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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Number 09-20, regarding a report on the circumstances of the termination of the lease between 3 Aces Pizza and Harvard University, Thomas J. Lucey, Director of Community Relations for Harvard University reports the following:

During preconstruction soil testing associated with the Harvard Law School's Northwest Corner Building, Harvard discovered that a dry cleaning solvent perchloroethylene (PCE) had been released at the commercial building at 1607-1615 Massachusetts Ave. (the Building) over many decades and has caused environmental contamination which must be cleaned up. As you may know, a dry cleaning business operated in the Building for more than 40 years. Harvard is working closely with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP) and coordinating with the City of Cambridge regarding investigation and remediation activities.

In conducting the investigation of the Building itself, Harvard's environmental consultants determined that some parts of the structure were contaminated and would eventually need to be removed. It is not known if it is possible to control and remediate the levels of PCE with the existing Building in place.

In order to allow Harvard to remediate the source and the surrounding areas in the most thorough and efficient manner, Harvard exercised the 12-month termination option that has been a part of the lease since its initial execution in 1990 with the building's tenants. Because Harvard's remediation options would be improved as soon as the Building is vacant, Harvard also offered to release both Three Aces and the Barbershop from their lease obligations earlier than the 12-month mark, and offered some additional compensation for the earlier departure date. One of the tenants opted to accept the offer. The situation with each tenant is different and Harvard will not comment on the individual business decisions of the businesses.

Having heard and acknowledged the community's interest in retail activity along Massachusetts Avenue, Harvard's desire is to resume commercial activity at the site when the Building is in suitable condition for re-occupancy. At this point, it is not clear when that will be. The impact of addressing the contamination on the Building is unknown but it will be significant. In the interim, Harvard will coordinate with the City and the community regarding ways to improve the Building's appearance such as window displays.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

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