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12/9/97

TO: The Honorable, the City Council
FROM: Daphne Abeel, 148 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
RE: Polaroid site development, for next Council meeting

The traffic study, ordered by the city and performed by Vanasse Associates makes it clear that the traffic problems surrounding the Spaulding & Slye/Polaroid proposed development cannot get any worse. Intersections are already rated LOS (level of service) F, which is the worst rating possible. The study asserts that the addition of a 600 car garage will not change the rating. Of course not. Traffic is already rated as bad as it can get. LOS F is defined as "operations with high delay values that often occur with over-saturation. Poor progression and long cycle lengths may also be major contributin causes to such delay levels."

The second City Council order issued last June asking for soil testing has not been acted upon. There are factors that lead neighbors and abutters to think that the site is, in fact, "dirty". One potential buyer put down a large nonrecoverable deposit and pulled out of the deal when it became clear that Polaroid was not going to test the site.

Overbuilding, congestion, traffic problems and pollution are global problems but they are reaching a crisis stage locally in Cambridge. Developers are building and renovating at an unprecedented pace. Every vacant lot in Cambridge is being claimed. I feel this keenly on my own Pleasant Street block. Four new buildings have gone up in the last three

years. Two other buildings have been renovated and cut into smaller units. One new building is still under way and one was completed two to three weeks ago. New tenants have already moved in and each unit has a car. There is off the street parking for them, but their visitors bring more cars to the neighborhood. With the exception of myself, there is not a single resident on my block who was there 3 years ago. Even the trend in cars is to larger sports utility vehicles and vans.

It is not possible to view with equanimity the Spaulding & Slye/Polaroid proposed development. The map accompanying the Vanasse study is very misleading as it omits several businesses -- Microcenter, Trader Joe's, Howard Johnson's, Bread & Circus (proposed), and Osco's -- which feed traffic off and on to local streets. It is too bad that Polaroid has not been able to sell this property, but does that mean the area has to accept a project that may open a polluted site, and that will surely mean intense traffic congestion on streets that are already overburdened and clogged?

Daphne Abel

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Consent Communication #20

S-757

Communication was received from Daphne Abeel, regarding Spaulding & Slye development on the Polaroid site.

In City Council December 15, 1997

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