

8

LORING L. STEVENS  
14 CHANNING STREET  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

2009 JUN 16 P 3: 20

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

June 11, 2009

Cambridge City Council  
Cambridge City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Councilors:

I am writing to add my support to Lesley University's petition for zoning changes to extend the Business C zone in Porter Square to include the North Prospect Church building. I also support the establishment of a Lesley Overlay District. These changes will allow the Art Institute of Boston, one of Lesley's four colleges, to relocate from Kenmore Square in Boston to the North Prospect Church site, thus creating a unique opportunity for Cambridge residents to benefit from, and participate in, the rich cultural/arts activities that AIB will bring to the area via exhibits, lectures and other arts related events.

Last fall, I read in the Boston Globe about this project and the manner in which Lesley University was working collaboratively with its neighbors to ensure that their proposal was sensitive to the needs of abutters. I was struck by the sensitivity of Lesley's approach but also by what an enormous coup it will be to have AIB in Cambridge.

I have lived in Cambridge since 1964; my first apartment was at 1648 Mass. Ave., a mere two blocks from the Lesley site. I subsequently ran my business from 1990 to 1998 from an office at 1698 Mass. Ave., even closer to the site. When I was looking for office space in 1990, Lesley's University Hall was the Porter Square Arcade; it was largely uninhabited, having gone from a flourishing Sears and Roebuck store in the '60s to a struggling effort at urban re-development under the inept hands of Peter Wasserman. The ground floor was populated with a constantly changing roster of small businesses/eateries and the upper floors were a wasteland. The neighborhood was considered "iffy" and businesses tended to come and go with disheartening regularity. As Lesley has grown in the last 20 years from a small "commuter" college to a large university, extending their original campus with the acquisition of the Porter Square properties, it has been gratifying to observe the positive impact that this growth has had on the economy and vitality of Mass. Ave. and the Porter Square area.

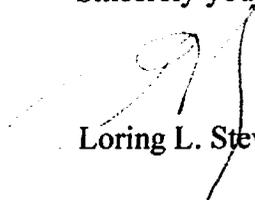
Since Lesley has taken over, the area has stabilized and flourished. With the proposal to move the Art Institute of Boston to this site and to develop the rest of Lesley's Porter Square property in a thoughtful and purposeful way comes the opportunity for this part of

Cambridge to finally achieve its full potential, making it an even more desirable and exciting location for both business and residential use.

Lesley has been, and continues to be, a good neighbor. The requested zoning changes are well thought out and represent a positive step forward for the entire Porter Square area. I urge you to vote affirmatively on Lesley's zoning petition.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Loring L. Stevens