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Drury, Margaret

From: Lauren K Gibbs [ladarelkg@verizon.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2009 1:07 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Drury, Margaret
Subject: remarks on Lesley - requesting Council to ask for parking information
Attachments: 6-15 Council Meeting Remarks - Gibbs.doc

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Councillors,

The remarks I would have made at your meeting yesterday are attached. I urge you to request information from your own Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department to identify the volume of permits issued to members of the Lesley community. There are a number of ways to do that listed in my remarks.

Thank you - and see you Wednesday!

Lauren Gibbs

2009 JUN 17 A 10:39
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Lauren Gibbs remarks for 6-15 2009 Council Meeting on proposed Lesley re-zonings (not given - arrived too late)

I am Lauren Gibbs at 3 Newport Road Apt 1. 16 other apartment owners on Newport Road who share a concern about the adequacy of Lesley's planning for parking are listed below.

We ask for a delay in approval of Lesley's rezoning application until effective parking planning has been accomplished and Lesley has a specific plan for the other lots, or we ask that you just deal with the proposed AIB Building separately from any future plans Lesley might develop. Again, once building is done on any one portion of the proposed Overlay District, there are fewer possibilities to rectify miscalculations of needs.

And miscalculations are likely since the City of Cambridge does not have adequate information about the parking needs that will arise from the AIB coming to Porter Square. Both studies Lesley has submitted to the City of Cambridge were not conducted on when regular classes were in session, which means there is no adequate information available for planners or councilors to work from. Vanasse & Associates conducted a one day parking study on December 10, 2008 - one day after classes ended (December 9th) and one day before exams began (December 11th). In other words, the day of the parking study was a reading day with no classes and no exams - reducing the campus presence of both faculty and students and reducing on-street parking levels - one of the required statistics to obtain special permit waivers of parking spots. In addition, the study was conducted on a day on which no Gallery event was held. Similarly, Dober, Lidsky, Craig & Associates conducted a Parking and Transportation Demand Management Plan for Lesley's 2008 Town Gown Report during the week of May 5-9, 2008 - final exams week rather than a week when classes were in session.

I have requested information from Brad Gerratt, Deputy Director of Cambridge's Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, as to the number of people who gave a Lesley address to get a residential permit - Lesley says no dorm students have cars and only 15% of the full-time faculty and staff live in Cambridge, but we don't know that that is the case. Having councilors request this information might expedite getting it, since I do not, unfortunately, yet have it to give to you today. Maybe by Wednesday... Another way to get at this is for Lesley to provide the names of all faculty, staff and students of both Lesley and the AIB - including adjuncts - to the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department and let them match the names to see how many have Cambridge permits. (I would be happy to donate my time to do this match and gather the data, if that would be useful). And the Council could make similar requests of the Boston Parking Department to match the names of AIB students, faculty and staff - including adjuncts - which would enable approximation of the number of AIB folks with cars who might be interested in driving to Porter Square. Lesley says AIB students don't use cars (and they don't even count part-time faculty - i.e. most of the AIB faculty! And these adjuncts are most likely to drive since they are likely to have multiple employers, being part-timers). In addition, I spoke on June 1st with a police official in Boston's D-4 precinct (the precinct including Kenmore Square) who indicated that many AIB students DO have cars and DO park on the street.

An additional idea is to require Lesley to provide parking to its employees - including adjuncts and students (currently not eligible for Lesley parking spaces) - for free, which would eliminate the motivation for Cambridge residents with permits to park on our neighboring streets day after day to avoid Lesley's parking fees. IF parking personnel monitor the area, others, without permits, once they have gotten a few tickets, we can HOPE will decide to park elsewhere...

We applaud Craig Kelley's idea of defining the parking requirements in any Overlay District, but you cannot define the parking requirements before you know what the true needs are. Please decide to look at the AIB building only without an Overlay District and ensure sufficient parking without waivers in the zoning proposal.

We also want to note that parking and traffic are big, big concerns for this neighborhood in the largest sense of the neighborhood. We remind you that Willie Bloomstein - a member of the Working Group with Lesley - submitted to you on May 27th the results of the February 2009 survey the Agassiz Baldwin community conducted about the Lesley AIB project in which the overwhelming top concerns expressed in 132 survey responses were parking (102), construction mitigation (100), and traffic (98), followed by open space (96).

In summary,

- We ask you to handle the AIB move independently of any potential future development plans Lesley may devise.
- We ask you to postpone approving this approval until a parking and traffic study has been designed and conducted by a neutral party and the issues have been fully explored.
- We ask you to remove the language that would prohibit a parking structure on the rear lot of Sears to maintain as much flexibility for the City of Cambridge as possible.

We think that, if Lesley cannot afford to meet the needs of the City, then maybe Lesley should do less on the site.

Thank you,

Lauren Gibbs, 3 Newport Road #1, 02140

Amery Burnham, 1 Newport Road #6, 02140
Margaret E. Curtis Jr., 1775 Mass Ave #8, 02140
Joanna Handlin & Bob Smith, 3 Newport Road #6, 02140
Boazhang He, 5 Newport Road #7, 02140
Eduardo Lozano, 3 Newport Road #3, 02140
Janet Reckman, 4 Newport Road #1 and #3, 02140
Rebecca Rivera, 1 Newport Road #2, 02140
Elizabeth Taylor-Mead, 2 Newport Road #6, 02140

Mary Christie, 5 Newport Road #6, 02140
Nora Etkin, 1783 Mass Ave #7, 02140
Martha Hass, 4 Newport Road #7, 02140
Joan Hutchinson, 6 Newport Road #7 and #8, 02140
Larry Minear, 3 Newport Road #7, 02140
Pat Rieker, 3 Newport Road #2, 02140
Jonathan Rowe, 1 Newport Road #1, 02140
Burt & Rhoda Unger, 3 Newport Road #4, 02140

PS Please note that the Council minutes of June 1st did not record the following points I made:

1. If you DO approve the rezoning, we would like to request the following changes to the proposed zoning language:

Changes Newport Neighbors Would Like to See in Lesley's Proposal Language, if Approved

- Strike language that assumes that parking and loading requirements will be waived for an Overlay District unless a parking study has been conducted by a neutral party selected by the City of Cambridge but paid for by Lesley University. I'll say why in a minute.
- Eliminate language that disallows an above ground parking structure on the rear of the Sears building. While we do not think that that would necessarily be the best use for that land, if the parking need is there, we would rather have the parking need met than have a life style nightmare. Lesley will not build parking unless forced to, so you don't have to worry that THEY will build parking unwanted by the community (it's too expensive). However, the City should retain the power to require the parking, if it turns out to be needed.

2. We are in support of the Oxford Court Condos request to include language that requires a Traffic Mitigation Plan and a Construction Mitigation Plan. We would like Lesley to provide Newport Road and the proposed rezoned area abutters with rodent control and other planned mitigation as they would provide to Oxford Court.

Newport Road suffered from a tremendous rodent problem when the T construction occurred years ago and we want to avoid a repeat.

3. However, we also note that we would oppose Oxford Court Condos language or any "understanding" included in a memorandum of understanding that the eastern Mass Ave properties of Lesley in the Overlay District are to be fully built before the Lesley properties on the western side of Mass Ave. Building up the east side of Mass Ave fully before the west side would make it difficult in the future for Lesley to either provide parking that is needed for current or future developments or to replace the parking on the western side, since the eastern side will have already been built.