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Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 907, Cambridge, MA 02238

December 12, 1996

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
Cambridge, MA

To the City Council:

At a November Neighborhood Town Meeting, the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association heard a report on the City's institutional use policy. This policy is incorporated in the City's Zoning Ordinance (Sec. 4.50) and is based on a 1980 study of the matter by the Community Development Department, the *Cambridge Institutional Growth Management Plan*, which also contains the criteria to be used for special permits for institutional uses.

There have been changes in the scale and nature of institutional uses and in other land uses and the economics of the City in the decade and a half since the study was completed. A number of specific concerns were raised:

1. the nature of new institutional-residential boundaries that are being created at boundaries of institutional overlay zones and where no further institutional expansion is permitted by the policy,
2. the possible role of long-term affiliate housing as a transitional, buffer use,
3. the impacts of new forms institutional uses, including large, free-standing colleges for day and night students, such as Cambridge College, and institutional ownership of formerly for-profit activities, such as telecommunications facilities and computer hardware sales, and
4. the appropriateness of permitted institutional uses in residential areas far from established institutional areas, such as dormitory uses in C-2 and C-3 zones on Broadway and Harvard Street.

Because of these and other changes, the Association believes that there is an urgent need for the 1980 institutional use study to be updated and to reexamine and if necessary refine the zoning provisions regarding institutional uses. By a vote of 37-1 the Association passed a motion to ***request the City Council to initiate a comprehensive study of these particular issues and the zoning code in general.*** I am hereby transmitting this request for your consideration and I would be glad to do anything further that could assist its implementation.

In other actions, the November meeting also passed motions

- to initiate a tree project for the betterment of the Mid-Cambridge forest and to research language for a possible tree ordinance;
- to study and report on practical regulations to limit the amount of black topped surface in back yards; and
- in response to the spread of commercial inns in the neighborhood, in general to support the consistent enforcement of zoning ordinances to maintain existing residential uses and the residential character of residential zones in the neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted,


John Pitkin
President

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Consent Communication #30

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Communication was received from John Pitkin,
Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association,
requesting the City Council to update and
reexamine the 1980 institutional use study.

In City Council December 16, 1996

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