

April 23, 1979

Memo to: The Honorable, The City Council

From: David Vickery, Community Development Department
William Fagen for Charles Sprague, Building Department

In response to the March 26 Council order concerning the nonconformance provisions of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, Staff Members of both the Community Development and Building Departments and Vice Chairperson of the Board of Zoning Appeal have reviewed the proposed changes accompanying that order. It is the considered opinion of the agencies involved that the complexity of the nonconformity issue, and the confusion of existing regulations, necessitates a thorough reworking and revision of this section of the Zoning Ordinance.

Because most of the City was developed prior to the adoption of zoning, under present regulations nearly all alterations to existing buildings are subject to an involved discretionary review process. The delays created by this process increase costs and inconvenience disproportionate to the nature and magnitude of the changes proposed.

Given the provisions of the Zoning Statute (Ch. 40A, G.L.) simplification of the existing review process may involve creation of a Zoning Administrator designation. An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance including both substantive change in Article 8.000 and this new administrative mechanism is currently being prepared and will be forthcoming.

Additional comments and questions may be referred to Richard Horgan in the Building Department.

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