



The Harvard Square
Business Association

Taking Care Of The Square

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

97 NOV 13 PM 3:43

CAMBRIDGE MA.

November 14, 1997

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Members of the City Council:

The Board of Directors of the Harvard Square Business Association is very concerned that the City Council has found it appropriate to hold a public hearing regarding the future of The Tasty. No matter the opinion of individual Board members regarding the plans of either Cambridge Savings Bank or The Tasty, all agree that the City Council's involvement in landlord/tenant relations is disturbing and may set a dangerous precedent. Will this now mean that every business with real estate issues can ask for a public hearing and Council support?

The answer: No, because the Council is not an appropriate place to be discussing or deliberating private contracts.

The Association's primary concern has always been what is best for the Square in its entirety. Specifically regarding the Read Block development, the HSBA met with Cambridge Savings Bank several times regarding concerns and plans for their project, the tenants, the design, construction, etc. We continue to contribute regularly to them regarding what is best for Harvard Square with this development.

It appears that "change," and how it affects the face of Harvard Square and all of Cambridge, is the real issue driving this hearing. We realize that the closing of mom-and-pops, the influx of chains, and the continued development of Harvard Square and Central Square are the major issues perceived as threatening both Squares. Many people, including some members of the Council, have stated that Harvard Square is becoming a mall or "anywhere USA." However, looking through the history pages, one must remember that chain stores and fast food establishments have existed in the Square since their inception in the 1930's. Many have forgotten the Hojo's, Albiani's, Joe and Nemo's Hot Dogs, Waldorf's, Brighams, and more, were in the Square. More recently, Pier One, Rebecca's, Pizzeria Regina, Talbot's, and others, have also left. True, many small businesses have a difficult time competing with larger stores for a variety of reasons, but Harvard Square has still proven to be a mixed use district in which new, innovative, and unique start-up businesses have not only built a loyal customer base, but have also prospered and grown well beyond Cambridge's boundaries. While other businesses prefer to stay small, happy to maintain a hands-on approach and daily contact with their customers. Yet, as we all know, keeping this pace is difficult, and when a smaller business closes we experience a sense of loss.

However, the closing of long standing establishments such as Elsie's, the Wursthaus, Cahaly's, the sale of Charlie's, and others, are due to the cycle of life in a thriving and innovative community; not as a result of the influx of chains or redevelopment. Is a public hearing on one business the appropriate response or answer to the larger concern or sentiment about the future of Harvard Square, Central Square, or all of Cambridge? How does focusing publicly on one

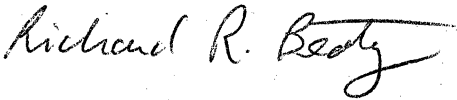
18-2

business' concerns effect all that is good and wonderful about Harvard Square and Cambridge? These questions need to be asked and their answers considered carefully.

Cambridge Savings Bank and The Tasty aside, temporary or permanent displacement is an inevitable process of planning for the future. However, the HSBA does feel that through appropriate efforts, this displacement can be handled and managed in a way can that work for all parties, but only if all concerned parties work together to find creative solutions to the problems. For example: the Council referred Harvard to the City Manager regarding the kiosk changes at The Shops by Harvard Yard. This approach is just one example of a more logical and suitable way to handle the Council's concerns about the future of The Tasty, and other such private matters.

While there are reasonable regulations and hearings in Cambridge on property "use", there are also good reasons (i.e. U.S. Constitution) why there no regulations or hearings on who the property "user" is, do not occur. Therefore, the Board finds this hearing improper, unfair, and not an appropriate way to handle concerns about changes in Cambridge.

Sincerely,



Richard R. Beaty, President
Harvard Square Business Association
Hammond Real Estate, President

rrb/kts

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK
97 NOV 13 PM 3:43
CAMBRIDGE MA.

Consent Communication #18

5-720

Communication was received from Richard
Beaty, President, Harvard Square Business
Association, transmitting concern regarding
the future of The Tasty.

In City Council November 17, 1997

Referred to
the Hearing.