

I want to share a little information about my neighborhood which I think has some bearing on Normandy/Twining.

The "antique" used everything mostly closed store around the corner from me with a semi-living space above it sold recently for a million dollars. They then went to the Planning Board and got permission for an almost 30% increase to 3 units because it wasn't financially viable at 2 units. Yesterday the house next door - a small nice 2 family - 1 br/2 br went on the market. The owners have lived there for decades and rented out the first floor based on the low rent (by today's standards) they paid for it. The asking price is 1.3 million dollars. what does this mean ?

Who can buy these places? And then who can afford the rents which will be mandated by the high costs? One of the less acknowledged benefits of rent control - was it kept housing prices lower and therefore a large pool of sustainable rental amounts. My house purchased in 1978 at 1/50th the current several million dollar price tag has enabled me to provide more rents below market rate.

What does this have to do with Normandy?

In giving away double FAR rates, parking lots in perpetuity, heights of the tallest magnitude, we are supporting ~~196~~ of 243 units of "market rate" now read expensive apartments. Whether they are micro units (beyond the 5% unless the cap is restored) or 2 bedrooms, the thousands of dollars of rent impacts the neighborhood. When landlords nearby follow suit raising rents the ~~40~~ affordable units proposed will be offset by the displacement of those who neighbors who can least afford it.

New market rates won't shift people from current apartments, because people will pursue what is "cheaper". More likely it will draw more people to Cambridge able to afford the new "market rate". (Although I am interested in the 416 vacant units in the new Alewife multi apartment buildings.) Are we building luxury apartments for people who aren't out there? It doesn't really matter because the rents aren't coming down in those buildings having gotten good deals from Cambridge financial breaks.

I have heard most of the councilors express a desire for families and young people graduating from Cambridge public schools, or teaching here or putting out fires here or perhaps painting and writing poetry here to be able to live and work here. I don't think this project will take us closer. I wish I had an answer but at this moment I can only point to the challenge,

Cathy Hoffman 67 Pleasant St.

thanks to Ellen for
affordable hsg efforts -

yes to bees (with ml)
new in cambridge