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Lopez, Donna

From: ShareThis [notifier@bounces.sharethis.com] on behalf of PaulStevenStone@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2012 8:04 AM
To: City Council; Lopez, Donna
Subject: PaulStevenStone@gmail.com has shared: Guest column: Why Cambridge should enact a one-year moratorium on up-zoning

I'm quite frustrated at how things went last Monday. I can't be at this next meeting. Things are hapening too quickly and we need to push this whole Forest City matter down the road to where we can all clearly and rationally review the matter. See my forwarded Oped from the Chronicle. Thank You!

Guest column: Why Cambridge should enact a one-year moratorium on up-zoning
Source: wickedlocal.com

They just don't get it! Don't see what's coming their way. "They" in this case are the Cambridge City Council, the Planning Board, and the Cambridge Development Department (CDD).

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WICKED LOCAL CAMBRIDGE
WITH NEWS FROM THE CAMBRIDGE CHRONICLE

Guest column: Why Cambridge should enact a one-year moratorium on up-zoning

By cambridge@wickedlocal.com
Wicked Local Cambridge
Posted Jul 29, 2012 @ 03:12 PM

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Cambridge –

They just don't get it! Don't see what's coming their way.

"They" in this case are the Cambridge City Council, the Planning Board, and the Cambridge Development Department (CDD). None of those groups seems aware that something momentous is happening in Cambridge that will permanently alter the fabric of our community. Not one has the vision or the courage to serve as the gatekeepers and cautious stewards our city needs.

Rather than pick up their collective heads to notice the ominously gathering wave of development rising on the horizon like a giant tsunami, they continue to consider each project individually, totally ignoring the combined impact from all other projects.

Watching any of these groups go about their business you would have no sense of the imminent threat posed by mega-development after mega-development, each one petitioning to lift zoning regulations, offering givebacks and amenities in exchange. In the short-term those givebacks are great—they keep our taxes low, create a few more low-income housing units—but in the long-term they're like the candy that entices the child into a stranger's van.

The Myth of "More Development Equals More Housing For Cambridge Residents"

Has anyone tested the city's underlying assumption that more development equals more housing for Cambridge residents? A.C.T., The Alliance of Cambridge Residents, which represents low and moderate income families, has joined the Cambridge Residents Alliance in calling for a one-year moratorium on all up-zoning petitions. Why? Could they possibly oppose increasing the number of units available to the very people they represent? Not likely. They've repeatedly seen new housing developments attract upscale residents from outside Cambridge, while driving up rents on the inside. Thousands of new apartments have been built in Cambridge in recent years; how many of them going to low- or even moderate-income families? Just the few set aside as givebacks. A small price to pay for a developer who stands to make millions.

The Myth that "Cambridge Is Winning The Traffic Wars"

If you listen to the CDD you would think traffic in Cambridge has improved in recent years! Or that our busiest intersections flow smoothly in rush hour. Or that the Red Line has plenty of capacity left during Rush Hour, especially if you like to STAND UP.

What is your Cambridge traffic experience? Have you found traffic easing up of late? Intersections flowing smoothly? Or, more accurately, do you find—like I do!—that driving through Cambridge in rush hour is a slow torturous process. And God help you if the usual construction is in place.

And What Will Be The Impact of 65,000 Additional Cars?

Approval of all proposed and likely developments citywide would bring an estimated18 million-plus square feet of new office, lab and living space into our city. Which would bring an *additional 65,112 cars* onto Cambridge's already congested streets. They would also result in an additional 65,775 public transit trips on a system that is already maxed out, according to a recent study.

Anyone who tries to drive through Cambridge at rush hour knows there's already more density on our streets than we can handle. Doesn't it seem sensible to discuss the impact of 65,000 additional cars on our roadways—and on the air we breathe—*before* we eviscerate our zoning regulations to let those cars in?

What's The Rush? Why Not Study The Future *Before* We Damage Our City's Future?

The decisions we make today will affect our lives and the lives of generations. If we don't do our due diligence before tearing down our zoning regulations, we leave ourselves and the fabric of our community totally vulnerable to market-driven forces.

It's a terrible irony that the unique characteristics that make Cambridge so desirable a community—our diverse population, small-town urban culture, our greenery and open spaces—create the very circumstances that threaten the destruction of everything that makes us special.

"Is Cambridge For Sale?"

That's the question the City Council and our civic planning bodies need to ask themselves. The power of money and the weight of traditional political behavior is moving us ever closer to the disappearance of all that makes Cambridge livable and worth living in.

The Cambridge Residents Alliance, made up of Cambridge residents and neighborhood groups, is looking to call a one-year moratorium on all up-zoning, so we—the current residents and stakeholders of Cambridge—can consider where these mega-developments are taking us. And whether that's where we want to go. We owe that much to ourselves and to this city we so appreciate and love.

Paul Steven Stone is a resident of Harvard Street in Cambridge.