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CAMBRIDGE MA.

September 16, 1997

✓ Members of the Cambridge City Council
City Clerk - Council Communication

On June 12 the Area Four Coalition voted to put aside \$200,000 toward the purchase and renovation of the "Linpro Site", 206-210 Broadway, as either affordable housing or active open space for the community. (see attached June 30 letter to Susan Schlesinger)

This 46,000 square foot parcel, on a gateway route into the City of Cambridge (Broadway), deserves to be considered as a potential and viable open active space for Cambridge.

In the August 4th report to the City Council concerning playing fields and open space, this \$200,000 set aside, the 1992 Neighborhood Study which focused on this site for open space as well as other creative ideas put forth by the Area Four Coalition to develop and maintain open space in Area Four, for use by the broader community, were not mentioned!

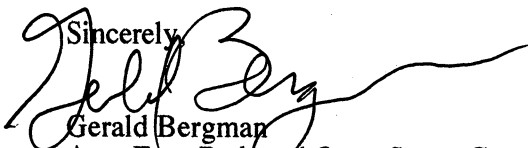
I believe that the Area Four Neighborhood should be given the number one priority for CDBG funds when it comes to the development of open space use, due to the Area Four proportion of children versus population and the low-income figures for this neighborhood.

This parcel is contiguous with the tennis court, small open green space and the tot-lot on Harvard street, and is adjacent to hundreds of units of family housing. It is located just down the street from the Maynard School and could be useful for field activities related to school use during school hours. (Note that the Maynard School playground is the only (F) rated school playground in the city and was recently passed over once again for renovation!)

The Open Space Committee must develop an Open Space Acquisition Trust as soon as possible (the hot development climate may make future land acquisition nearly impossible in the near future), it must set aside a portion of the Free Cash Fund and CDBG for open space development, and it must pay attention to current possibilities and the history of neglect as they pertain to the Area Four neighborhood, as well as other central areas of the city.

The final paragraph of the August 4th report recommends an open space/recreational resource analysis by neighborhood and citywide -- such an analysis has been done (often) in regard to Area Four, yet this analysis seems to have been dismissed in this latest report -- analysis and need should be acted upon before land acquisition becomes impossible. Please review the August 4th report by the City Manager!

Thank you for your immediate attention. The Area Four Coalition next meets on October 9th and looks forward to a comprehensive response to our \$200,000 set aside.

Sincerely,

Gerald Bergman
Area Four Park and Open Space Committee

cc. Area Four Coalition; City Manager, Community Development Department

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Attachment

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82 Elm Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
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June 30, 1997

Susan Schlesinger
Assistant City Manager
Community Development Department

Dear Ms. Schlesinger,

I am sure that Venita Mathias has informed you that the Area Four Coalition, by formal vote of the Coalition on June 12, has "put aside" \$200,000 for the development of the Linpro site (206-210 Broadway) for purchase and development either as affordable housing or as open space.

I see this as a unique opportunity for the city to meet at least one of its most pressing objectives: either the development of much needed open space or the development of affordable housing. Unfortunately, this opportunity may not last for long. With the economy heating up, development of such scarce parcels of undeveloped land are going fast. This appears to be the last major piece of property in Area Four that lies undeveloped and on the selling block.

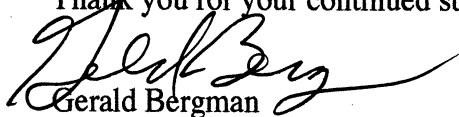
I am appealing to the City of Cambridge to take action now in pursuing purchase of this land, land banking the 46,000 square foot parcel in the short term, and moving forward on developing, with neighborhood input, long-term plans for the site as quickly as possible.

As you know, our neighborhood has the highest concentration of children 18 and younger in the City of Cambridge and we suffer from one of the most severe shortages of public recreational open space in Cambridge even as we remain one of the highest priority neighborhoods for increased open space in the city. The 1992 Neighborhood Study clearly indicates the high priority placed on this site for open space. Open meetings in the neighborhood in January/February also underscored this dual need. As an aside, it was with recent shock and dismay that the Maynard School play area (the only F rated city play area in Cambridge) was once again passed over for play space development!

We are all well aware of the citywide need for affordable home ownership opportunities as well as recreational open space!

Would it be possible to have a "Linpro" report before the City Council for consideration in August? What steps should the neighborhood take to pursue its desired goals? What is the possibility of using CDBG funds, along with UDAG, free cash, and State/Federal grants for such a land purchase?

Thank you for your continued support and assistance,


Gerald Bergman

cc. Mayor Sheila Russell
Ralph Boynton, Coalition Chair

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Communication was received from Gerald Bergman, regarding the purchase and renovation of the "Linpro Site", 206-210 Broadway, as affordable housing or active open space for the community.

In City Council September 22, 1997

Referred to the
City Manager for
a report.

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sent

9-24-97

MC