



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300
FAX 349-4307



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

June 21, 1999

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 99-29, regarding a report on a policy change that would require that a certain percentage of revenue from new construction go directly to the purchase of open space, please be advised of the following:

Over the last several months at the urging of the City Council the City has taken two significant steps towards ensuring the expansion of open space within the City. The first step was the creation and funding of the open space acquisition account which will total \$4,000,000 as of July 1, 1999. The second step was the creation of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee which is reviewing criteria for the purchase and expansion of open space. Together, these two steps can be expected to result in the expansion of open space here over the next few years. It would be my strong recommendation to let the work of the open space committee continue and not be entangled with the policy that called for open space acquisition to be tied to development in a given area of the City.

This recommendation is given for the following reasons. First and most importantly, revenue from new development is used for a wide variety of City programs (including open space acquisition). Taxes from new development support schools, affordable housing, public safety, public health as well as general government operation (salaries, etc.) I do not believe it would be wise to establish a policy that would put any single need at the top of the list for additional funding. Such funding decisions should be made by the City Council on an annual basis. Secondly, development occurs sporadically from area to area and if development slows in an area that might have a need for additional open space it is not necessarily in the broader interest of the City to require that area to wait. The third issue that I believe is important relates to overall City needs and gets back to the work of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee. Geographically, Cambridge is a small City and our open space planning goals should not be based solely upon specific area development activity. This does not mean that new development cannot be a factor in determining open space acquisition/expansion, but we must recognize other factors such as population density, existing open space and specific area needs (active vs. passive, school location, etc.)

Very truly yours,


Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Consent Agenda #2

160/C) Cal. 1
F

Relative to AW Rpt. #99-29,
regarding a report on a policy
change that would require
that a certain percentage of
revenue from new construction
go directly to the purchase
of open space.

In City Council June 21, 1999

CHARTER RIGHT

BY Councillor Toomey

7/26/99

Referred to round table
in September or October