establishing a new norm for the market rate of housing in and near Central Square will cause many landowners to upgrade and raise the price of units they own to obtain similar rent to the units in the tower. Second the lost opportunity to develop a far greater number of units by planning development utilizing the larger footprint including the city's lots, once the looming tower darkens the sky.

What we should not do is zone parcel by parcel. It leads to the pathetic situation of having to approve each proposal one by one because it is the only way to obtain a paltry number of affordable units rather than planning ahead to assure a much greater number with much lower cost to our community. The cost to Cambridge of this parcel by parcel selling off of our beautiful cityscape will be the loss of the very vibrant, diverse community that makes us attractive. It is time we take up the challenge and plan and build the affordable housing at a human scale so Cambridge remains true to its core. We should leave luxury skyboxes for Foxborough and plan a vibrant Central Square with enough affordable housing to meet our needs, built to scale using the resources, public and private with which our community is endowed.

5/19/2015

Comment on Normandy/Twining - Creedon, Paul

Sincerely,

John Ratliff
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