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Michael O'Shea

February 14, 2012

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City Council
Cambridge, Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Honorable Councilors,

Shortly you will discuss the "Bishop Petition" regarding zoning changes in North Cambridge.

I am writing to oppose that proposal as written, specifically sections 1. and 1a.

These sections propose to limit and restrict current uses allowed for my building and business at 95 Harvey St. and those of my neighbor at 91 Harvey St. We occupy and use our buildings in a legal and responsible manner and, until now, expected that our already narrow property rights in SD-2 would be maintained.

Sections 1. and 1a. amount to a "Taking."

I spoke to Ms. Bishop at the Special Council meeting on February 8, 2012. She explained that the idea of these clauses is to eliminate the possibility of some large commercial component at the Fawcett Oil development site. New residential traffic will impact small streets and she wishes to avoid non-resident commercial traffic. She said that she was unaware of the effects on us and called them "unintended consequences." Her intent seems reasonable but her prescription is not.

Three alternatives come to mind.

Allow that area of SD-2 to break away into its own Special District with its own amended regulations. It is a large area and spot zoning concerns should not apply.

Allow 1. and 1a. to apply to commercial spaces over 4000 sq. ft. only.

Strike 1. and 1a. from the petition and let the Planning Board address the issue, IF it comes up, as they do so well in other instances. My experience is that the Planning Board can and does "encourage" developers to build neighborly projects.

In any case, I urge you to reject sections 1. and 1a. of the Bishop Petition as written.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Shea and Linda McJannet
Owners 95 Harvey Street, North Cambridge