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September 12, 2011

City of Cambridge City Council Meeting

I am speaking tonite in regards to Policy Order #0-19 proposed by Councillor Simmons regarding tree work needing to be done in the city.

I am surprised that such a request has been framed as a Policy Order, when it appears to be nothing more than a Cambridge Request System entry, since the issue is ongoing work for the arborist concerning damage done by the recent storm.

Does Simmons really think that the arborist is not aware of the many trees damaged in the storm and that they are not working as hard and fast as they can to get to all of the trees that need to be addressed?

Does Simmons really think that the arborist or residents need to be reminded of the value of trees, as she states in the Policy Order, "Trees not only provide shade, they trap carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and keep our city looking beautiful..."

This Policy Order is a complete a waste of the council and residents time.

I think Simmons wrote this very particular Policy Order to enhance her political goal of being reelected to City Council, by portraying herself as a person who truly values city trees and works to protect them, when that is a lie.

Look at me, she declares! I'm a tree lover and I want you to know and remember that!

Well, where was this tree lover last summer when four mature healthy pear trees on Gilmore Street were proposed for removal by the city arborist because he claimed they were a safety concern, when in reality it was a favor to Mr. Moore, to remove the trees he didn't want near his property; because he held the misconception that the tree roots would damage his new solid concrete foundation.

Where was this tree lover when I, along with a neighbor on Gilmore Street, brought suit against the City of Cambridge in July 2010 in the Middlesex Superior Court for Breach of Public Trust, for attempting to take down four healthy trees for a political favor?

I know where she was last summer because I ran into Simmons in Central Square, and I asked for her support in saving the Gilmore trees. Her reply was quick and to the point.

She had no questions for the over 200 residents who wanted the trees saved. She didn't want to read the two arborist reports from Save ATree that stated the trees were healthy and posed no safety concern.

She had all the information she needed to make an intelligent, reasonable decision based on facts which she had gathered. She needed nothing from the other side of the argument. She wanted no discussion. She did not need to hear their points of concern or any evidence that they had to support the trees.

“Those trees all have to be taken down because they are damaging a neighbor’s foundation,” she said. Then she hurried away.

Is this the kind of person who should be a city councilor? A person who doesn’t bother to get all the facts of a situation? The City never claimed that the tree roots would damage Mr. Moore’s foundation. That was not the reason the City used to take them down. They claimed they were unsafe, which was a lie.

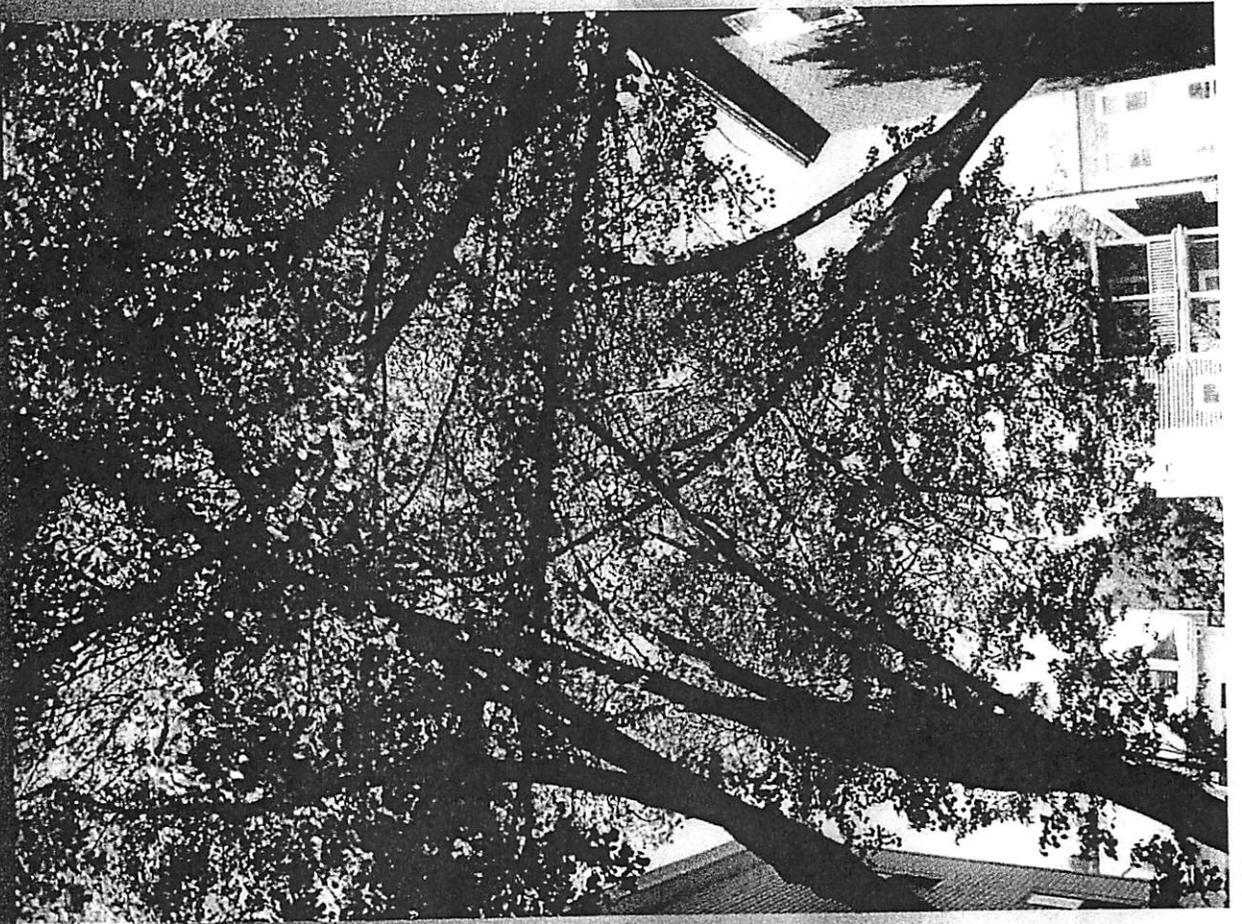
The point here is that Simmons lacks the basic qualities that a councilor should have: an open mind with an ability to see both sides; the skills to evaluate and understand the complexities of a conflict, and the time and compassion and commitment to make a fair decision.

I find it disgusting that she should use the storm damage to declare herself a tree supporter, when in reality she supported the wrongful act of removing the four Gilmore pear trees.

There were two councilors who supported the Gilmore trees. Two councilors who took the time to understand and make a fair judgment of the situation, and they were Craig Kelley and Minka.

Craig and Minka are true tree supporters and we need their continued support in Cambridge.

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