

NOTES TO CITY COUNCIL/ORDINANCE COMMITTEE RE THE STERN PETITION
August 20, 2015

The overlay zoning along Mass Ave which requires ground floor retail and incentivizes developers with an of-right building height of 50 feet, puts the neighborhood of Richard Ave and the particular developer of 2551 Mass Ave between a rock and a hard place. Why is this?

The intent of the overlay zoning is to incentivize a mix of residential and retail along the Avenue, to create a vibrant main thoroughfare. I think that's a great idea. But let's adhere to the spirit of that intent, rather than be locked, as is the PB, to the letter of the law. The PB, in their last meeting, recommended to CC that the Stern Petition not be passed, and directed the neighborhood and the developer to "work out a solution".

Okay, the question is, how do we do that? Between the requirement for retail and the neighborhood objections to the 50-foot height next to a Res B zone, there's no wiggle room.. The developer is currently making use of that height to create enough residential units to get a return on his investment. The neighborhood would be content with a three-story, 35-foot high building, but that doesn't give the developer enough space given all the requirements as they now stand: he has to put parking for 5 cars and a retail space on the ground floor.

And what about this retail? As the developer for the Masse's parking lot conceded at that same Aug 10th meeting, the retail for him was a loss leader (I am quoting Mr. Hoagland) And Councilor Carlone pointed out in that same meeting that best indications for success of retail are where other retail and heavy foot traffic coexist. This is definitely not the case at 2551 Mass Ave, which is the terminus of the overlay zone. Furthermore, because of needing to put parking on the street level, the retail space is only 900sf. In order to meet the 75% storefront requirement, the developer has wrapped the storefront around the corner onto Richard Ave itself. We don't want retail frontage on Richard Ave. Nor do we on Richard Ave want to look at commercial trash facilities nor lighted open parking facilities.

As I said before: a rock and a hard place for everyone. We the neighbors appeal to our elected representatives to act in a spirit of which the Planning Board is incapable: to think creatively, outside the box, to help us find a solution that works for the neighborhood, that works for the developer, and that works for Mass Ave.

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT B

From: cariho@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2015 2:17 PM
To: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Richard Ave rezoning

I don't think making the building smaller and without retail is necessary; I like having shops on Mass Ave. -Carolyn Hoffman, 100 Reed Street, Cambridge 02140

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT C

From: TaxT17@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 7:10 AM
To: Council@cambridge.gov
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Stern Petition

We support the Stern Petition.
"Ms Clerk, please enter this into the Council record."

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Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT D

From: mdanehy07@comcast.net
Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 8:00 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: SUPPORT -- Stern Petition- 2551 Mass Ave

I am writing in favor of the Stern Petition at 2551 Mass Ave . As I very longtime resident on Richard Avenue in North Cambridge I reject the current proposal for the property at 2551 Mass Ave. All the homes on Richard Avenue consist of 2.5 story residences. The oddly designed four story building at the corner of Richard Ave is in no way designed to fit in the neighborhood. I feel that the building should be lower with a better design and do not want a retail space designed to fail

Ms.Clerk please enter this into the Council record

Margaret E. Danehy
19 Richard Avenue
Cambridge MA 02140

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT E.

From: Cynthia Barros <barroscynthia1129@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 7:40 AM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: 2551 Mass Ave

Hello!

My name is Cynthia Barros I am writing because I think it's great that someone wants to build a new development for North Cambridge. Mr. Scott Zink followed all the zone codes. Although I don't reside in north Cambridge I am here for (at times) 12 hour days throughout the week. The design is not what's going to make the business fail or be successful (that's just the icing on the cake ...) the building that's there now isn't pretty and the business isn't doing well because I don't have other businesses (i.e. post office, super market, Starbucks, even another dry cleaner) around. Anyway in conclusion I believe that this would be great for the community. I understand change can be a scary thing sometimes but that's how the community grows, not to mention it will create more jobs.

Ms. Clerk please enter this into the Council record.

Thank You
Cynthia Barros

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT F.

From: Cattaneo, Mariagnese <cattaneo@lesley.edu>
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 11:20 AM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: public hearing Aug. 20

I live on Richard Ave. 17. Unluckily I am unable to attend the meeting this late afternoon. But I would like to share some thought with you concerning 2551 Mass. Ave.

This planned project is not conducive to the character of our neighborhood of mostly two families, that are lower than the planned project which would be four stories high which do not include the Elevator shaft and ventilation adding to the four story. I fully support the petition for a lower building, and a design that is more in the character of this neighborhood and stretch of Mass. Ave.

I also think a commercial space would effect our streets, the parking is certainly an issue since there would be not enough parking for the planned commercial space. this would effect the whole neighborhood especially street close to it such as Richard Ave. From the experience with other commercial endeavor on this part of the avenue they have not been really successful.

thank you for your consideration,

Mariagnese Cattaneo,
17 Richard Ave.

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT G

From: Walter DeGuglielmo <wdeguglielmo@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 12:33 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Support-Stern Petition- 2551 Mass Ave.

To the Members of the Cambridge City Council,

My wife and I are lifelong residents of Cambridge and most recently, the past 20 years, a resident of North Cambridge(Foch St.), specifically the area in question in the subject heading. My wife and I would like to voice our opposition to the proposal that has been put forth. This area is already to congested with traffic as well as development and we feel that there is no need for more development in our area. The development that is at the end of Magoun St when it is finished will increase the traffic past the saturation point and we feel that this new proposal would make it even more unbearable. We would appreciate it if the members of the City Council would take a long and hard look at this and reject this outright. Ms. Clerk, could you please take this correspondence and enter this into the Council record. Thank you for your time on this matter.

Walter and Janet DeGuglielmo

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT H

From: Gannon, Marie <mgannon@lesley.edu>
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 2:01 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: SUPPORT - Stern Petition - 2551 Mass Ave

Ms. Clerk, please enter this into the Council record:

I am writing to support the Stern Petition.

The proposed development at 2551 Mass Ave is very much out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood.

The surrounding area is primarily 2 family houses and residential.

The height of our existing buildings allow light and air to pass through the neighborhood.

The proposed development would restrict both of those and stick out next to more moderately sized buildings.

Retail at that site has little chance of success.

I hope that the Stern Petition is successful and that the 2551 Mass. Ave. property is developed at a scale that makes sense for this neighborhood.

I regret that I cannot attend the Planning Board meeting tonight, August 20. Thank you for having it and for considering the Stern Petition.

..Marie Gannon

Marie Gannon
owner
15 Richard Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT I

From: Kathleen Aguero <kathiaguero@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 2:44 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: SUPPORT--Stern Petition--2551 Mass. Ave

As a resident of North Cambridge, I am concerned about the proposed development for 2551 Mass. Ave. I support a lower building with a better design.

Ms. Clerk, please enter this into the Council record.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Aguero
3 Gladstone St.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Kathleen Aguero
kathiaguero@comcast.net
617 640 7455
www.KathleenAguero.com

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT J

From: Phil Anderson <pallworth403@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2015 3:24 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: SUPPORT - - Stern Petition - - 2551 Mass Ave

Ms. Lopez - I am a resident of 30 Churchill Ave in North Cambridge and I strongly support the Stern Petition concerning the plan for 2551 Mass Ave.

Please enter this into the Council record.

Thank you

*Sincerely,
Philip Anderson
30 Churchill Ave, Apt 403
Cambridge, MA 02140*