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## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mayor E. Denise Simmons

07-21-09P04:23 FILE

July 16, 2009

Dear Concerned Residents of Cambridge:

First and foremost thank you Councillor and Chair Decker for calling tonight's meeting. I would also like to thank the residents of Cambridge for coming out to tonight's meeting, as well. Unfortunately I am unable to attend tonight's meeting due to a prior commitment. The topic and discussion of tonight's meeting is of up most importance to me and my office. My Deputy Assistant, Ms. Rosaleah Brown, and Summer Associate, Ms. Sarah Girma, are here taking copious notes to report back to me. If you have any immediate concerns, comments, or suggestions, please visit me tomorrow morning during my weekly, Friday open office hours between 8:30am and 9:30am.

I encourage each of you to call my office, as well as the Police Department, when it comes to concerns about crime and violence in your neighborhood. Please defer to Ms. Brown and Ms. Girma for my contact information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mayor E. Denise Simmons", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mayor E. Denise Simmons

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Craig

Councilor Decker, I'm sorry I can't make this meeting, but I hope these comments via email will be useful. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

At a recent meeting with CHA and CPD staff, there was discussion of clearing better site lines at Jefferson Park through addressing the landscaping challenges posed by the buffer berm by the railroad tracks and the vegetation associated with that berm. There was also talk of increased lighting and the future installation of cameras to capture license plates of cars exiting CHA property.

While I understand the need to have the visibility created by clear site lines and good lighting, I worry that that sort of security approach, while making sense in the short term, does not create the type of residential atmosphere most likely to result in long term success for local residents. Instead, with less vegetation, clear sight lines and more lighting, things start to look more and more like a security complex rather than a housing development. I would want to see these changes made, if at all, as part of a much more comprehensive site safety plan that includes more emphasis on social marketing and outreach efforts aimed at changing troublesome behavior rather than simply moving it. Much more difficult, but with greater payback, I believe. More aggressive, even daily if necessary, efforts to maintain the fence by the railroad track would be, from my perspective, a more suitable place to put our resources in an attempt to discourage inappropriate activities in the rear of the property.

I also think that the "remoteness" of Jefferson Park and the nearby three towers needs to be addressed. I understand that it is difficult for CPD, despite their ongoing door-to-door, walking patrol and assigned officer outreach efforts, to engage the residents, especially the youth, in outside events. Similarly, I've heard from a variety of Jefferson Park neighbors that they don't feel comfortable going into the development. In fact, I have heard that some people won't attend tonight's meeting for that reason. I'm not sure how to better integrate these housing developments with the surrounding neighborhoods, but to the extent the residents of all types feel comfortable mixing back and forth, I think the area will be safer. To the extent that Jefferson Park and other developments have strong tenants councils and healthy, ongoing relationships with management, and to the extent that management involves their residents and neighbors in a proactive effort to maximize public safety and address quality of life concerns, I think we'll see the respective comfort levels about mingling rise.

Finally, I have heard that CHA plans to put in cameras that capture license plate numbers. These new cameras compliment CHA's already extensive camera program but they raise the larger question of how surveillance cameras fit into our public safety efforts in general and bring up the related issue of general expectations of privacy. That is a discussion beyond the scope of tonight's meeting, but I think it suitably belongs in your committee and I hope you will have a meeting on the subject in the near future.

Thanks again for holding this meeting and feel free to contact me with any questions or thoughts you might have.

Craig

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**Drury, Margaret**

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**From:** Sai [sai.r.yerram@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 16, 2009 1:23 PM  
**To:** Craig Kelley; Drury, Margaret; Decker, Marjorie; Seidel, Sam (home); Sam Seidel  
**Subject:** Re: Councilor Kelley's Comments for the Civic Unity Committee meeting 16 July

Craig,

I agree with you 100% on this. We need to have a long term plan than just short term and I hope most council members share the same viewpoint.

The general consensus among most homeowners is in line with my comments below. If possible please forward this to other council members as well, so they're at least aware of their tax-paying residents frustrations/suggestions.

I am not aware of Jefferson Park area, but seems like it needs some work. Extra lighting, landscaping can definitely make the place more personal and give some form of ownership to the residents.

We know the concentration of the crime is in and around housing complexes. I am myself a product of housing from other state, so I can go on record for saying that.

CHA should enforce tenant laws just like my landlord does. Enforcing doesn't mean evicting tenants because they got parking ticket but should be imposed when tenants commit serious crimes irrespective whether it happened on the property or off.

I think a better plan would be a combination of security measures and outreach programs. I think most people would agree just having outreach programs won't push individuals to subscribe. I think we need to introduce the element of fear, so folks know that bad behavior has consequences. Just because they feel they are under-privileged, doesn't relinquish them from owning responsibilities and facing consequences of their actions.

In my opinion, we should cease building more housing complexes [except for vouchers] and take a step back and resolve the current issues, e.g. design new outreach programs, comprehensive tenant contracts, landscaping in and around, lighting, parks etc. If we continue to build more and more in already tightly packed city, we will continue to chase our tails. Not to mention, fleeing of corporations due to high rental prices and economy will continue to flourish, thereby causing a downward pressure on Cambridge budget. This will undeniably have an impact on the housing programs, which in turn might, and history proves it, cause uptick in violence. My apologies if I painted a doomsday picture but its actually happening in cities all across the country.

Just because we can doesn't mean we have too.

Thanks,

Sai  
Inman/Wellington Homeowners

On Thu, Jul 16, 2009 at 12:13 PM, Craig Kelley <[craig@craigkelley.org](mailto:craig@craigkelley.org)> wrote:

Hi Margaret:

I can't make tonight's meeting, could you attach this email to the record please?

Thanks a lot.