

City of Cambridge

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Co-Chair
Vice Mayor David P. Maher, Co-Chair
Councillor Jim Braude
Councillor Henrietta Davis
Councillor Marjorie C. Decker
Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves
Councillor Michael A. Sullivan
Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio*

In City Council June 18, 2001

The Ordinance Committee held a public hearing on May 29, 2001, beginning at 4:42 P.M. in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of continued discussion on proposed zoning amendments for Special District 8.

Present at the hearing were Vice Mayor David P. Maher, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Jim Braude, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present was Lester Barber, Director of Land Use and Zoning for the Community Development Department.

Vice Mayor Maher convened the hearing and explained the purpose. He explained that Councillor Born was unable to be present because her new grandchild was being born. Vice Mayor Maher then noted that the City Council has passed the petition to a second reading. He requested that Mr. Barber describe the petition for the benefit of anyone who was not at the previous hearing on this petition on May 2, 2001. Mr. Barber proceeded with a description of the proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance.

Vice Mayor Maher then invited questions from members of the committee.

Councillor Davis asked about the California Paint site. She said that she had always expected that the site's next use would be a housing use, and she asked what other uses would be permitted on that site.

Mr. Barber stated that the Planning Board has requested that Community Development staff address this issue for the Planning Board meeting on this issue on June 5, 2001. It will be discussed in the Planning Board's report to the City Council.

Vice Mayor Maher then invited public comment.

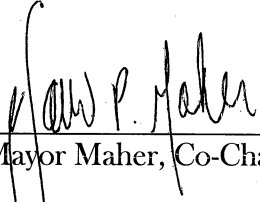
William Jones, Green Street, stated that MIT should build more housing, not dormitories.

Vice Mayor Maher noted that MIT has submitted a letter from John Curry, Executive Vice President (**Attachment A**) stating overall support but expressing concerns and requesting amendments on account of the California Paint property.

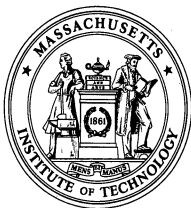
Vice Mayor Maher thanked those present for their attendance.

Councillor Sullivan moved adjournment, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 P.M.

For the Committee,



Vice Mayor Maher, Co-Chair



JOHN R. CURRY
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

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FAX: (617) 252-1387

May 29, 2001

Ms Kathy Born, Co-Chair Ordinance Committee
Mr. David Maher, Co-Chair Ordinance Committee
Cambridge City Council
City Hall
Cambridge MA 02139

RE: Proposed Rezoning for Special Districts 8 and 8A

Dear Ms Born and Mr. Maher,

MIT appreciates this additional opportunity to offer comments on the proposed rezoning petition for areas of Cambridgeport referred to as the modified Special District-8 and the proposed Special District-8A. MIT owns a substantial proportion of the property affected by this petition. The comments we are offering tonight supercede those we brought to your May 2 hearing on this petition.

- **Commitment to Housing**

MIT supports the creation of new housing in general and in Cambridgeport specifically. We have consistently supported the many measures that you have created to provide incentives for affordable housing. Providing incentives for housing through zoning changes offers yet another way for the City to achieve its highest policy priority. We endorse this approach as it is incorporated in the petition before you tonight as we did a few months ago for the recently passed Citywide Rezoning petition.

As you know MIT currently has over 1100 beds under construction, about 750 of these are for graduate students. With this increase in supply coming on-line in September 2002, we hope to reduce the pressure that these students currently exert on the local housing market.

- **Support for this Petition**

MIT supports most of the provisions of the petition for Special District-8 and Special District-8A. We believe that the terms of the proposed districts reinforce the intended direction for this area of Cambridgeport as it moves from its industrial past to a residential future.

- **MIT's Two Concerns**

While we support the overall objectives and terms of the petition, we do have concerns about two of the provisions that we would like to put forward for your further consideration:

1. Interim Use of the California Paint Building

In our negotiations with the City of Cambridge for the purchase of the California Paint Properties, we expressed our intent --and the City acknowledged our desire --to put the large California Paint factory building to productive use during the interval between the departure of California Paint and the time when developing housing on the site would become feasible.

Our participation in the transaction was premised on this assumption and was underscored by the zoning that was in place when our agreement with the City was reached. We believe that allowing for commercial use for an interval will serve not only MIT's interests but those of the City and our neighbors as well.

Allowing for economic use of the existing building will ensure its continued maintenance, and will allow MIT to recoup some of its investment, and in so doing will improve the financial feasibility of housing on this site.

For these reasons, we ask that you insert provisions --similar to those provided to property owners in Special Districts 9 and 10-- which allow for a transition of uses from industrial to residential.

2. California Paint property on Putnam Ave. northwest of Waverly Street

We request that the portion of the California Paint properties on Putnam Avenue northwest of Waverly Street --which is surrounded by buildings which house bio-tech uses --remain within Special District-8 rather than be moved into the SD-8A district. This property is unlikely to be developed at least until the larger California Paint building across the street is redeveloped for housing. In the meantime, this small parcel can be used effectively and without harmful impact to support adjacent uses.

- **Another Housing Opportunity**

We would like to take advantage of this opportunity to call attention to the Special District-10 (F) district between Sidney Street and the railroad right-of-way. This parcel was rezoned to a low-density housing district when Cambridgeport was downzoned in 1992. Since then MIT has demolished the building at 38 Henry Street to provide land for the Cambridgeport roadway right of way.

Although this district is not included in the petition as currently written, we believe that it should be considered for rezoning in the future in light of the many changes incorporated into

the zoning ordinance since 1992. The provisions of this district are not consistent with the Incentive Zoning and Inclusionary Housing terms in Section 11.200.

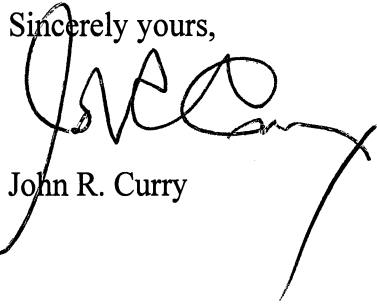
This site, because it is cleared already, is a better candidate for housing development than the California Paint site especially if it were able to take advantage of the same terms (FAR, bonus for affordable units, setbacks, etc.) that apply to other such housing only districts elsewhere in the City.

In conclusion, we want to reiterate MIT's commitment to achieving the City's housing goals. We believe that the recommendations outlined above will accelerate the accomplishment of those goals and it is in that spirit that they are offered.

Should you have any questions about our comments, please feel free to call Sarah Gallop at 617.253.0942 or Catherine Donaher at 617.232.9051.

Thank you for hearing our comments and recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John R. Curry', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John R. Curry

Attachment

Cc: Members of the Cambridge City Council
 Members of the Cambridge Planning Board
 Robert Healy, City Manager
 Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

2445

Committee Report #3

A communication was received from D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk, transmitting a report from Vice Mayor David P. Maher, Co-Chair of the Ordinance Committee for a meeting held on May 20, 2001 for the purpose of continued discussion on a proposed zoning amendments for Special District 8.

In City Council June 18, 2001

Report accepted

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