

CCA STATEMENT ON DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

BUDGET PROPOSAL APRIL 28, 1976 HEARING

The Department of Community Development in the City of Cambridge is too large and too expensive. It is one of the largest planning departments in the country for cities of 100,000 to 250,000. The total cost of the Department, \$6.40 for every resident of the city is near the top for cities of our size.

The high cost of the Department does not mean that Cambridge is getting superior planning. It does mean that un-needed personnel have been retained on the payroll, and un-necessary projects are still being funded.

The City Manager directed the administrators or the Department to submit a budget which did not increase the tax rate supported portion of the budget. The CCA supports and applauds the Manager's directive.

A preliminary budget was due to be made available on February 17th. After nearly two months of waiting, the members of the Planning Board were finally hand delivered a hand written "budget" on Saturday morning just twelve days ago.

This so called "budget" and "work plan" achieved the goal of not raising the tax rate portion of the Department's budget, and saved all existing jobs within the Department. In order to achieve those two objectives, funds for staff for the ten project areas which the Planning Board has assigned top priority such as Alwife Brook, Porter Square, and the Industrial Zones were cut. Allocations for hiring essential consultants to competently study these priority areas were eliminated. Instead, existing staff member salaries were simply sliced up and spread onto Block Grant tasks without apparent regard for matching qualifications or time commitments to the jobs to be done. If this so called "budget" and "work program" is allowed to stand unchanged, chaos will result in the department and planning will come to a standstill.

The CCA believes the following steps must be taken:

The top administrators of the Department should be terminated by the Manager and the Department restructured with fewer administrators. They have demonstrated by their handling of \$100,000 in tax revenue monies and \$540,000 in Block Grant funds that they are incapable of setting priorities for the tasks which should be done and of assigning qualified staff to accomplish those tasks.

The Harvard Square Policy Plan is virtually complete and there is no reason for maintaining a \$30,000 per year administrator for that project.

The Comprehensive Planning process can and should be completed within the present fiscal year, thus, three no longer required staff positions can be eliminated.

By reducing the top heavy administration within the Department and terminating no longer needed projects and staff, funds can be made available to address the ten priority planning issues for the City: The Industrial Zones, Alwife Brook, Porter Square, Mass Avenu, the Inner Belt re-habilitation, Off Street Parking, River-Western -Prospect Corridor, The City wide height limit and transitional zones , and Low and Moderate Income housing use Survey.

Consultants who can bring realistic expertise in traffic, marketing, economics and design to the priority projects can be hired. Staffing can be restructured to provide more technical professionals and fewer administrators.

If the present "job saver" budget is let stand, the planning which needs to be done will come to a standstill.

Our salaries for planning staff are as high as those in the private sector. We have the right to expect the same level of performance from our planners and administrators as the private sector demands from it's employees.

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