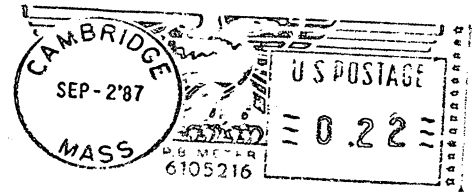


COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

City Hall Annex • Inman & Broadway
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139



City Council

Inter-Departmental

North Cambridge Stabilization Committee

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1 September 1987

Planning Board
City of Cambridge

Re: Alewife Center P.U.D. Application

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

As you know, the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee has been meeting on an ongoing basis with the developer of Alewife Center. As we noted in our letter of comments on the draft EIR for the development, we are eager to see the site cleaned up and developed, and we appreciate the developer's willingness to expend a substantial amount of time and effort in meeting with the community. However, as we noted both in our draft EIR comments and in our letter to you of 8/4/87, we have concerns that have not yet been resolved. The purpose of this letter is to summarize for you now, as you prepare to decide whether and under what conditions to grant the P.U.D. application, the major issues that remain unresolved from our perspective.

The critical issues, as described in more detail in our previous submissions, are:

1. Traffic. We do not agree with the paragraph in the 3/10 draft decision on the Grace site which says that "access to the site has been designed to discourage to the maximum such negative impacts on local neighborhood residential streets." While we appreciate the developer's willingness to talk with us about the traffic issues, our concerns about major traffic impacts on the streets around Whittemore Ave. and on the likely short-cut alternatives to Alewife Brook Parkway (for example, Mass. Ave. to Cedar to Rindge and Concord or Sherman to Walden to Mass. Ave.) have not yet been answered. For example, the developer has done current traffic counts for Whittemore and the surrounding streets, among others. In addition, problems with the traffic estimates in the draft EIR (numbers not adding, future base counts lower than today's counts) have not been resolved.

We feel very strongly that the City of Cambridge Traffic Department and the developer need to come up with a plan to keep traffic to and from the development off residential streets. Such a plan does not currently exist. While the Stabilization Committee has not voted a formal recommendation to the Planning Board on the timing of approval of the PUD, my sense of the meetings so far is that the neighborhood does not understand how so major a project in so congested an area could be approved without a fuller traffic plan.

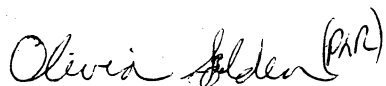
2. Environmental Concerns. We appreciate the careful scrutiny of the site provided by the City of Cambridge and the DEQE, as well as the cooperation of the developer on these particularly important issues. Nonetheless, the fact that the various environmental reviews are still in process does raise questions about the timing of PUD approval. At the least, it suggests that the conditions for further review might be specifically written to require further discussion as the environmental reviews are completed.

3. Open Space and Pedestrian Access. The public amenities offered by the plan are primarily open space around Jerry's Pond and pedestrian paths across the Alewife Center area. We would like to reiterate our earlier comments, which are very similar to the Board's concerns as expressed in your letter to David Vickery of January 29, 1987. The pedestrian link from the Linear Park to the Alewife MBTA station should be as direct as possible; there should be as much pedestrian-level activity as possible to insure pleasant and safe surroundings (which, as the Board's letter points out, is difficult to reconcile with so much above-ground parking); and the plans for Jerry's Pond, which still contain several uncertainties, should be made final so that we can be sure that the developers' intention of providing attractive public open space can be carried out. None of these issues has yet been fully addressed.

4. Housing. The developer's draft EIR proposes housing at Grace-owned sites on Whittemore Ave. As our comments on that draft indicated, we believe that the commitment needs to be more specific in terms of number of units, targeted income level, and dates.

I hope this information is helpful as you make a decision on whether and with what conditions to approve the PUD application for Alewife Center. Please feel free to call me if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Olivia Golden in cursive script, with the initials "PRL" written in parentheses to the right.

Olivia Golden, Chair
North Cambridge Stabilization Committee

200 Sherman St., #1
Cambridge, MA 02140
354-7932

OG:nbm

cc: David Vickery, RVM&G
Cambridge City Council
Michael Rosenberg, CDD

21.

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Comm. from Olivia Golden, Chair, North Cambridge
Stabilization Committee, transmitting her
letter to the Planning Board summarizing con-
cerns on the P.U.D. application for Alewife
Center.

In City Council,

September 14, 1987

Placed on F-11