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## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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Community Development

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Deputy Director for  
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To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Brian P. Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development 

Date: June 14, 2011

Subject: Council Order # 8, dated June 6, 2011, requesting a report on best way for residents and neighborhood groups to obtain information and technical support for zoning and development issues.

The Cambridge Zoning Ordinance is a complex document that can, at times, be difficult to interpret. Community Development Department staff are always willing to help residents, business owners, property owners, and neighborhood groups to understand the principles and contents of the Zoning Ordinance, to provide information on the potential impact developments might have on their neighborhoods and, more importantly, to learn what questions to ask in meetings with developers.

The CDD Community Planning Division has assigned to each neighborhood a neighborhood planner who becomes familiar with the land use and physical details of the area, attends neighborhood meetings and leads the neighborhood planning study update process. These planners can be very helpful to the community in sorting out land use issues when they arise in a neighborhood. Working in this kind of advisory role with residents and other stakeholders is a customary and appropriate staff function.

If people want a quick reference to zoning information, another useful resource is the *The Zoning Guide: A User Guide to the City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance*, which is available on the CDD web site:  
<http://www2.cambridgema.gov/cdd/cp/zng/zguide/index.html>. The Zoning Guide provides an overview of the Zoning Ordinance and seeks to explain some of the more technical concepts in language accessible to the layperson.

As part of updating the CDD website, we will highlight the availability of staff resources to assist residents and neighborhood groups with zoning and other development-related information.