

RE: **OPPOSE NORMANDY TOWER UP-ZONING**

4-27-15-

Dear City Council,

I am speaking **against the 195 ft Twinings Tower at Mass and Main**, as premature to master planning and its DEFERENCE to a single private developer over public benefit. Planning for Central Square is not finished. Height as of right is 80 ft. Special permit would allow 140-160 ft. Yet this developer is asking for permanent legislation for out-of-scale and out-of-character luxury residences 2 ½ times the height allowed—making Central Square Kendall's bedroom.

The threat of residences or labs is a false choice because Council has the power to dictate lab districts. Given the type of housing proposed, the ratio between underprivileged and over-achieving will never be equitable. We need more affordable housing. But to dangle the carrot, play to fear and desperation is unconscionable, causing those to grasp at straws without realizing the consequences. We have yet to explore other possibilities, something Councilor Carlone tried to present.

The developer asking for his own fiefdom opens Pandora's box for his other properties, other developers and businesses wanting zoning exemptions. We need to place a **moratorium on Mass and Main** until a fair master plan can define precisely what is needed and what is available before developer designs. Developers shouldn't wag the City Council with a single hot button gesture. Have we heard from other departments, MBTA and traffic, fire dept. etc? And perhaps those Councilors who have accepted money from this project should recues themselves from voting because of a perceived conflict of interest. Harvard Professor Lawrence Lessig brought up the concept of Institutional Corruption. Not that the players are corrupt, but the process has morphed into a stacked system which needs to be investigated. In the meantime, Zoning was developed expressly to ensure that our interests and that of a livable city are represented in all development, public and private. We are selling our souls for an additional 20 something units, while being priced out of potentially gentrified neighborhoods.

Technically, the neighborhood begins with the brick housing projects on Main Street. The scale of local neighborhoods begin immediately one street behind the proposed tower. From everywhere you look, a human streetscape is interrupted by this oppressive tower potentially visible from Mass Pike. The scale and fabric, the funky storefronts on side streets, are equally as important in giving Central Sq its identity. Mass and Main is a landmark for what? Central Square doesn't start there.

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