

TO: Cambridge City Council

4.27.15 THANK YOU MR. MATTHEW AND ^{MEMBERS OF THE CITY} COUNCIL ~~COUNCIL~~

(Mark Boyes-Watson, 100 Pacific Street #6, Cambridge, MA 02139)

I am ^{here} ~~writing~~ to urge you to support the Mass + Main zoning petition.

Having had the pleasure of presenting an idea for an urban square in Central Square to the Red Ribbon Commission on the Delights and Concerns of Central Square, and then having served as a member of the C2 Committee for the K2C2 study, I am familiar with the challenges and opportunities that development in the square brings, and with the ideas and aspirations that came out of the ~~committee process~~ ^{long and public committee process} and CDD's subsequent report.

There is the sense in the City and in this chamber that escalating housing costs is an insuperable problem. I speak to you as an architect who has worked for 30 years to build housing in Cambridge. From this experience I can tell you that the in this city it is hard, very hard, to acquire land and build housing. It is too hard, in fact, so hard that despite the will of developers to invest in the city, not enough housing is being permitted and built ^{too} here so that the wealthy, the moderate income and low income folk are competing for ^{too} limited, too static, resource.

This is not only, as some would have it, a problem of not building enough affordable housing. Make no mistake, this is a problem of not permitting and building enough housing, period. Every new unit of housing takes pressure off the existing housing stock. ^{built} ~~permitted~~ It is very expensive to build, so the new housing is expensive but every unit ~~permitted~~ relieves pressure on the existing housing stock. So it is a false choice between "new luxury housing" and "new affordable housing". They both improve housing affordability.

Well, this proposal has both, and it is broadly consistent with the goals established in the C2 process. It would be a small step in the right direction for the Council to advance the Mass + Main petition and PERMIT the proposed housing to be built.

I would then urge you to move on in addressing the issues of quality of life and housing affordability that would come out of new zoning suggested by the C2 process. It is disingenuous to suggest the Council is powerless to slow the rise of housing costs in Cambridge. You can and should by permitting more housing to be built. ^{I am still dreaming of a great urban square in Central. But lets start where} ~~Steve, the Commission Report, I want more attention to be paid into~~ ^{we are} Thanks for the opportunity to speak.

Mark Boyes-Watson

and use what we have and do what we can. ~~right~~ Right now.