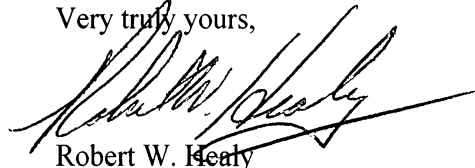


Finally, staff tries to make sure that Planning Board members are aware of other major meetings and events planned which may affect their work (ordinance committee, major planning workshops, etc.) and will continue to do so.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert W. Healy', written over the typed name.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec



9.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

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June 2, 2003

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 03-49, regarding a report on ways the Planning Board members can become more familiar with various neighborhood concerns, Assistant City Manager for Community Development Beth Rubenstein reports the following:

As you know, Planning Board members are drawn from various parts of the city, represent a number of different professions and backgrounds, and bring various viewpoints to their work on the Board. In addition, many Board members keep their "eyes and ears" on their own and other neighborhoods and interact with many members of the community, attending planning workshops and other community meetings as their interests dictate.

As a special permit granting authority, the Board holds hearings (in some cases more than one) on each special permit application or major amendment to a special permit. The Planning Board also holds public hearings on proposed changes to zoning. Through these forums the Planning Board hears frequently from residents, business owners, institutions and others on a wide variety of issues. Often the testimony raises issues that are wider than the specifics of the case at hand, such as general concerns regarding traffic, open space, health of retail businesses, and others.

Under the Article 19 Project Review special permit process, which was adopted as part of the Citywide Rezoning in 2001, the Board is guided by urban design, traffic and other criteria which are specified in the zoning ordinance. In some cases, such as development in the North Point area, the Board is also guided by area-specific design guidelines, which have been developed through public processes like the East Cambridge ECAPS process. These guidelines express many community values by promoting open space, ground floor retail, an active pedestrian environment, transportation improvements and others.

As part of the annual Town-Gown reporting done by the city's colleges and universities each year, the Board holds public meetings on the most recent report. This year, the Board also discussed ways in which the reports might be enhanced and expanded to be more inclusive and comprehensive. Staff will be working with the Board to seek those changes in the 2003 Town-Gown reports.

The Planning Board receives copies of CDD neighborhood studies and updates which are developed through community process. This enables the Board to have the latest thinking from the neighborhood when issues come before them from that part of the city. Many of the recommendations in the neighborhood studies will eventually be before the Board as zoning petitions.

S-186

Consent Agenda #9

Awaiting Report Item Number 03-49, regarding a report on ways the Planning Board members can become more familiar with various neighborhood concerns.

In City Council June 2, 2003

**REFERRED TO THE
COMMITTEE FOR
NEIGHBORHOOD AND LONG
TERM PLANNING**