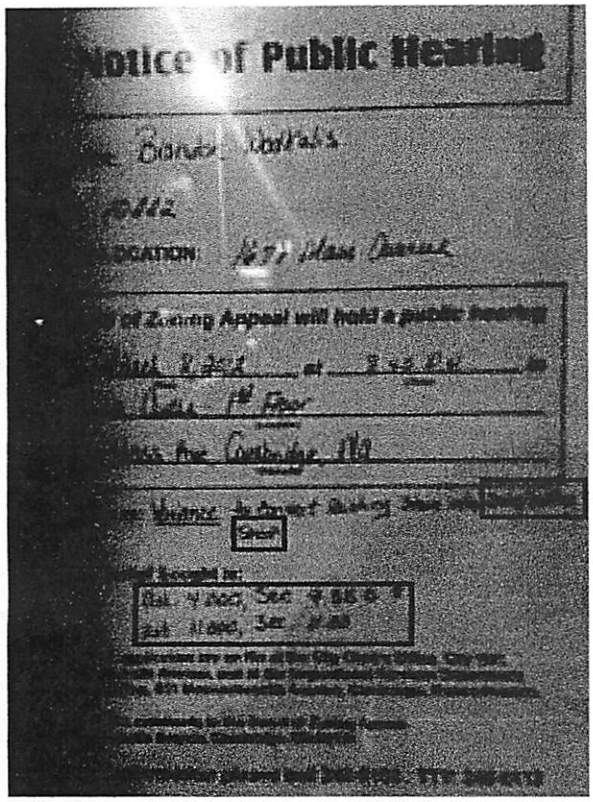
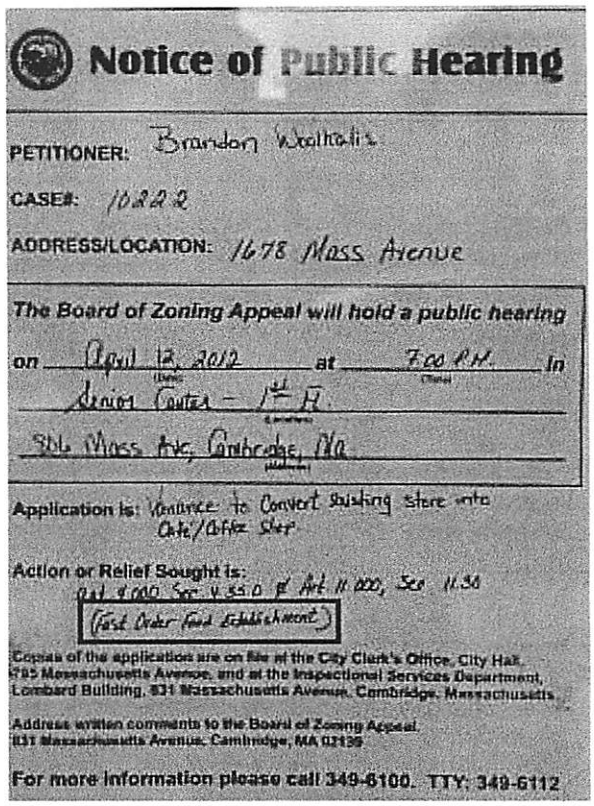
Improper Public Announcement: Fast Food Variance Request for 1678 Mass Ave



Public Notice for Board of Zoning Appeal Hearing for a "Cafe/Coffee Shop" on March 8, 2012 posted on 1678 Mass Avenue storefront. Note: 'Fast Food Establishment', the true subject of the variance, is not listed and only zoning article numbers without section names are called out.

Photo by Ron Axlerod on March 8, 2012



Public Notice for Board of Zoning Appeal Second Hearing on April 12, 2012 posted on 1678 Mass Avenue storefront. Note: "Fast Order Food Establishment" has been added; but makes no mention that verbal comment is closed.

Photo by Dennis Carlone on March 16, 2012

The Notice of Public Hearing, posted at 1678 Mass Avenue (above left), made no mention that the applicant was seeking a Fast Food Ordinance variance. If not technically required ('full and complete disclosure'), it appears to be at least very misleading, if not disingenuous. This is not how the Cambridge works or has that changed?

My background includes over 35 years of extensive Cambridge zoning experience and the notice appeared to me to be benign (a minor dimensional /technical issue). It was not until late Thursday, on the day of the Board of Zoning Appeal hearing, Thursday March 8th when I learned the zoning matter was actually a request for a Fast Food Variance. Like many of my neighbors, I felt baffled followed by a sense of betrayal.

The franchise operator and building owner clearly realized their error when they posted their second Notice of Public Hearing. This time they properly announced what they were after all along - a "Fast Order Food Establishment" (above right).

How could the Board of Zoning Appeal close verbal public comment on the proposal without full and complete disclosure on what Dunkin Donuts and building owner were seeking?

Please start the Variance Process over again after an accurate, honest advertisement. We look forward to your response.

Dennis Carlone, Architect/Urban Designer
Neighborhood Nine Rep./Mass Avenue Committee, 3.19.12