



City of Cambridge

O-25

IN CITY COUNCIL

March 17, 2003

VICE MAYOR DAVIS
COUNCLLOR MURPHY
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO

- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to cooperate with the Mystic River Watershed Association in convening a regional planning process for the Alewife sub watershed area; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to refrain from granting sewer and water connections subject to discussions and support of the Cambridge Conservation Commission; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to provide information on the capacity and flooding issues for current and future development in this area.

In City Council March 17, 2003.
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy; *D. Margaret Drury*
ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Vice Mayor Davis asked what is the process. A sewer connection permit is required, said Mr. O’Riordan. There are 200 permits granted each year. There is no public process associated with these permits. Vice Mayor Davis asked Mr. O’Riordan if Cambridge has asked another city to discharge into their system. Mr. O’Riordan responded in the negative.

At five o’clock and fifty minutes p.m. Vice Mayor Davis opened the meeting to public comment.

Albe Simenas, Chair of the Conservation Commission distributed written testimony (**ATTACHMENT A**). He stated his concern for this area. The Conservation Commission has not received information from the developer so it is difficult to make a determination of the impact of the project. The area is an undeveloped area and this development may have an impact on this area. Vice Mayor Davis asked if the Conservation Commission has reviewed this project. The conceptual plans have come before the Conservation Commission said Mr. Simenas. There will be a need for mitigation.

Councillor Murphy asked what is the process if the project is in Cambridge. Mr. Simenas responded that the developer would come before the Conservation Commission with preliminary concepts. A certificate of Applicability and Intent would be decided.

Cynthia Jensen, member, Conservation Commission, stated that the Alewife Reservation is important because the undeveloped areas about the reservation. She expressed concern on the water quality, loss of flood storage volume and wildlife and construction impacts.

Mary Hammett, Mystic River Watershed Association, stated that any decision by any city or town should be made on a regional context. She made a plea that fragmented decisions be prevented. Cambridge, Arlington and Belmont are having conversations about flooding.

Steve Kaiser, 191 Hamilton Street, stated that an Environmental Impact Report is imminent and will include traffic, wetlands and flooding. The question is whether there is adequate down stream to handle flooding. The overflow flows into Alewife Brook. The sewer impact from the development must be addressed. A bottleneck is created in Alewife. Too much is being dumped into this area by Somerville, Cambridge, Arlington and Belmont. Belmont needs this financial revenue desperately, he said.

Michael F. Nakagawa, 51 Madison Avenue, submitted written testimony (**ATTACHMENT B**). He stated that the Alewife Reservation is a good educational area and an urban wild. He spoke on the sewer connection. There were sixty-three actual CSO discharges of sewerage each year into the Alewife Brook when sixteen were estimated. There is an over capacity due to overdeveloping. Belmont, he said wants to connect into an overburdened area. The proposed project contains 245,000 square feet.

There is a lot of development planned in this area and this system is barely meeting the EPA standards. The capacity into the sewer system must be planned. The flooding issues have not been addressed by the sewer separation plan, he said.

Ellen Mass, Friends of Alewife, 104A Inman Street, was representing Save My Forest Committee, stated that she was heartened by the concerns of the Conservation Commission. This meeting is to focus on the forest and the flooding. In the Alewife Master Plan the flora and fauna environmental inventory were reviewed. She noted the natural riches, recreational and habitat use of the area. The Alewife is also on a major route that uses buses, walking, trains and bicycles. She read a letter submitted by Peter Alden (**ATTACHMENT C**).

Bruce Jacobs, Friends of Alewife, stated that he was a civil engineer and a hydrologist. He has knowledge of the flooding issues in the area. North Cambridge residents are fearful of the impact of flooding. Large storms occurred in 1996 and 1998, but they were small compared to the 1954 and 1958 storms. The northern part of Little Pond is filling in; grass is growing from the sediment. This property is sensitive, he said. From a regional perspective it makes more sense not to develop the sensitive area.

John Walker, 150 Whittemore Avenue, stated that there is a tremendous amount of development done in Cambridge. The Reservation is a terrific resource for Cambridge and a passive recreation site. Three years of envision planning was done for the MDC for the Master Plan. There are wonderful consultants working on the Master Plan, he said. He stated that comprehensive planning should be done including the Arthur D. Little site. The Silver Maple site is known as Belmont Upland. Mammals use this for their residence and then feed downstream. He urged that this area be mitigated to reduce the impact.

David Hobbie, 34 Surrey Road, Arlington, Friends of Alewife, stated that he was concerned with the regional impact. He spoke about downstream flooding impacts. He was concerned that the habitat would be destroyed. Traffic congestion and peak storm water flooding are also concerns for this area. This is an example of a callous disregard for the environment. He suggested a regional meeting. Belmont would feel the economic benefits; the surrounding cities and towns would feel the environmental impacts.

Stash Horowitz, 12 Florence Street, Vice President, Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods, stated that he appreciated the regional planning idea, but the three cities/towns must be committed to the plan. He does not believe that the office project will be built. The Department of Environmental Protection is understaffed. Alewife was up-zoned by the City Council. O'Neill purchased the Arthur D. Little site. This project will require an indirect permit from the Massachusetts Highway Authority due to the traffic on Route Two. He suggested that the Traffic, Parking and Transportation respond to this project in the Environmental Impact Report. Cambridge can take a stand on the traffic issue. It is unlikely that the MDC will remove the Arthur D. Little parking lot. The wetlands will not be returned to the MDC until the project is built, he said. The

MDC Master Plan may be put on hold due to the financial crises. Traffic congestion and flooding issues may delay the project.

Jennifer Griffith, 4 Edith Street, Arlington, stated that she is an Environmental Engineer. She has experienced flooding in this area. The area is on the border of three towns and cities. Flooding and sewer backups occur at the Alewife and into residential yards and basements. The air quality and loss of trees need to be considered. More traffic congestion is going to cause more air quality impacts. She hoped that Cambridge would prevent the development.

Tim Higgins, Senior Planner, Town of Belmont, informed the committee that many public hearings have been held on the proposal. All issues, he said, have been carefully reviewed. The project is 6.5 acres; some of the area is in Cambridge and would be conditioned by the Conservation Commission. The selectman wanted to see this property preserved for open space. No money was committed to purchase the property; this was the reason why the town rezoned the property to office and RD. Belmont, he said, is open to a regional meeting. The Cambridge Planning Board has not attended the regional meetings.

Vice Mayor Davis asked Mr. Higgins to outline the process and the permits required. Mr. Higgins responded that a notice of intent is required to be filed by the Conservation Commission and then the Conservation Commission would issue an order of condition. The Conservation Commission is required to address flooding mitigation under the Wetlands Protection Act. An EIR needs to be filed with MEPA. Public comment would be received. Then the Final EIR report would be filed and then a MEPA Certificate would be issued. Only after all this is completed can the Conservation Commission issue an order of conditions. .

Mr. Nakagawa stated that the site is under developable. The property values are out of bounds with the natural resources.

Vice Mayor Davis stated that she discovered the Alewife Reservation by taking a canoe ride and traveled to Little Pond. She asked where do we go from here. It is difficult to be critical of development in another community and Cambridge does have to help another community. She supported a regional meeting to discuss development and regional planning for the Alewife area. She asked is there room to be generous with the sewer tie in with all the development expected in this area. The fiscal impact to the city may not be dramatic, but what is the environmental impact. The developer, she said, would rather connect to Cambridge because it costs less money and takes less time. \$100,000 to \$400,000 - \$500,000 is the difference between connecting to Cambridge and Belmont. She supported a regional conversation. Cambridge needs to look to the state for protection, but this is questionable due to the state's fiscal condition. Vice Mayor Davis stated that the committee needs an opportunity to review the Conservation Commission's comments and would transmit the comments to the full City Council.

Ms. Jensen stated that the area does need regional planning, but it is difficult to do. The state has a model for regional planning using watersheds. Massachusetts is out in the forefront. Context and vision is needed for planning. Planning on the scale of the

Alewife sub-water shed should be done. A Request for Proposal was issued by the MDC for the Mystic River. The water ways need to be connected on the ground, she said.

Ms. Hammett expressed the interest of the Mystic Watershed Association to convene a regional meeting.

Robert Franz, Harvard University Professor, stated that the Alewife is an example of twenty-five years of appalling planning. To plan this area is going to take forethought and working together. The wildlife is the most serious problem, not the water or the sewer. The Alewife Quadrangle plans are embarrassing. He supported regional planning.

Mr. Horowitz stated that the question is the tax base and the quality of life in Cambridge. He asked what leverage does Cambridge have over O'Neill. Does O'Neill have projects that will be built in Cambridge. Mr. Corridon, representing O'Neill Properties, informed the committee that O'Neill has no projects in Cambridge.

Brian Sullivan, Senior Vice President, Rizzo Associates, representing O'Neill Properties, stated that there has been extensive review to date on the project and the review would continue. The issue is the water and sewer connection through Cambridge or Belmont. Both systems have the capacity. Inflow and infiltration mitigation fees have been paid to Belmont. Wet weather flow is the problem with the system.

Vice Mayor Davis submitted e-mail that was sent to her from the following persons:

Patrick W. Fairbairn, Ph.D (ATTACHMENT D)

Sue Bass, Vice President, Belmont Citizens Forum (ATTACHMENT E)

In conclusion Vice Mayor Davis and Councillor Murphy made the following motion:

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to cooperate with the Mystic River Watershed Association in convening a regional planning process for the Alewife sub watershed area; and be it further

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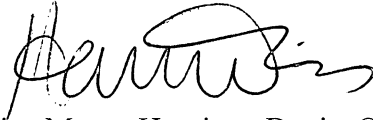
The motion –

Carried.

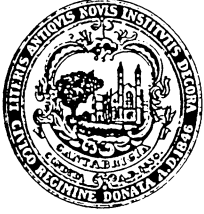
Vice Mayor Davis thanked those present for their attendance.

The meeting was adjourned at seven o'clock and twenty-three minutes p. m.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henrietta Davis", written in a cursive style.

Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair



ATTACHMENT A.
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139 • TEL (617) 349-4680

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

March 3, 2003

Henrietta Davis, Chairperson
Health and Environment Committee
Cambridge City Council
City Hall, Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Councilor Davis,

The Cambridge Conservation Commission would like to provide the following information for your consideration at the March 4, 2003, Health and Environment Committee hearing on the proposed development on the "Belmont Uplands." This site is located off Route 2, adjacent to Little Pond and the Arthur D. Little campus on Acorn Park Drive. This letter is also in partial response to City Council Order # 0-24.

We very much appreciate that you are holding this hearing, as we believe that this proposed development needs close review regarding its potential negative and positive impacts on the City of Cambridge, especially its wetland resources and natural areas. In addition, we are concerned about the proposal in a larger, watershed context, specifically whether it is in keeping with "Smart Growth" principles that the City of Cambridge is striving to follow.

Broadly speaking, there are two areas of concern to the Conservation Commission.

We are concerned about the potential negative impacts that this development will pose:

1. In the immediate vicinity of the development for resource areas under the jurisdiction of the Cambridge Conservation Commission, such as (but not limited to) the neighboring Little River.
2. For downstream resources under the jurisdiction of the Cambridge Conservation Commission, such as (but not limited to) the Alewife Brook and the Alewife Reservation.

We also believe it is relevant to ask if this development makes sense in the broader context of economic development in an environmentally sustainable context for our region and our Commonwealth.

We will go into a further discussion of these points on the following pages.

To date, the Conservation Commission has not received information from the developer regarding the site plan. Our comments and concerns are based on our own knowledge of the site, review of the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) that the developer submitted to the Massachusetts Office of Environmental Policy, the City of Cambridge response to the ENF, information in newspapers, several briefings at the Conservation Commission by concerned citizens, and an informal briefing by Owen O'Riordan, Cambridge Department of Public Works, on the Cambridge sanitary and stormwater system in the Acorn Park Drive area.

1. Concerns regarding direct impacts to resource areas protected under the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA)

Although most of this 16 acre site lies in the Town of Belmont, its southeastern corner lies within the city boundary of Cambridge. In addition, the remaining eastern property line of the parcel abuts the city line. The portion of the site that lies in Cambridge is roughly 1.5 acres. This area abuts the Little River, and we know from our own familiarity with the area that the following resource areas protected under the WPA lie within the site: land under water (Little River), riverfront area, land subject to flooding (100-year floodplain), inland bank, bordering vegetated wetland, and buffer zones to the two latter areas.

Although we understand that no development is proposed on the portion of the site that lies within Cambridge, the Cambridge Conservation Commission must review the proposed development for potential impacts to the wetland resource areas that lie in Cambridge. As a first step, the developer must delineate the resource areas on the site that lie in Cambridge and come before the Conservation Commission for approval of this delineation.

Second, the Conservation Commission must have the opportunity to review the potential impacts of the proposed development on the resource areas of the portion of the site that lies in Cambridge. At a minimum, the developer must submit a Request for Determination of Applicability to the Commission for our determination whether the proposed development is likely to have impacts on protected resource areas. If the Commission's determination is positive, then the developer must submit a Notice of Intent for our review and approval.

Potential direct impacts include impairment of water quality, wildlife habitat, endangered species habitat, and flood control (see below).

2. Concerns regarding indirect and/or downstream impacts to resource areas protected under the WPA

In addition to reviewing the direct impacts of the proposed development on the resource areas that lie within the Cambridge portion of the site, the Conservation Commission is also concerned about the potential impacts of the development on protected resource areas downstream of the site. The downstream areas include the Little River and Alewife Brook, the portions of Alewife Reservation and Alewife Brook Parkway that lie in Cambridge, and the wetland complex that abuts the site to the east. This latter wetland complex is commonly referred to as the "ADL [Arthur D. Little] Wetland."

These areas contain the full suite of protected wetland resource areas, namely land under water (Little River, Alewife Brook, and open water wetland in the ADL wetland), riverfront area, inland bank, bordering vegetated wetland, and land subject to flooding (100-year floodplain).

Potential direct and indirect (downstream) impacts to these resource areas include:

- Impairment of water quality from overland stormwater runoff, discharges of stormwater from point sources, and increased volume and frequency of combined sewer overflows into Little River and Alewife Brook. Stormwater and CSO discharges may introduce sediment, nutrients, pesticides, herbicides, pathogens, road salt, oil and grease, and debris into the water. Any impairment of water quality may negatively impact resident and anadromous fish species that use Little River and Alewife Brook. Two species of anadromous fish, namely alewife and blueback herring, are known to use Alewife Brook

and Little River for spawning. In addition, although it is not clear whether any significant populations of freshwater mussels occupy Little River and Alewife Brook, the streams are potential future habitat, once water quality improves. Any potential water quality impairment would harm freshwater mussels that could potentially use the aquatic habitat.

- Impairment of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat. Aquatic habitat may be impaired by decreased water quality. Terrestrial wildlife habitat “downstream” may also be significantly impaired by loss of habitat on the site. Currently the undeveloped site is home to fifteen species of mammals, including two species for which the site is a refugium, namely eastern coyote and white-tailed deer (see recent Wildlife Inventory by David Brown and Inventory of Resources at Alewife Reservation and Alewife Brook Parkway by the Metropolitan District Commission). In addition, the site provides a continual population of several species of small mammals that can continually recolonize the south bank of the Little River, where a large population of feral cats appears able to decimate the south bank’s population of small mammals. Finally, the Alewife Reservation and contiguous natural areas, including the Belmont Uplands and nearby Fresh Pond, is a significant migratory bird stopover location.
- Impairment of biological diversity: The Belmont Uplands site contains approximately seven acres of forested upland habitat, a habitat type not otherwise present in the Alewife Reservation. Because the site is contiguous with the reservation, it functions ecologically as part of the reservation, and increases the overall habitat and species biodiversity found within this natural area. Loss of the Belmont Uplands will further fragment the remaining relict ecosystem of the once “Great Swamp” that stretched from Fresh Pond to the Mystic River.
- Loss of flood storage volume will occur in the Alewife area if the upland portion of the site is developed without compensatory flood storage provided. It is widely known that the Alewife area suffers significant flooding.
- Impairment of endangered species habitat: Although the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program does not have official records of rare, endangered, or special concern species using the site, veteran birdwatchers have observed that a number of protected bird species use the Alewife area in general. These include Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Cooper’s Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Parula, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow.
- Construction impacts: In addition to potential permanent impacts to protected resource areas and valued ecological functions, construction may result in temporary impacts. Therefore the Conservation Commission also needs to review the construction plan and ensure that construction-related impacts are avoided, minimized, or mitigated.

3. Concerns regarding impairment of regional importance of Alewife natural area

The Alewife Reservation, Alewife Brook Parkway, nearby natural areas, and abutting, undeveloped parcels comprise a large, contiguous open area. Review of the Massachusetts’s Executive Office of Environmental Affairs’s BioMap for the Boston Basin region shows that the Fresh Pond – Alewife – Mystic River complex is the largest, contiguous open area in the basin between Middlesex Fells to the north and Blue Hills to the south. The abutting parcels and nearby natural areas more than double the acreage of the Alewife Reservation and Alewife Brook Parkway.

The larger, contiguous area includes Alewife Reservation (including Blair Pond and Little Pond), Alewife Brook Parkway, Mystic Valley Parkway, the "Belmont Uplands," the "ADL Wetland," the ADL parking lot currently occupying the eastern end of the Alewife Reservation, the undeveloped portions of the Martignetti property on Route 2, the Mugar parcel on the north side of Route 2, Jerry's Pond, the undeveloped portions of the W.R. Grace property, Danehy Park, and land associated with the MBTA Alewife T Station. In very close proximity lies Rafferty Park, Fresh Pond Reservation, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and the Charles River Reservation. In addition, this broad area is interlaced with a network of bicycle and pedestrian paths that connect to a regional (and in the future inter-state) network of trails.

Unfortunately many of the abutting parcels are currently vacant and consist of low quality habitat. However, the potential to link these areas together and to enhance their habitat value to protect the complex as a whole is an outstanding opportunity for the City of Cambridge, in cooperation with Belmont, Arlington, and Somerville. A continuous swath of natural areas could be crafted from the Charles River to the Mystic River if plans are developed with thoughtful foresight and a commitment to protecting natural areas in the midst of our highly urban cities.

The project runs counter to the principles of "smart growth" which call for the redevelopment of existing parcels rather than the development of naturalized environments.

We, your Cambridge Conservation Commission, wish to make you aware of our serious concern over this development, and urge you to promote alternate development schemes and to encourage development in a thoughtful and prudent manner, that will protect our fair city's dwindling natural resources.

Sincerely yours,

Albe Simenas, chair

The Cambridge Conservation Commission

Albe Simenas, Chariman
Karen McGuire, Vice Chairman
Dorothy Altman
Bette Woody
Maura McCaffery
Cynthia Jensen
Samuel Seidel

MICHAEL F. NAKAGAWA

51 Madison Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140

March 4, 2003

Re: Sewer Connection by O'Neill Project in Belmont

Cambridge City Council
c/o Health and Environment Committee
Cambridge City Hall, 2nd Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139

Honorable Mayor and City Councilors:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the connection of the sewer outflows into the Cambridge sewer system of the Office/R&D Center project submitted on behalf of O'Neill Properties Group (O'Neill) for their Belmont project proposal.

The O'Neill project represents just one of the projects slated for development in the Alewife region, an area that is already plagued by sewer problems. The Alewife Brook periodically floods residences near its banks with water contaminated by an overflowing combined sewer system creating public health risks.

The City is currently facing a much larger task in addressing the issue than was originally anticipated just a few years ago during the preliminary study of the combined sewer systems that overflow into the Alewife Brook. Combined sewer outflow (CSO) discharges, estimated to occur 16 times per year in the 1997 plan were found to occur 63 times per year, with an annual volume of 49.7 million gallons of untreated combined sewage dumped into the Brook. The original estimated \$12 million plan is now estimated to be \$74 million, yet the final discharges, compared to the original plan, increase from 4 to 7 times per year, barely meeting the absolute minimum requirement by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, with an increase in annual volume of 255%. Because of the increased cost of the project, a significant portion of the area will remain unseparated and overflowing.

In actuality, the proposal has not even been approved, and the public comment period for further changes to the proposal has just ended. Despite the deplorable state of our sewer system, caused by years of intense development without corresponding infrastructure support, the costs of which might have hurt our Triple-A bond rating, we are considering further sewer connections from large-scale development projects.

The O'Neill project alone, 245,000 square feet of research and development space, will bring an estimated 4.6 million gallons of wastewater into our overburdened sewer system each year, given a 250-day work-year. Consider that the Acorn Park Drive area alone is slated for an additional 900,000 square feet of new office space by the Bulfinch Company, with the plans to be released shortly, plus an additional estimated 125,000 square feet of new office space and 400,000 square feet of residential space by the Martignetti Brothers. Other development in the Alewife Floodplain includes the recent 366,000 square foot apartment complex on Cambridge Park Drive, and the 400,000 square foot office and hotel proposed by W. R. Grace and Company. Furthermore, the Concord-Alewife Study Committee has just been formed to consider the development opportunities north of Fresh Pond to the Alewife Reservation.

It is unlikely that all these projects have been considered in the current proposal for the sewer improvements. And by just meeting the minimum federal standards for CSO control, it becomes questionable whether the additional projects will return the City to noncompliance. Furthermore, the proposal included design elements that appear to put it in violation of the state regulations covering the Wetlands Protection Act, specifically the performance standards of 310 CMR 10.57, Bordering Land Subject to Flooding.

MICHAEL F. NAKAGAWA

Considering the current state of uncertainty, both in projected regional development and with regard to understanding the hydrology of the sewer proposal (specifically during large storm events) and its final performance, I urge you to submit a municipal order preventing further connections to our sewer systems until both the proposal for the sewer changes has been officially approved and the design of system has been shown to accommodate the upcoming development slated for the region.

Furthermore, the proposed O'Neill development shows a blatant disregard for the environment, one that does not warrant any special concessions. With the constraints on the Alewife Brook Reservation because of its nature as an urban wildlife refuge in one of the most densely populated cities in the country, the developers are destroying almost all of the habitat of the only area outside the floodplain in the vicinity of the Reservation. The area they plan to develop represents an important support function to the wetlands habitat, one that, by law, cannot be replicated elsewhere in the Alewife Floodplain.

It appears from their map of the proposal, which was included in their Environmental Notification Form, that about one parking space worth of the non-wetlands bordering uplands will be further than 100 feet from the development, unless the yellow region constitutes landscaped area, in which case no such uplands habitat areas will exist adjacent to the Reservation.

The O'Neill project abuts the Reservation and wetlands habitat on the Bulfinch Properties site formerly owned by Arthur D. Little. The project includes extensive work in the buffer zone of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW), covered by M.G. L. Chapter 131 Paragraph 40 and 310 CMR 10.02 and 10.55. It appears that the proposed structures will add shading to existing wetlands, since the project essentially occupies all non-wetland areas up to the BVW border.

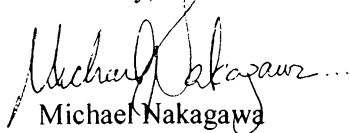
The additional 4.4 acres of impervious surface will alter hydrologic flow in the area. The surfaces and the structures will act as a localized thermal reservoir that will alter the local heating characteristics. Vegetation provides evaporative cooling, drawing cooler groundwater to the leaves. Replacement of this natural cooling mechanism with an urban heat island in the middle of a wetlands habitat area is irresponsible, unsustainable development. These surfaces will act to dry out the surrounding wetlands.

Finally, the project will degrade the environment and create public health risks from the pollution generated by the addition traffic congestion that will be caused by the project. Traffic at the major intersections adjacent to the property is already at Grade 'F' during rush hours; office and R&D space will put a large traffic burden at rush hour. The area has no ability to absorb an additional 2642 car trips daily.

The main intersection in this area overlooks the Russell Field children's outdoor recreational area. I hope the members of the Health and Environment Committee recognize the greatly increased urban asthma problem among children, and that studies have suggested it may be caused by outdoor pollutants, particularly small particulate matter caused by combustion sources.

Again, I urge you to order that an approved CSO control plan must be shown to provide sufficient margin for additional area development, beyond just this one project, before additional sewer connections by large projects can be allowed.

Sincerely,


Michael Nakagawa

ATTACHMENT C

Tuesday, March 4, 2003
To: Cambridge Conservation Comm.
& City Council

Peter Alden
11 Riverside Ave.
Concord, Mass. 01742
1 (978) 369-5768 Tel.
peteralden@aol.com

SILVER MAPLE FOREST aka Belmont Uplands

The proposed clearcutting of much of the roughly 15 acre site between Spy Pond, Little Pond and the Little River of the "MDC"'s Alewife Brook Reservation is a cause of great concern. Much outrage has evolved concerning storm water, sewage, flooding (deeper floods in basements of West Cambridge and East Arlington), traffic (another 1000 car trips in a saturated area), and other public works problems if a large office building is to be built on this site.

Ninety-five percent of the former woods, marshes and farms of this basin have already been covered with highways, railroads, homes, offices, and businesses. The sliver of streamside habitat in the reservation and its animal life will suffer enormous species loss if the magnificent adjacent Silver Maple forest is destroyed.

This is the last (as in final) unprotected remnant forest within 5 miles of the state house. I know of no other pure forest of Silver Maples in greater Boston or statewide. The Red Fox, Coyote, Canadian Beaver, White-tailed Deer and other mammals, along with nesting Wood Ducks, American Woodcock and Wood Thrush would lose their last stronghold this close to Harvard Square and the state house.

The high fence and paved paths around Fresh Pond diminish the exploring nature experience still possible at Alewife AND the adjacent Silver Maple forest. The 100,000 students and citizens living in this basin can still walk in a tall quiet forest on a dirt trail as Daniel Boone and Henry David Thoreau once did.

When the office building goes up and the vast paved lots and roads encircling it are reality, that last morsel of wilderness in inner greater Boston dies an asphalt death. The integrity of the diverse habitats and their wildlife at the Alewife reservation will be compromised, and 100,000 diverse people become further isolated from nature; nature the human spirit needs.

Please initiate a land swap, and sharing of tax revenues between the 3 towns, such that the forest is preserved and a similar size building erected closer to the Alewife T stop and existing building footprints such as the present ADL site.

-- Author of 14 nature books incl. the National Audubon Society Field Guide to New England; Biodiversity Days organizer for former Environmental Affairs Sec. Bob Durand; Steering Committee of Harvard Museum of Natural History R. T. Peterson Lecture Series; President of Cambridge-based Nuttall Ornithological Club; former Cambridge resident 15 years.

ATTACHMENT D

20 Marcia Road
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

1 March 2003

Ms. Henrietta Davis, Vice Mayor
Committee on Health and Environment
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Ms. Davis,

RE: Silver Maple forest ("Belmont Uplands") on O'Neill Properties tract, Alewife Reservation at Little Pond and Little River

The Friends of Alewife Reservation recently approached me for my comments as a biologist and planner (and local resident) on the proposed development of the above property. I have a Ph.D. in Wildlife Biology/Natural Resources Planning (1974) from the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), and have worked most of my professional life in New England as a consultant ecologist, for the past 19 years with Normandeau Associates Inc. of Bedford, New Hampshire. Restricting myself primarily to professional rather than personal opinion, I offer you the following thoughts.

This tract gives value to the open space it adjoins and in turn derives value from it. As an example, amphibians such as the American Toad make use of the wetland for breeding but depend on upland for non-breeding habitat. Reptiles like the Eastern Garter Snake make use of the upland for hibernation but often forage in the wetland. Many other animals (e.g. Raccoon) need surface water as part of their habitat but spend as much or more of their time in upland.

Each animal species requires a certain minimum habitat area in order to maintain its presence from year to year. For example, a forest-breeding bird like the Wood Thrush will only nest if there are enough trees and shrubs in a compact area to provide the shelter and food necessary for hiding and raising young. Other birds (e.g. Eastern Bluebird) require an interspersed of habitat types including forest (for nesting and shelter) and fields (for foraging). The wintering Bald Eagle I observed at Little Pond on 22 February 2003 required the combination of open water (complete with ducks as potential prey) and the surrounding dense buffer of trees in which to roost, out of sight and relatively

undisturbed by human activity. Small, flightless animals (e.g. reptiles, amphibians, Eastern Chipmunk and Meadow Vole) are even more highly dependent on a sufficiency of habitat area, because of their difficulties in repopulating a relatively isolated habitat from which they have been eradicated. All the above species are native to this area.

For the above reasons, the Silver Maple forest tract possesses far more biological value as part of a large open space than it would if it stood alone, surrounded by cityscape. Any map or aerial photograph of this corner of Greater Boston reveals the rarity of comparable open space in such a highly urbanized environment. The whole complex of upland and wetland forest adjoining ponds and running water, and bordered by fields and parklands, constitutes a significant natural resource for all recreational users of the Mystic River Valley. Like any economic commodity, it appreciates in value as its scarcity in this region increases. That value will diminish to the extent that it is exchanged for the common coin of yet one more commercial enterprise, conceived without sufficient regard for the greater good of the entire landscape. Please encourage all new development in the vicinity of the Alewife Reservation to take place without further encroachment on the remaining semi-natural areas.

Sincerely,

Patrick W Fairbairn
Patrick W. Fairbairn, Ph.D.

c. Ellen Mass, Friends of Alewife Reservation

Garrett Simonsen

ATTACHMENT E.

From: MerrFilms@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2003 7:01 AM
To: hdavis@ci.cambridge.ma.us
Subject: re Alewife

The same letter is attached & pasted in below.

Belmont Citizens Forum
P. O. Box 609, Belmont MA 02478 (617) 484-1844

March 3, 2003

Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis
Chair, Health & Environment Committee
Cambridge City Council
City Hall, 795 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Councillor Davis,

The Belmont Citizens Forum is supported by about 500 families concerned with protecting the environment, preserving historic and archeological resources, and controlling the growth of traffic. Many of our supporters live in Cambridge and in other communities adjoining ours. We believe our responsibility is a regional one, not just confined to the Belmont town limits.

Development of the O'Neill property at Alewife, though it is mostly located in Belmont with only a small sliver in Cambridge, will have a regional impact - on Cambridge and Arlington even more than on Belmont. Since Belmont voted to rezone that land, the Citizens Forum has learned how important the few upland acres are as habitat for many of the creatures who spend part of their time in the adjoining wetlands. Unfortunately, saving the wetlands is not enough to save the wildlife; they need the uplands as well.

We've also learned more about the role of the silver maple forest growing in the uplands in sucking up water during wet periods and reducing flooding in the Alewife area. Holding tanks under the planned R&D building will not compensate for the flood storage provided naturally by those silver maples. They have far more effect in reducing flooding than the same acreage in grass.

Since there's considerable doubt about the accuracy of the current flood plain mapping in the area (and FEMA has undertaken a new flood plain map,) there's some question about whether the proposed holding tanks will even be above the flood plain.

We also have major concerns about the traffic generated by this massive development in an area that is often at a standstill now during peak hours. The developers announced that they expect 95 percent of the employees and visitors to drive. O'Neill's consultants, Rizzo Associates, said the development will generate more than 2,500 vehicle trips per day. The amount of parking planned - more than three spaces per 1,000 square feet of office space - encourages the use of single-occupancy vehicles. The developer has made no legally binding commitment to require or facilitate the use of public transportation despite the proximity to Alewife station. The additional 2,500 trips per day will worsen some of the most overloaded intersections and streets in Cambridge, Arlington, and Belmont.

The MDC's Alewife Reservation is a rare resource for the residents of Cambridge as well as those of Belmont, Arlington, Somerville, and Medford. If you have not walked it, we urge you to do so. The master plan just created by the MDC would make it more attractive and valuable to city dwellers. Unfortunately, the O'Neill development will threaten the wildlife that visitors come to see.

Therefore, we encourage your committee to explore the possibility of bringing a number of public and private organizations together to attempt to work out a comprehensive master plan for the area that incorporates the principles of smart growth and protects environmental resources. This small area on the borders of our communities has been treated like a stepchild. It is time that we acknowledge its importance to all of us.

Cordially,

Sue Bass
Vice President

City of Cambridge

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

*Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair
Councillor Anthony D. Galluccio
Councillor Brian Murphy*

In City Council March 17, 2003

The Health and Environment Committee held a public meeting on Tuesday, March 4, 2003 at five o'clock and forty minutes P.M. in the Sullivan Chamber.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the water and sewer connections for the Silver Maple Forest site development at Alewife and other related matters.

Present at the hearing were Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Brian Murphy, Owen O'Riordan, City Engineer, Lisa Peterson, Public Works Commissioner, Julia Bowdoin, Assistant to the City Manager, Albe Simenas, Chairman, Conservation Commission, Cynthia Jensen, Conservation Commission and Deputy City Clerk Donna P. Lopez. Also present were Ellen Mass, Friends of Alewife, Nancy Hammett, Mystic River Watershed Association, Tim Higgins, Senior Planner, Town of Belmont and Stephen Corridon, O'Neill Properties.

Vice Mayor Davis opened the meeting and stated the purpose. She stated that the City Engineer would give a brief presentation.

Owen O'Riordan, City Engineer, outlined the history of the project. In June of 2002 the town of Belmont and the developer asked Cambridge if it was possible to provide sewer connections to the development. There is no dry weather sewer or water capacity problem for Cambridge with the development. No decision has been received from MEPA and pending this decision the city of Cambridge has not made a decision with regard to these service connections. There would be no adverse impact to Cambridge with mitigation. Belmont's Conservation Commission is responsible for the flooding impact issue.

Councillor Murphy asked how common is it to connect to another city's water and sewer connections. Mr. O'Riordan stated that the storm water comes from Belmont. This is not uncommon. Councillor Murphy asked what are the financial impacts of water and sewer connections. Minimal revenue responded Mr. O'Riordan. What is the protocol in place for another city to connect to Cambridge's system? In this instance the developer would be required to mitigate with the combined sewer overflow (CSO). The infrastructure immediate to the development will be reviewed to ensure that it is working. Councillor Murphy asked what is the impact if the connection were not allowed. The project can be tied into Belmont's system. Councillor Murphy further asked what is the cost of the connection to Cambridge versus Belmont. Mr. O'Riordan responded it would cost \$100,000 to connect to Cambridge. The cost is five times higher to connect to Belmont.

S-101

Committee Report #7

Committee Report from Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Health and Environment Committee, for a meeting held on March 4, 2003 to discuss the water and sewer connections for the Silver Maple Forest site development at Alewife and other related matters.

In City Council March 17, 2003

**REPORT ACCEPTED.
PLACED ON FILE.
ORDER ADOPTED.
SEE ORDER #25.**