



Lopez, Donna

From: Hubert Murray [hmurray@murraystudio.com]
Sent: Monday, July 30, 2012 11:43 AM
To: Lopez, Donna
Cc: Davis, Henrietta
Subject: Re: Area IV Preservation Petition

I see that there are three items on the agenda for this evening's meeting of the City Council (Unfinished Business #7; Committee Report #2 and #5) that concern zoning issues in Area IV and the related issue of the proposed Forest City Development between Green Street and Massachusetts Avenue and Blanche and Lansdowne Streets. I am unable to attend the meeting but considering the importance of the issues for the neighborhood and for the city as a whole I would like to make the following points for the record.

1. Cambridge's industrial base of higher education and research is enormously successful by world standards and provides significant revenue and employment for the city and the region. The fact that our residential property tax is relatively low compared to many other surrounding communities is due in no small part to the revenue generated by this industry in our midst. This is an asset that must be encouraged but also leveraged to achieve goals that we hold dear as a community.
2. Another great asset of this city is that we have a strong civic culture, a passion for social justice, a citizenry that is prepared to work for the common good and a council that by and large reflects these values.
3. A third asset that Cambridge has enjoyed historically is the diverse communities that make up the demographics of the city. Ethnic and cultural diversity and economic diversity not only enrich the life of the city but also ensure that people who have jobs here can also live here and can send their children to schools here - and look forward to the next generation.

It is this third asset that has been under severe strain for a number of years now. The issues before the Council regarding the proposed MIT / Forest City development and the future zoning of areas in and around Central Square impinge directly on the future of the community as we would like to see it. An enormous amount of work has already been accomplished on the planning for Central Square and the recommendations of the consultants are due in the Fall.

There are a multitude of issues that have already been analyzed and discussed (transportation, density, housing affordability, massing and the street edge, open space and how all these issues are refracted through the lens of sustainability on which Cambridge is taking such a leading role) so this email is just a reminder of some core principles on which I hope all parties can agree.

I would like to suggest the following:

- Asset #1 (bio-tech industrial development) is both the leverage and the opportunity and at the same time the greatest threat to Asset #3 (our cultural and economic diversity). While it is important not to strangle the prime economic engine that brings income to the city, it is also important not to lose sight of what we as a community value most, to make sure that the creation of wealth is directed towards the creation of social and economic opportunity for the broader citizenry, not just the institutions, developers and venture capitalists who seek to invest. We hardle need reminding that the quality of life in this city, the fact that we are a mixed community and would like to remain so, is what makes Cambridge such an attractive place to invest in and is the foundation of the 'value' that all of us would like to build on.
- Having talked with a number of people on both sides of what seems to have become an increasingly polarized discussion I am convinced that the vast majority on both sides share the core values suggested by Asset #2 (social justic, civic engagement).

I would urge the council to delay decisions on zoning and on the Forest City proposal until the consultants' report on Central Square is finalized. This is not a 'delaying tactic' but rather a logical course of action to have a comprehensive overview and a well articulated strategy before decisions are made about specific locations or sites.

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