Creedon, Paul

From: Rosemary Booth <RosemaryBooth@verizon.net>
Sent: Friday, July 03, 2015 11:47 AM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna; Gerald C. O'Leary
Subject: Concerns about PUD-KS (Volpe site) rezoning proposal and process

To: Cambridge Ordinance Committee
Subject: Objections to Volpe site (PUD-KS) Rezoning Proposal

Date: July 3, 2015

Dear Chairman Dennis A. Benzan and Members Dennis J. Carlone, Leland Cheung, Craig A. Kelley, David P. Maher, Nadeem A. Mazen, Marc C. McGovern, E. Denise Simmons, and Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.:

As resident-owners who live in a condo that directly faces Volpe Center land, we object to several provisions of the Planning Board's 5/27/2015 petition to amend current zoning for the PUD-KS (Volpe Center site). Further, we find ourselves alarmed by the speed and timing of the process for reaching decisions about these enormous changes to our neighborhood.

We attended last Monday night's (June 29) hearing held by the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board, and noted that many of the 21 speakers voiced similar concerns about the proposed zoning amendments and about the process.

In light of this hearing and our own concerns, we ask that the text of the PUD-KS rezoning amendment be revised to:

- **Require 40% of the site to be public open space**
  o *The rezoning petition proposes to reduce the amount of open space from 42% to 25%*
- **Require that a significant contiguous open space be included on the site**; most design team and resident input has put that contiguous open space at the corner of Third Street and Broadway

  o *The rezoning petition proposes to completely remove the existing requirement for a contiguous public park; this requirement appeared in draft rezoning text circulated at the 4/6/2015 roundtable*

- **Disallow any property of the federal government to be counted toward the public open space requirement**
- **Require that building heights and placement allow abundant sunlight and open-sky exposure,** while minimizing ground-level effects like strong wind

  o *The rezoning petition proposes to remove existing language requiring that the orientation and location of any new structures not "diminish the health and safety of the area around the development parcel"*

  In addition to these requests, we support the requests voiced by many other speakers that 20-25% or more of the residential housing—rather than the proposed 10%—be affordable by low- and moderate-income persons.

Besides our concern with rezoning specifics, we remain troubled by the rapid pace of the process now underway. Other speakers on Monday night also questioned this speed, and several City Councilors said they were feeling rushed by the process.

As you know, Monday's hearing went on for more than four hours. Public comments only opened up after 8PM, and more than half a dozen persons who had signed up to speak had left before their names were called.

Furthermore, the hearing and discussions are happening during the summer—when residents are only sporadically available.

We can see that the Volpe site "land swap" is incredibly complex, with an unusual number of major parties (GSA, Volpe/DOT, the City of Cambridge and an as-yet unknown developer). All this may be an opportunity—but it is surely a challenge. City Councilors and members of the public at the hearing spoke of their need for more information, preferably in quantitative form, to better weigh the tradeoffs between things like open space, low-income housing, or building heights—and economically viable development.

We ask that, as the City body charged with rezoning approval, you consider relaxing the timeline to give all parties enough time to carefully examine, consider and discuss the tradeoffs, and reach a level of comfort with the decisions made.

Thank you for your attention and help.

With best regards,
Rosemary Booth and Jerry O'Leary

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