

City of Cambridge

MEETING	MAY 22, 2000 ROUNDTABLE MEETING ON GROWTH MANAGEMENT
TIME	6:06 P. M.
PRESIDING OFFICER	Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio
PRESENT	Mayor Galluccio, Vice Mayor Maher, Councillors Born, Braude, Davis, Decker, Reeves, Sullivan and Toomey

Also present were:

Planning Board members:
Larissa Brown, Chair, Hugh Russell,
Thomas Anniger and William Tibbs

Various members of the Cambridge
Management Growth Advisory Committee
(CGMAC)

Robert W. Healy, City Manager
Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager
Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City
Manager
Ini Tomeu, Public Information Officer
Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager
for Community Development
Malaina Bowker, Deputy Assistant for
Community Development
Stuart Dash, Director of Community
Planning, Community Development Dept.
(CDD)
Darcy Jameson, Director of Housing,
(CDD)
Jean Strain, Director of Economic
Development, (CDD)
Les Barber, Director of Land Use,
Planning and Zoning, (CDD)
Cara Seiderman, Environmental and
Transportation Planning Division, (CDD)
Roger Booth, CDD

Jim Maloney, Assistant City Manager for
Fiscal Affairs
Sue Clippinger, Director of Traffic,
Parking and Transportation
Mary Power, Senior Director of
Community Relations, Harvard University
Katharine Donaher, M.I.T.
Sarah Klipfel, Cambridge Chamber of
Commerce

SUBMISSION OF THE RECORD

None

**SEE SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION
ISSUES ATTACHED**

No votes were taken

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Councillor Davis at nine
o'clock and two minutes p. m. the meeting
adjourned.

Summary of Discussion Points

Beth Rubenstein made a presentation and distributed written material on the growth management work of the Planning Board and the Citizens Growth Management Advisory Committee (CGMAC). She began with an overview of the process and then reviewed the five scenarios for FAR reduction which the Planning Board is presently considering.

Those scenarios are as follow:

- Status Quo

- 25% Across-the-Board uniform reduction of FAR

- FAR adjusted based on proximity to transit and type of use.

- FAR reduced for all uses except housing to provide an incentive for the development of more housing

- FAR reduced for all uses except housing, based on transit proximity and district-specific considerations.

There was a discussion of incentives for building housing close to public transportation. While there has been some talk of reduction of the required parking, to date the only incentive being proposed is not reducing FAR. It was pointed out that even residents who live close to transit stations tend to have cars and those cars will end up exacerbating the difficulties with already tight street parking for residents.

There was a request for information about possible tax incentives for housing production or affordable housing production.

Planning Board Member Hugh Russell distributed a handout entitled "Growth Management Goals and Incentives," Attachment A, and summarized the material presented therein. He stated that smallish FAR reductions will not have much effect in the next 20 years. He would be interested in reducing FAR by ½ in all districts and then providing FAR bonuses for housing.

It was noted that the current land uses in Cambridge are not the result of lack of a vision.. In earlier decades; in the 1960's and 1970's when Cambridge had lost its economic base, the formerly robust industrial manufacturing sector. Kendall Square was a vast empty space and the city was not in great financial shape. At that time there, there was a widely supported vision to encourage commercial growth to improve the finances of the city and a plan to encourage commercial growth and development at the east and west ends of the city. The vision is different now, and changes in zoning and planning are needed to reflect this difference.

With regard to the outcome of the current growth management process, the Planning Board members emphasized their plan to submit to the City Council one proposal that

they will have finalized by consensus. They intend to include all of the recommendations for zoning changes in one package, rather than submit piecemeal recommendations, because the individual changes are part of an integrated whole that should be considered together.

There are a huge number of trade-offs, in the decisions that must be made with regard to these issues. They represent value judgments and policy decisions the Council must make, for example, density and affordability, big university dorms and pressure on the housing market.

The proposal will contain a project review proposal with strong traffic study requirements.

There was a discussion about the pros and cons of the Planning Board giving the City Council a bit of "wiggle" room - fashioning its proposals in a way that gives the City Council some latitude for changes.

Some members of the City Council expressed concerns about how to engage the public in this complicated set of proposals.

There was a request for information about the process that CDD will use to inform and engage the public.

There was a discussion about the PUD process, with members of the Planning Board and staff agreeing that it can be useful in particular situations, but the goal is to get to zoning that allows people to do the right thing as of right.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT GOALS AND TECHNIQUES - Progress Towards A Personal View Hugh Russell 5/21/2000

Goals

- A. Reduce impacts of new development so that our city can handle the impacts of what the zoning ordinance would allow to be built. Particular concerns today:
- cumulative traffic impacts
 - storm water management and construction
 - too tall and bulky buildings

- B. Encourage desired land uses
- Housing, including low and moderate income
 - Institutional expansion on campus
 - Creation of new open spaces
 - Neighborhood, not "big box" retail

- C. Manage development at transitions between high density commercial/institutional uses and residential neighborhoods to reduce impacts on nearby residences

Zoning Techniques

1. Reduce as-of-right commercial FAR substantially (at least 50% across the board) but allow increases by special permit for more building when low impact can be demonstrated by PTDM, type of use, inclusion of housing, etc.
2. Encourage low traffic generators, such as housing, commercial and institutional R&D (see below)
3. Change portions of some mixed use districts to exclusively residential
4. Require traffic impact studies for large traffic generators similar to IPOP
5. Require urban design impact review of large projects
6. Cap commercial parking uniformly in all districts (1 space per 1000-1200 sf of as-of-right building?)
1. Change portions of some mixed use districts to exclusively residential - consider mixed use areas adjacent to existing residential areas in Cambridgeport SD's, Cambridge St., Area 3, West Cambridge, North Point waterfront, Cambridgeport/Riverside waterfront, Richdale Ave, 2nd St, others?
2. Create PUD districts for campus areas to facilitate long-term planning and permitting
3. Allow for transfers of development rights in commercial areas to facilitate creation of housing and open space sites.
4. Designate some desired Open Space sites for acquisition per Green Space report
5. Leave residential and institutional use FAR's intact in commercial districts so that all commercial districts allow substantially more housing than commercial development
6. Encourage (require?) housing over ground floor retail in neighborhood Business A, A1, A2 districts
7. Allow housing in all zoning districts (petition filed)
8. Raise threshold for multifamily special permits (expand "option 3" for Industrial districts city-wide)
1. Urban design review of medium and large projects
2. Individual petitions for transitional districts:
 - Harvard: Museum St., Banks St., Putnam & Western Ave.
 - Yoder: Alewife reservation
 - Larkin/Broussard: East Cambridge study
 - Tennis: Concord Ave. heights
 - Others to be identified: YWCA, Bus C1, Main St. facing CHA housing, height transition @ C2 dists.
3. Change portions of some mixed use districts to exclusively residential

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ROUNDTABLE of the
Cambridge City Council
relative to Growth
Management

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