

20 Prescott St., #5
Cambridge, MA 02138
August 2, 1989

Cambridge City Council and City Manager
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Sirs/Madams:

On March 10, 1989, I and a group of Cambridge residents filed a petition to change the zoning law of Cambridge to raise more revenue for the construction of new housing by increasing the linkage fee from \$2 to \$3 per square foot. The petition was first advertised on May 2, 1989, and a hearing before the Planning Board took place on May 16, 1989. My neighbors and I heard nothing about our petition after May 16. We are very dissatisfied with a process which did not make us aware of the date and disposition of further Planning Board votes. We also ask why no City Council Ordinance Committee hearing was held on our petition.

On June 27, 1989, I attended the City Hall reception announcing the Small Property Owners Rehab and Loan Program, and afterwards I walked over to the Community Development Department and spoke with Lester Barber and Elizabeth Malenfant about our petition. They informed me that the Planning Board met a second time and spent "a few minutes" on our petition. The Board did not write an official report and send it to the petitioners or the City Council. Mr. Barber and Ms. Malenfant also informed me that the petition had expired because the Ordinance Committee had not acted.

The need for affordable housing in Cambridge requires more responsible action on the part of the city when residents petition and suggest changes. I would like to recommend some improvements in the process, and I request that our linkage fee zoning petition receive prompt attention.

First, I would ask that all petitioners be notified of all Planning Board meetings when their petitions will be discussed. At the moment we are notified officially only of the first hearing.

Second, I would ask that a copy of the written decision and rationale for that decision be forwarded to all petitioners within a week of Planning Board action. In this case no written decision was even sent to the City Council. Petitioners have a right to know what action is taken and why.

Third, if the Ordinance Committee chooses not to consider a petition for whatever reason, the Ordinance Committee should notify all petitioners of the reasons and what further options are open to them as citizens.

At the moment the process is defective, and communication between city agencies and citizens is insufficient. We hope the City Council and City Manager will act as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Robert O. Edbrooke

Robert O. Edbrooke

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Comm. from Robert O. Edbrooke, Jr. Re: a previous zoning petition that he & a group of residents filed on March 10, 1989 to increase the linkage fee from \$2. to \$3.; said comm. recommending improvements in the process of notifying petitioners of when their petition is scheduled for discussion by the Planning Board.

In City Council,

August 7, 1989

8-7-89

City Manager & City
Clerk to Report.