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Lopez, Donna

From: William Morse [willym@verizon.net]
Sent: Thursday, July 26, 2012 6:44 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Vote No on Forest City

Dear City Councilors:

As a resident of Cambridge for the last 42 years, I am dismayed that I even have to write this letter.

It should be self-evident that approval of Forest City's current proposal is not in the people of Cambridge's interest. The eagerness of city councilors to leap onto the development bandwagon, without even negotiating for a better deal, is appalling.

A few examples of what is wrong with this proposal:

- Forest City refused to include affordable housing on the site, as requested by the Council.
- The building is too tall and too bulky for the site, shadowing Mass Ave in the winter, and cutting off sky and sun from Jill Brown-Rhone Park.
- A decision on the Forest City petition should await the report of the Central Square Advisory Committee in the fall.
- Forest City is renegeing on the 80-foot height limit previously negotiated with the community.
- Forest City's offer of community benefits is a tiny fraction of the profit they will make from the additional square feet over that currently permitted.

The last point get to the heart of the matter. Forest City is allowed by zoning law to build a very large building, but they want to build a much larger one.

WHO BENEFITS if they build a much larger building? The city will collect taxes, currently ~2%/ year, FOR WHICH WE HAVE TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE BUILDING OWNERS AND TENANTS, so the people of Cambridge actually recieve little of even this 2%. The building owners recieve the great bulk of the remaining increased value of the building, essentially a gift from the people of Cambridge!

Already it is clear that there is great room to negotiate with Forest City over the terms of this project. Without ANY organized opposition from within the City Council, purely on the basis of community opposition, Forest City has made some concessions in the form of reduced bulk, setbacks, and a paltry (in the context of the money involved) financial offer. How much more could the people of Cambridge negotiate, if those negotiations were lead by the City Council and City Manager? I'm afraid we will never know, because the "Progressive" City Council of Cambridge is showing itself to be nothing less than apologists and spokespeople for Forest City and the development train. There is still time for you to get off that train. If you don't, I will be working to replace each of you who violates your trust with the people of Cambridge.

Best,

Bill Morse

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PS- What's the hurry? Why can't this wait for the Central Square Advisory Committee report?

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