

TO: Ms. Margaret Drury
City Clerk
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

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OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

96 OCT 31 PM 3:28

CAMBRIDGE MA.

FROM: Peter V. Cignetti
5 Theriault Court
Cambridge, MA 02140
491-6314

RE: Resubmittal of Information for Inclusion in the Consent Communication
Agenda for the Upcoming City Council Meeting on November 4, 1996 Relative to
the Alewife Study Group's Support of the 400 foot Open Space Buffer Zone in
North Cambridge.

DATE: October 30, 1996

Dear Ms. Drury:

Due to the length of Monday, October 28, 1996's Public Comment Period at the City Council meeting, and the time limits imposed, the attached letter from the Alewife Study Group, dated October 28, 1996, in support of the 400 foot Open Space Buffer Zone in North Cambridge, was not read in its entirety into the record.

Would you please include this cover letter and the attached communication from the Alewife Study Group dated October 28, 1996 in the Consent Communication for the upcoming City Council meeting on Monday, November 4, 1996.

Thank you for your consideration and attention in this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Peter V. Cignetti

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TO: City Council Members
City Clerk's Office
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

RE: Support of the 400 Foot Open Space Buffer Zone Petition for the W. R. Grace Site in North Cambridge.

DATE: October 28, 1996.

Dear City Council Members:

The North Cambridge Community's phone calls, letters, public testimony, and reports, will not protect the North Cambridge neighborhoods unless the City Council votes YES on the Open Space Buffer Zone Petition for the W. R. Grace Site in North Cambridge. Additionally, we are in full agreement with the Planning Board's statement in its October 10, 1996 report to the City Council that "the expeditious submission of a comprehensive rezoning proposal to the City Council" is in order for this area. (p.4)

The Planning Board's decision on the Community's Open Space Buffer Zone Petition was unfortunately non-responsive to the neighborhood's desire to preserve more natural **flood storage**, address issues of site **contamination**, **scale** of development, **wetlands** and **habitat**, **traffic**, hydrological changes due to **MBTA construction**, and etc. Instead of commenting directly upon the petition submitted, the Planning Board presented an insubstantial substitute, in sketch format, at an October 10, 1996 meeting. Devoid of details relative to the Community's stated concerns, this sketch had *literally* no community input, no legal review, and it has yet to be formally explained to the public.

Rather than recommend the neighborhood petition, the Planning Board voted to substitute a 25 foot landscaped setback. This substitute plan does not even prohibit vehicle access to the Grace Site from Whittemore Ave., Clifton St., and Harvey St.; *and it allows the construction of high density commercial or industrial development 25 feet from both the Clifton St. and Whittemore Ave. neighborhoods.*

The Recent Legal Review from the law firm of Hovey, Urbelis, Fieldsteel & Bailin relative to the Petition and dated October 17, 1996 falls far short in its understanding of the many critical issues whose adverse impacts are mitigated by the Open Space Buffer Zone Petition. (See also the Report submitted by the Alewife Study Group dated October 1, 1996 in support of the Petition.)

* With regard to site **contamination**, the legal review states that "on the evidence gathered to date, it does not appear that the proposed open space area is of primary concern with regard to contamination." (p. 10) The reviewing attorneys have apparently either not read or not comprehended the reams of documentation submitted to the Planning Board relative to site contamination which are contrary to this opinion.

* With regard to **traffic** issues, the legal review has paid little heed to the abutting residential neighborhood's desire to prevent thousands of cars from entering or exiting the site on a daily basis through those neighborhoods. Vehicular access and egress to the site are expressly restricted by the Petition.

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* With regard to **MBTA construction**, the legal opinion has apparently not even considered, at a minimum, the hydrological changes to the area or the impact on the flood plain subsequent to the MBTA tunnel construction which occurred in the late 1970's & early 1980's. It should be restated that the MBTA tunnel runs *directly under* that portion of the proposed Open Space Buffer Zone bordering the Harvey St. & Clifton St. neighborhoods.

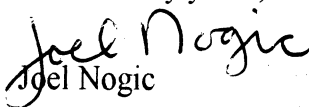
* With regard to natural **flood storage**, the legal review correctly states, "**That municipalities have authority to enact flood plain zoning bylaws is not to be questioned.**" (p.6) However, the reviewing attorney's lack of understanding of flooding and flood plain issues for the Alewife area in general, and the proposed Open Space Buffer Zone in particular, become readily apparent in the statement that, "Based on our review of the information provided, it appears that only a small area, if any, of the 400 foot proposed open space buffer area is within the 100 year flood plain." (p. 6) In the past week, neighbors abutting the proposed Open Space Buffer Zone have taken hundreds of photographs documenting the flooding and flood damage which occurred during the recent heavy rain storm. We have attached one of those photos which shows virtually the entire proposed Open Space Buffer Zone in the Harvey St. & Clifton St. area under several feet of water.

Whether the recent heavy rain storm is considered a 30, 40, 50, or 100 year storm, enactment of the neighborhood's Petition will help to keep this type of flooding & flood damage from becoming an annual event. We urge the City Council to reject the Planning Board's substitute, and to vote YES on the neighborhood's 400 foot Open Space Buffer Zone Petition.



Lisa Birk
Co-Chair, Alewife Study Group
20 Columbus Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140
354-3295

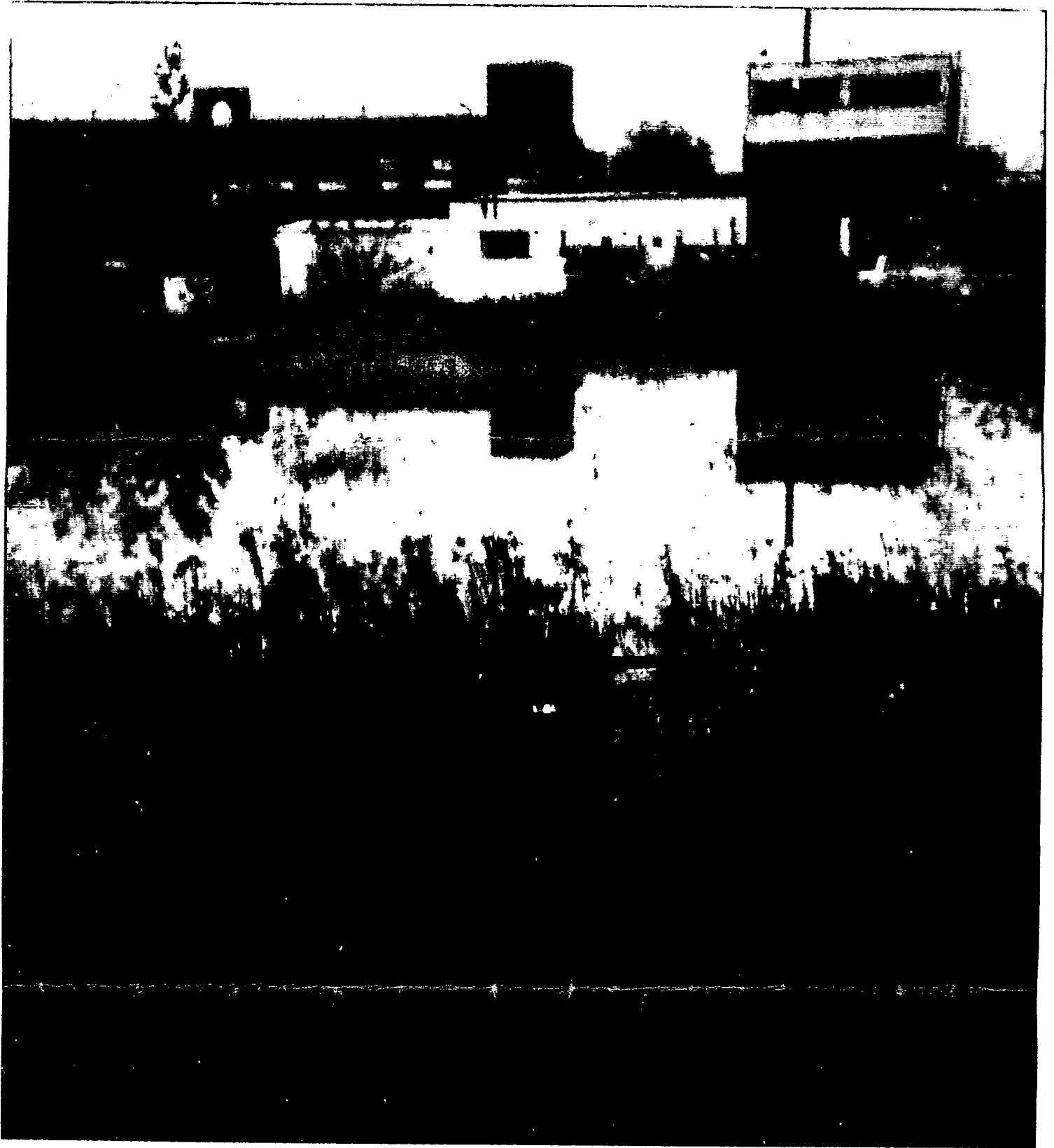
Sincerely yours,



Joel Nogic
Co-Chair, Alewife Study Group
94 Clifton Street
Cambridge, MA 02140
547-6463



Peter Cignetti
5 Theriault Court
Cambridge, MA
491-6314



Oct. 21, 1996 - W.R. Grace Site/Harvey St. end.
(NOTE: This area is in the proposed 400'
Open Space Buffer Zone.)

Consent Communication #5

5-534

Communication was received from Peter V. Cignetti, transmitting information relative to the Alewife Study Group's Support of the 400 foot Open Space Buffer Zone in North Cambridge.

In City Council November 4, 1996

Placed on file