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67 Highland Avenue, Apartment 2
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
February 19, 1976

Editor
Cambridge Chronicle

In reading your report on the Harvard Square Development Task Force's vote concerning the park proposal for the corner of Boylston Street and Memorial Drive you omitted the reasons I gave for my opposition to the plan. Would you please print this to provide those reasons.

I agree that Cambridge is in desperate condition for open space. I find this proposal and the two other active open space proposals perverse in that they recognize the need for open space but place open space in neighborhoods which have relatively little need and in locations which are additive to large closely adjacent tracts of open space. At the same time open space needs in the desperate neighborhoods of the city are being responded to in a negative manner, if at all.

The desperation of Aggasiz (nghd 8, .23 acres per thousand population), Mid-Cambridge (nghd 6, .21 acres per), and Central Square (nghd 4, .75 acres per) is no excuse to add open space benefitting relatively open-space rich neighborhoods of the city: Neighborhood 9 (2.21 acres per thousand population), Brattle Street (nghd 10, 5.1 acres per), Riverside (nghd 7, 1.32 acres per), and Cambridgeport (nghd 5, 2.75 acres per).

The three active open space proposals are (1) the massive recreational area on the dump site, adjacent to the existing St. Peter's Field (nghd 9) and near the existing Fresh Pond Reservation (nghd 12 and 13), Callahan Playground (nghd 10), and the Russell and Rindge Fields (nghd 11); (2) this large Kennedy Park (nghd 10, next to 7), adjacent to the existing M.D.C. tracts along the river; and (3) the Riverside Press site (nghd 7, next to 5), two blocks south of Hoyt Field, and within two blocks in either direction of the M.D.C. tracts along the river.

What is being done for the neighborhoods which are in need? The best park in the three neighborhoods, Library Park, is slated for destruction, with 21 to 33 of its 37 generally mature trees to go. A replacement has been promised in an inferior location, with wild descriptions of improvements and a budget one-third that which would be needed to fulfill the wild promises. A neighborhood meeting conditionally approved the destruction, based on, among other things, adequate funding, adequate maintenance, and an independent determination of the legality of the destruction of Library Park. Meaningful guarantees for none of the three have been provided by the city, nor can they be. A decent park in the promised location would not fit possible long range planning. The city badly needs a new police station. The location is ideal for it. A good replacement park would automatically generate opposition to later construction of a police station there, and would "waste" money which could be spent on open space for the rich neighborhoods.

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Editor
Cambridge Chronicle

Page two
February 19, 1976

What could be done on the site of the proposed Kennedy Park? It is likely that a taxpaying structure could not be developed on that location in scale with the surroundings. However, a municipal structure of appropriate scale could be placed in that location which would relieve pressure on the needy neighborhoods of the city and which could possibly include sufficient open space to complement the river.

I propose either of the following, recognizing the first as more feasible. (1) Place on it a temporary city, not M.D.C., park, so marked, containing strictly strictly grass except for peripheral trees and other improvements which could be retained later. Then, in about 10 years, when the city has the money, construct our badly needed new police station on this location. This would not be dissimilar to present long-range likelihood for Mid-Cambridge. This location is more central than is the existing Central Square station and is within two blocks of public transit to more of the city than is the existing station. (2) In the alternative, using the park area, and the 2 acres which Harvard wishes to grab, build the high school there. Part of the tax-paying area could also be used, if the high school were constructed jointly with parking space under it. Adjacent to the river would be a lovely location for a high school. It would be consistent with existing educational use on the river and would benefit from closer proximity to Harvard. The present high school site could then be used for the new police station, and, contrary to the present open-space proposals could also provide meaningful new open-space in a neighborhood desperate for it.

In short, I consider the present proposal for a permanent 5 acre park, without a Kennedy Archives, of benefit only to those who already have plenty of open-space. Instead of strictly benefitting the fortunate, I suggest the presently less fortunate benefit from open-space in this city, as well.

Sincerely,

RJ La 2-19

Robert J. La Tremouille

cc: City Council

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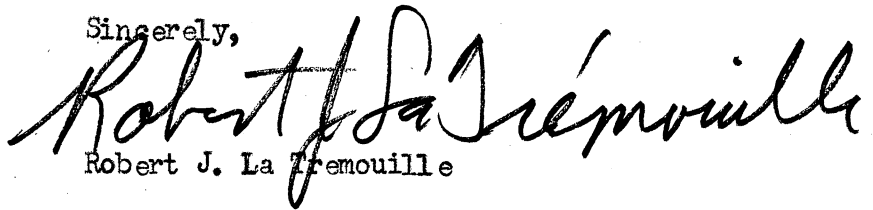
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67 Highland Avenue, Apartment 2
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
February 19, 1976

City Council
City of Cambridge

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a letter to the Chronicle explaining my vote against the Kennedy Park at the Harvard Square Task Force meeting of February 12, 1976. This letter is a general discussion of open space needs and proposals, including but not limited to Riverside Press, the M.B.T.A. yards, the dump site, and Library Park.

Sincerely,


Robert J. La Tremouille

8. 5- 66

Comm. from Robert J. La Tremouille re: to the
Kennedy Park.

In City Council,
Feb. 23, 1976

Placed on File