



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUSAN B. SCHLESINGER,
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

September 6, 1995

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Susan Schlesinger, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

SBS

SUBJECT: Response to Council Order #13, dated 6/26/95, re: Two Canal Park Public Process

One and Two Canal Park, two buildings on Lechmere Canal at First Street and Cambridge Street, were previously approved for construction by Planning Board as a Planned Unit Development Special Permit under the provisions of PUD-4 in Article 13.000 of the Zoning Ordinance. Initial approval was granted in 1984. One Canal Park, an office building of about 100,000 square feet, has been built and occupied for a number of years pursuant to the authorization in the permit. Two Canal Park, also authorized as an office building with approximately 165,000 square feet of space, was fully designed and its foundation constructed. Because of depressed market conditions no further construction has taken place in the last five years.

As the schedule for construction of Two Canal Park has not been met or amended, a new special permit is required to re-authorize construction of the originally approved office building. Furthermore, the program of uses now proposed for the building has changed: retail and theater activities are proposed to replace the previously approved office space and accessory retail stores on the first floor. That shift in use of the building would require a new special permit even if the original schedule of construction had been adhered to.

Approval of a Planned Unit Development requires the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board, as was done with the original PUD. In Cambridge, the PUD special permit process requires that two public hearings be held, rather than the one hearing mandated by state statute for every other special permit. The first hearing is held to review the proposed preliminary plan and a second hearing is held to consider a final plan, which incorporates changes made to reflect comments received and direction given by the Planning Board at the first public hearing.

Formal consideration of a PUD Special Permit Application must take place within the typical special permit time line set forth in state statute and our own Zoning Ordinance, unless extensions of time are granted by the applicant: the first hearing is held within 65 days of application and the hearing on the final plan and final approval, if it is to be granted, must occur within 90 days of that first hearing. As is required by law, abutters to the project

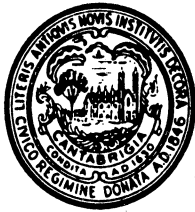
receive notice of the hearing and may participate in it, as may any other member of the public.

All aspects of the building, including its use, the impacts of those uses on the abutting neighborhood, and its specific design elements are within the purview of the Planning Board in considering the proposal and granting its approval.

As is typical for most major proposals in the City, an extensive informal process of discussion occurs between the proponents and the affected nearby residents and property owners and the neighborhood at large, both before formal application and during the Planning Board's review of that special permit application. Preliminary contact has already taken place between the proponent and those in the neighborhood most affected by the proposal. However, as plans are more firmly developed, a more organized process will begin with a meeting between the proponent and the East Cambridge Planning Team in the early fall. That meeting will be followed by a community-wide meeting sponsored by the Planning Team and the Community Development Department. In addition, the proponent expects to meet directly with particularly affected abutters at Graves Landing, One Canal Park and Ten Canal Park; residents at Miller's River, Truman and Putnam School elderly apartments will be contacted. Other meetings with the proponent will take place as appropriate or as requested. The Community Development Department is always available to facilitate communication between the community, the proponent, and the Planning Board. In addition, the Planning Board can be expected to discuss the application at several regular meetings, after the required public hearings, and before any final decision is made on the special permit application request.

Additional approvals, somewhat more limited in scope, may also be needed before the project can proceed. An amendment to the existing state Chapter 91 License must be secured as the building will be located on former tidelands. The applicant filed a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR), dated June 30, 1995, with MEPA describing the proposed changes. After receiving public comment, the Secretary of Environmental Affairs certified the adequacy of the SEIR and directed the applicant to work with the City and the community to address outstanding issues through the special permit process. Several other, more technical, Department of Environmental Protection and Metropolitan District Commission permits must be secured.

At the City level, the Conservation Commission must review the project for a Determination of Applicability. Additional approvals may be required depending on the final uses established. Theaters, for instance, need a local license that is issued only after a public hearing and with due consideration of the impact of the activity on its neighborhood. Other more specialized licenses may be necessary, depending on the final uses that occupy the building.



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
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September 11, 1995

To The Honorable, The City Council:

With reference to Awaiting Report Item No. 47, regarding the planning process and public input/review of proposed developments at 2 Canal Park, please find attached a response received from Assistant City Manager for Community Development Susan Schlesinger.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
attachment

Consent Agenda Item Number 36

SV 293
Response to Awaiting Report Item Number
Forty-Seven regarding the planning process
of the proposed developments at 2 Canal
Park.

for original see 1995
City Manager
Requests # 287.

9/18/95- Report Placed in
file

In City Council,

Sept. 11, 1995

Charter Right
exercised by
Councilman Dooney