

Jane Jacobs sees the political definition as one very important definition of neighborhood – the neighborhood as a political unit. However, cities can have several different combinations that make up political districts for different levels of government. Clearly, the boundary areas are not fixed boundaries; they are what the residents define as the boundaries.

- Population to support neighborhood activity – local retail, facilities and functions.
- Human scale – short walking distances, pedestrian activity on streets.

At this point Councillor Reeves added that the characteristic of human scale also relates to the size of the buildings. Ms. Rubenstein agreed. She said that the “new urbanism” movement involves looking at the horizontal building spaces as well, with the point of view that buildings that are closer together and arranged in patterns that emphasize street life contribute greatly to livability.

- Places for human interaction - front stoops, sidewalks, parks.

Mr. Dash explained that recent articles look at need for places for human interactions as a need for the “third space,” a space that is neither home nor workplace, but rather “in between” both physically and psychosocially.

- Provides ability to meet the daily needs of residents – goods, services and transportation.
- Works to service those things that contribute to the quality of life, e.g., safety, schools.

The discussion then turned to the tools and programs that the City of Cambridge, through the Community Development Department, uses to support and enhance good neighborhoods. See **Attachment B**.

Ms. Rubenstein noted that the design review provisions adopted by the City Council as part of the Citywide Rezoning amendments have had a positive effect and will continue to be of major importance in the North Point development. She pointed to the plans for the first new housing at North Point since the completion of that zoning as an example of how well the guidelines are working to provide a physical framework for a livable neighborhood.

Councillor Reeves asked if Cambridge Street would have broader sidewalks after the Cambridge Street reconstruction work is finished. Ms. Rubenstein said that she would look into that matter and report back to the committee. There will be many enhancements to the area, but she is not sure whether the sidewalks will be widened significantly. She recalls that the local business owners did not want to lose the customers who traditionally double-park outside of Cambridge Street businesses for quick purchases.

Councillor Reeves asked if there are statistics on how many businesses are helped each year by the façade improvement program. Ms. Rubenstein said that those statistics are included in the budget; she believes that the program assists six to ten businesses per year. Councillor Reeves said that the Grafton Street Restaurant windows are lovely and that he would like to see them replicated in many other facades. He said that this is a good program. He added that the program could perhaps make a more substantial change if it were more closely focused in one particular area.

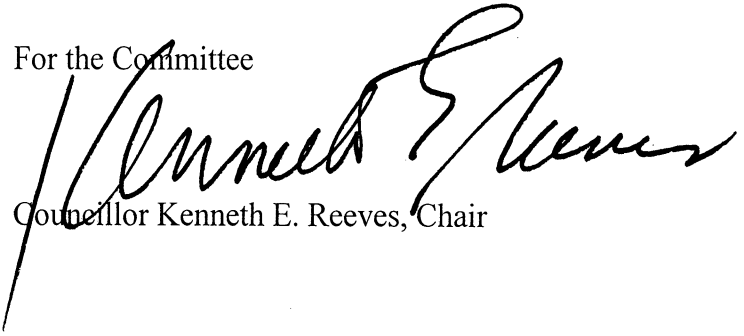
Councillor Reeves then suggested that this might be the time for an evaluative look at the changes in Central Square; from the point of view of what actions the City took to bring about change, what worked and what did not work. He stated that he is still interested in more information about how other cities, including international cities, have tried to manage change to improve the livability of their neighborhoods. He would also be very interested in obtaining a copy of anything that Kevin Lynch has written about Cambridge. Councillor Reeves reminded the committee that there is also an outstanding request for the list of affordable housing produced in Riverside over the last ten years.

At this time, Mr. Dash distributed the appendices to the compendium of neighborhood study plans (plans and appendices are on file in the City Clerk's Office) and described the contents.

Councillor Reeves ended the meeting by thanking the Community Development staff, and in particular, Mr. Dash, for his work in providing the materials for the committee. He thanked all of those present for their participation in this interesting and important subject.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

For the Committee



Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves, Chair

What Makes a Good Neighborhood - Selected Bibliography

Alexander, Christopher, Ishikawa, Sara, and Silverstein, Murray. *A Pattern Language. Towns, Buildings, and Construction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Chaskin, Robert J. *Defining Neighborhood: History, Theory and Practice*. Chicago, 1995.

Hoch, Charles J. *The Practice of Local Government Planning*. Washington: International City/County Management Association, 2000.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1961.

Kunstler, James Howard. *Home from Nowhere. Remaking Our Everyday World for the 21st Century*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Lynch, Kevin. *Good City Form*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987.

Nelessen, Anton C. *Visions for a New American Dream*. Chicago: American Planning Association, Planners Press, 1994.

Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committee
July 30, 2002

I. What makes good neighborhoods?

- An identity that creates a sense of place. (e.g. well defined boundaries)
- Population to support neighborhood activity (local retail, facilities and functions)
- Human Scale – (short walking distances, pedestrian activity on streets)
- Places for human interaction (front stoops, sidewalks, parks)
- Provides ability to met the daily needs of residents (goods and services, transportation)
- Works to service those things that contribute to the quality of life (safety, schools)

II. How does CDD support good neighborhoods?

- Neighborhood studies and updates (e.g. Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Study)
Develop recommendations for land use, zoning, urban design, parks, transportation, economic development
- Major planning studies (e.g. Citywide Rezoning, ECaPS, Concord-Alewife)
May allow study of larger area, more detailed study, longer timeframe
- Project review (e.g. Article 19.00 Project Review)
Allows Planning Board to support urban design, transportation goals
- Issue/local planning study (e.g. Rooftop/Mechanical Task Force)
Focus on specific issue or project

III. CDD programs to enhance and support good neighborhoods

- Affordable housing development
- First Time Home buyer classes
- Lead Safe Cambridge
- Traffic Calming
- Pedestrian and bicycle friendly design
- Promotion of non-auto travel
- Major transportation infrastructure projects
- Small Business Assistance
- Retail Best Practices
- Façade Improvement Program
- Park and Open Space Design and Construction

City of Cambridge

NEIGHBORHOOD AND LONG TERM PLANNING

In City Council September 23, 2002

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves, Chair

Councillor Marjorie C. Decker

Councillor E. Denise Simmons

The Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committee held a public meeting on July 30, 2002, beginning at 3:15 p.m., in the Office of the City Council for the purpose of continuing to discuss neighborhood studies and the ingredients of a good neighborhood and a livable city.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves, chair of the committee, City Clerk D. Margaret Drury, Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development, Susan Glazer, Deputy Director of the Community Development Department (CDD) and Stuart Dash, Director of Community and Neighborhood Planning, CDD.

Councillor Reeves convened the hearing and explained the purpose. He reviewed the following requests for material made at the last meeting:

- Selected bibliography of books and articles on livable cities and neighborhoods.
- List of affordable housing developed in Riverside in the last ten years.
- Information about how other cities proceed with neighborhood planning, including examples of other ways of shaping/controlling change.
- Appendices to the neighborhood studies including other/more recent planning studies and reports related to the areas studied in the neighborhood study reports.

Mr. Dash submitted a bibliography on the subject of what makes good neighborhoods (**Attachment A**). He then discussed material outlined in a summary he had prepared based on a review of some of the respected literature on what makes a good neighborhood and how CDD supports good neighborhoods. Attachment B.

Mr. Dash found the following factors to be among the most significant in determining whether a neighborhood is good and livable place:

- A sense of place – well defined boundaries.

Councillor Reeves noted the importance of a neighborhood identity in the creation of a sense of place. He also pointed to Cambridgeport, Riverside and Kerry Corner as examples of how there can be different definitions of a neighborhood. Mr. Dash said that

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Committee Report #2

Committee Report from Councillor
Kenneth E. Reeves, Chair of the
Neighborhood and Long Term
Planning Committee, for a meeting
held on July 30, 2002 for the
purpose of continuing to discuss
neighborhood studies and the
ingredients of a good neighborhood
and a livable city.

In City Council September 23, 2002

**REPORT ACCEPTED.
PLACED ON FILE.**