

FW: Policy Order 29 on Volpe open space

Lopez, Donna

Thu 2/5/2015 10:06 AM

Inbox

To: Creedon, Paul <pcreedon@cambridgema.gov>;

Categories: Communications for Agenda

From: Jan Devereux [mailto:jan.devereux@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2015 8:11 AM

To: City Council

Cc: Lopez, Donna; Murphy, Brian; Rossi, Rich; Dash, Stuart; Farooq, Iram; Paden, Liza

Subject: Policy Order 29 on Volpe open space

Dear Councillors,

I write in strong support of Policy Order O-29 on the postponed February 2 agenda, regarding the preservation of 7.5 acres of public open space when the Volpe Center is redeveloped.

I attended CDD's recent presentation to the Planning Board on the proposed re-zoning, and was shocked by the recommendation to dramatically reduce by public open space, while significantly increasing the allowed height and density of the area. There is a paucity of publicly usable open space in Kendall Square, and there was a public outcry when the city sacrificed a portion of its rooftop park to enable Google's expansion. While the existing Volpe lawn is seldom used by people outside the Volpe community (an exception is the popular outdoor movie night for families hosted by the Kendall Square Association each August), it provides a green buffer that balances an already very densely built commercial environment. For CDD to propose increasing density by a third while more than halving centrally located open space ignores the principles of smart growth and

squanders the last chance to create a sizable public green in the heart of Kendall Square.

The Kendall community prides itself on the ease of which those in the innovation economy can "bump and connect" to spur new ideas and forge creative collaborations-- a large public park would multiply those opportunities exponentially. Many creative people mentally recharge by leaving their desks to engage in physical activity outdoors, and a centrally located park would be a magnet for this purpose, as well as a gathering place to build community among future and current residents.

Finally, I would like to add that I have worked within a block of the Volpe since 2012 and am well aware of the lack of usable open space nearby; it's a stark contrast to the open space resources in the other cities where I have lived and worked -- Manhattan and Paris. Last fall I was walking past the Volpe with one of the students at the school where I work, explaining that the area would soon be redeveloped with more tall buildings (this was around the time the RFP was released). Without my even mentioning open space, he asked, "But will there be a park? People need someplace to go sit outside with a book." His question has stayed with me: truth out of the mouth of babes. I hope I don't have to explain to him how the area was originally zoned for a large public park, but the city decided it simply wasn't a priority.

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