

Cathy Hoffman, 67 Pleasant St.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to all of the council.

73

Despite the suggestion that this process of forest City has been active for 18 months, the real activity has just begun to take shape in the last 6 weeks – sparked by a growing resident outcry. This outcry has led to a series of community meetings, additional ordinance committee meetings, a review by the Central Square Committee and some changes by Forest City to address concerns.

To me this is an endorsement to continue the trend of engagement not end it tonight.

A lot of learning and information is emerging –

There is still no real traffic plan/projection from Forest City. Their figures and parking relate to employee figures at best without a sense of increased traffic for retail. This is in the context of a traffic study that defies reality by showing Cambridge at below 50% of grid by choosing obscure intersections, excluding bicycle/ pedestrian traffic and using suburban figures. They even project declining traffic (based apparently on a demographic of young, professional, bike-riders. )

A larger debate about density which needs much attention - Is it the answer for housing and vibrancy or will density, especially directed by developers, only increase the cost of housing and adversely affect the quality of life for all in terms of traffic, open space ?

I have sat at many meetings now where “official” information put forward has been countered by community driven research data (on our own time) or common sense which you would recognize – such as the assertion of declining traffic and easy flow (been on Prospect Street?). Or the FC assertion of having met their responsibility for housing and community benefits through the history of the CRDD when 300 Mass. Ave is not part of the district (until this proposal passes)

My concern is many councilors have not been at all of these meetings and some not to any. Which may mean you are limited to the presentations by Forest City who have millions and millions of dollars to gain so their ability to spend on presentations is limitless. And to our Community Development Department where Brian Murphy described the new Forest City proposal as “we” were asked to change this and “we” are proposing this at the last ordinance meeting. So if CDD and Forest City are a “we”, and you were not able to hear the litany of 3 minute community sound bites (as opposed to unlimited FC assertions) how can you vote tonight? When the Planning Board heard our concerns– which have only grown since - they unanimously recommended delaying this proposal with some totally opposed to it. If those representatives of our community could change their thinking, I hope you will as well.

As someone who has lived in Cambridge for 53 years, I love this city as I know you do. I will hate getting satisfaction of “I told you so” when our streets are clogged, when Kendall Square begins at the Fire Station and when there are these empty spaces where community people used to be. Let’s really create communities involvement in Cambridge’s future by withdrawing the Forest City petition and giving ourselves time for a responsive plan by supporting the downzoning.



COM 2012 #336

Communications #73

A communication was received from Cathy Hoffman, 67 Pleasant Street requesting Forest City petition be withdrawn:reject the Forest City Petition.

In City Council July 30, 2012

REFERRED TO THE PETITION