

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

City Hall Annex - Inman & Broadway - Cambridge, Mass. 02139

498-9034

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: *KA* Kathy A. Spiegelman, Assistant City
Manager for Community Development

Subject: Linkage/Inclusionary Zoning

Date: June 20, 1985

At the request of the City Council, I have contacted representatives of the business/development community to solicit their comments for a new inclusionary zoning/linkage proposal. I tried to determine the specific objections which triggered the overwhelming opposition of this segment of the community to previous proposals, with the intent of preparing a draft incorporating suggestions from these former opponents. I am not able to present such a draft but I would like to report back to the Council on the problems which seem to confront such an effort.

The signatories opposed to the most recent inclusionary zoning/linkage proposals are linked by this particular issue but ordinarily operate very independently of one another. This makes cooperation around an affirmative effort for crafting a program much more difficult than eliciting participation in blocking a program to which they are opposed. Nevertheless, many of the opposing landowners have met together to seek mutual interests beyond the filed opposition to the Council and Rent Control Coalition petitions. I have not been a part of such a larger meeting but I have pursued the issues with several of those major landowners who have indicated that they are not unalterably opposed to the concept of linkage for housing. I will attempt to summarize what I have been told.

Many of the developers who have opposed linkage are discouraged by the proposal for a regulatory program which is not combined with any sort of incentive program. This grievance is furthered by their opinion that the tax on commercial real estate is already asking for a heightened contribution to cover public costs. There are also many complaints that the City's housing problems are not generated by commercial development in isolation from other local, regional and national factors and cannot be solved solely by this sector.

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There is another component which seems to overlay these programmatic objections to the recent linkage proposals. The development community recognizes that the City has successfully used grants, PUD bonuses and partnerships to encourage development in areas and forms which are desirable and that this has led to both a strengthening of the City's financial position and a positive dialogue between business and other community interests. They are interested in pursuing this process, understanding that monitoring growth means evaluating project impacts which go beyond one particular site or building. But they are business people who do not want to be chastized for doing their business. They are leary of a process which portrays them in a negative light and seeks to extract profits to the maximum extent feasible.

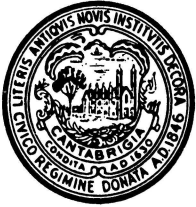
The resolution of this ideological conflict will be very difficult. The resentment for past actions on the sides of both supporters and opponents must not be allowed to destroy the opportunity for compromise. Certainly the City's housing efforts are in no way enhanced by leaving the linkage issue stymied by the landowner opposition which has been demonstrated to be sufficient to prevent passage on the City Council.

The Community Development Department has both initiated and provided staff support for linkage and inclusionary housing efforts over the past several years. We have also been carrying out the City's incentive and grant programs which direct growth. I do not believe that the Community Development Department is charged with the authority to mediate on a policy decision thus far established by the Council's not enacting a linkage program. There can always be more study, more analysis, more planning, but the decision will continue to rest with the City Council.

I would like to suggest that one possibility for moving forward might be to call for the endorsement of the entire City Council to authorize you as the City Manager to examine the record of previous efforts and to provide a program recommendation. It seems to me that the involvement of the chief executive of the administrative branch of the local government has the greatest opportunity for effecting a compromise in this situation.

I am requesting that you share this correspondence with the City Council in response to their order from March, 1985. I am prepared to help in any way I can should you choose to endorse my suggestion for your involvement.

KAS/tm



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

June 24, 1985

RICHARD C. ROSSI
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I transmit herewith a communication from the Community Development Department, with information requested by the City Council, relative to Linkage/Inclusionary Zoning.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/b

Agenda Item No. 23

0-34

Re: enclosed information from the Community Development Dept. relative to Linkage/Inclusionary Zoning.

In City Council,

June 24, 1985

6/24/85
Referred to the
Planning 15624