

49

Lopez, Donna

From: Lee Farris <lee.farris@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2015 4:53 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: No to Normandy Tower, Yes to Planning

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

As you know, I am a big supporter of affordable housing. I am concerned that the urgent need for affordable housing in Cambridge is used to justify the huge zoning increase for the Normandy tower in Central Sq.

There are so many other things that the city could do and has not done that would increase affordable housing while allowing development that is more appropriate for Central Sq. For example, I encourage you to increase the proposed linkage fee above the \$12/Sq. Ft. recommended by the Housing Committee.

Also, I want to note that more luxury housing is NOT likely to reduce market housing, as stated in the 2012 report, **Losing Ground: The Struggle of Moderate Income Households to Afford the Rising Costs of Housing and Transportation**

http://www.nhc.org/media/files/LosingGround_10_2012.pdf

The report states: "**In many communities, the demand for housing in location-efficient areas so far exceeds supply that reductions in the cost of developing housing in those areas do not necessarily lead to lower housing prices.**"

The report states that in addition to inclusionary and incentive zoning, the city could trade **reduced parking requirements** for affordability; and "Local government ... can also make publicly owned land available for development of affordable homes."

The report concludes that if there is not enough effort for affordable housing, that **investments [in location-efficient transit] risk making housing more expensive.**

What we need is a Master Plan process with an immediate priority assessment of our housing needs to increase equity and socio-economic diversity in Cambridge NOW. There should be no approval of new large developments, including the Normandy/Twining tower, without this analysis. We also call for the City to use its own resources to sharply increase affordable housing now.

Early deliverables in the citywide comprehensive plan should include:

- Preliminary housing plan that will serve during the time of the planning process, and be revised at the end of the process that includes initial target population size and socio-economic mix;
- Preliminary plan and a final plan on using city-owned land, including the parking lots and general city revenues, to maximize affordable housing; assess possible public/private partnerships, 100% city-financed housing, and lease or sale of some city land holdings;
- A revised target population size and socio-economic mix for the city in 2030 that assesses regional growth and international investments in land and construction in Cambridge;
- A plan to deal with development proposals during the planning process;
- Early priority given to the Fresh Pond/Alewife area due to the poor planning which has resulted in over-building, and to the potential for rapid development of the remaining land, especially within the quadrangle;

- Assess the reality of climate change in the short term as large buildings that contribute most to environmental degradation are constructed in flood zones;
- Conduct the Comprehensive Planning process in a democratic, community-based manner and complete it in 18-24 months, not 3 years from the hiring of a consultant.

Sincerely,

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