



Cambridge Arts Council

57 Inman Street Cambridge, MA 02139 (617) 349-4380

December 16, 1997

The Honorable Sheila T. Russell
Mayor of Cambridge
Cambridge City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mayor Russell:

On behalf of the Public Art Committee, I am requesting that the City Council reconsider their response to Communication Order #30, instructing the City Manager to put the Fresh Pond public art project on hold pending completion of the masterplan.

The consequence of linking the art project to the masterplan is equivalent to canceling the project. The construction of the art is an integral part of the building and water system construction. This is not just a matter of costs, it involves the Federal, State and Local permit process for this construction and shutting down and restarting the water supply to the City. The engineers and architects tell us that the artwork cannot be separated from the construction of the building and water system and done a year later.

Mags Harries' project for Fresh Pond has gone through an extensive and rigorous review process. It has been reviewed at various points with regard to its siting, security, safety, and its potential affects on water quality by Camp Dresser and McKee, Inc., the Water Department, and the Water Board. The art proposal has also been reviewed by the Cambridge Public Art Committee with regard to the potential for vandalism. The proposal has passed all the reviews and been approved with regard to all pertinent issues.

Beyond the above review process, the art has also been the subject of a public meeting on December 9, where the issue of open space was discussed. With members of the Public Art Committee, I attended the meeting which included some 120 Cambridge residents. A significant majority of those who spoke at the meeting recommended that the City proceed with this project without further delay.

We question why the City Council did not await the City Manager's report on the public meeting in accordance with the City Council Order #198, dated 9/8/97, requesting the meeting. We are deeply disappointed that the City Council is disregarding the response to the public's concerns which were addressed in the changes made by the architect and artist over the past several months and reported at the public meeting.

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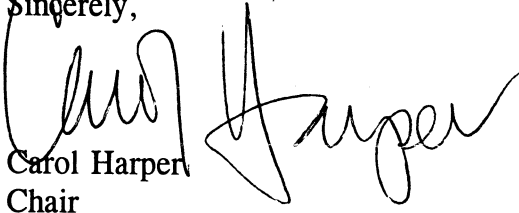
Advisory Board: Carol E. Harper, Chair; Jeffrey Dunn, Leonie Gordon, Jeffrey H. Mauzy,
Judith E. Motzkin, Jane Nichols, Paula A. Paris, David Perry, Wendy Prellwitz, William S. Strong
Fund Board: William S. Strong, President; Stephen Pratt-Otto, Treasurer; Josie Patterson, Clerk; Paula A. Paris, Carol N. Zwanger
Pallas C. Lombardi, Executive Director

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This artwork is about Cambridge's water supply and the flow of water into the pond. It can only occur at the proposed site. To place the project on hold and not include it in the construction means canceling it and consequently censoring this artist. All significant technical issues have been addressed and the project should move forward. Public review was welcomed and has resulted in positive changes. To consider canceling a public art project because it is unpopular with a very vocal group who oppose any art at the site is unfair to the artist and the people who have worked so hard to realize a water project at Fresh Pond.

Please allow the City Manager to make a decision based on the process and in response to previous Council Orders.

Sincerely,



Carol Harper
Chair

cc: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Consent Communication #5

S-799

Communication was received from Carol Harper, Chair, Public Art Committee, transmitting concern regarding City Council order requesting delay of action on the Fresh Pond public art project.

In City Council December 22, 1997

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