



City of Cambridge

42.

IN CITY COUNCIL

October 16, 1995

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO
VICE MAYOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

WHEREAS: The City of Boston is not contemplating changes in the manner in which they operate relative to permitting in order to attract new responsible development (see attached Boston Globe article 10/12/95), without reducing public input; and

WHEREAS: A major portion of this proposal is the creation of a position of a person that tracks and assists in the permitting process, said position would not only assist developers but also community groups and neighbors seeking the status of a particular proposal; and

WHEREAS: Another portion of said proposal includes the creation of clear timelines, so that responses are given to proposals in a responsible and timely manner; and

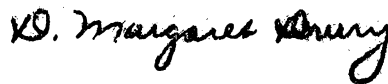
WHEREAS: This Councillor and other Councillors have proposed and/or discussed many of the points raised in this article as a proper way in which government should become user friendly for residents and businesses; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager is hereby requested to review the proposed plan contained in the attached Boston Globe article "City leaders [Boston] discuss plan to simplify zoning code" (10/12/95) in order to attract and/or assist proposed development projects, without reducing public input, by imposing timelines for city responses and creating the position of a person to guide persons (both commercial and residential) through the city's process; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager is hereby requested to report back to this City Council within two months relative to the application of said plan to Cambridge.

In City Council October 16, 1995
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;



ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

42

October 18, 1995

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN

WHEREAS: The City Boston is not contemplating changes in the manner in which they operate relative to permitting in order to attract new responsible development (see attached *Boston Globe* article 10/12/95), without reducing public input; and

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ATTACHMENT

City leaders discuss plan to simplify zoning code

By Richard Chacón
GLOBE STAFF

For years, it seems, real estate developers in Boston have complained that the city's review process is riddled with bureaucracy and filled with unpredictable twists and turns.

But in an effort to cut that red tape, and to add reliability to the way development decisions are made, Mayor Menino's administration plans to propose changes to the zoning code that would streamline the review process.

The proposals, which have been circulating in draft form to business and community leaders, would eliminate duplicative parts of the review process, consolidate review proce-

dures into one of two categories, appoint a city-employed advocate to oversee a project's progress through the review process, and impose stricter time limits on city reviews — with a money-back guarantee for developers when those limits are not met.

"We're finally putting a beginning, middle and an end to our review process," Menino said yesterday. "We're on the verge of lots of new development in this city and this is one way to encourage that."

Currently, developers must consult 800 pages of zoning regulations to meet the review process. The proposals, if passed by the Zoning Commission, would weave the rules into a 76-page article — known as Article 80 — of the city zoning code, according

to Marisa Lago, director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

In some cases, Lago said, developers may be exempted from preparing a final report on the impact of their project if the draft version is adequate. And when issues raised by a project can be addressed relatively quickly, the BRA may waive that part of the review process.

And in what Lago called a "revolutionary" idea, the city will guarantee to meet timelines for decisions on reviews or it will refund the developer's fees — which can often amount to thousands of dollars.

"Timelines were seldom adhered to in the past," Jim Klocke, director of economic development for the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, said yesterday. "Our mem-

bers constantly tell us they need a yes or no from the city on a review decision. Hopefully, Article 80 will set a precedent for other city permitting agencies to respond in a timely fashion."

But city officials promise the proposals will not reduce the amount of public input already required by law in the review process. BRA officials will continue to solicit comments on Article 80 until early December,

when the proposals will be formally presented to the BRA board, which is expected to recommend the changes to the Zoning Commission.

"Streamlining the process is a great idea," one business leader said. "Now, if only the city could rewrite some of those ancient zoning laws."

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Galluccio, Russell, Triantafyllou
Consent Order #42

CM-454

Councillor Sullivan re: City
leaders [Boston] discuss plan
to simplify zoning code.

Order Adopted

In City Council October 16, 1995