

6 Saint Gerard Terrace
Cambridge, MA 02140
4 February, 1999

City Council
City Hall
Cambridge, MA

RE: EXCESSIVE DEVELOPMENT THREATS AT FORMER INDUSTRIAL SITES

Dear Councilors:

On Tuesday, 26 January, at a fashionable hotel just off 128, a group of real estate developers gathered for a seminar on the Massachusetts Brownfields Act. Focusing on how to "find value in environmentally impaired property," this seminar, titled "Turning Brownfields into Gold," explained in detail how these real estate professionals could "profit from environmentally distressed properties" such as the ComEnergy site in East Cambridge, the Grace site at Alewife and the Polaroid site in Cambridgeport.

Co-hosting the seminar was Spaulding & Slye, the development company for both the Polaroid and Grace sites. Speaking for Spaulding & Slye was William N. Whelan, the company's Chairman. Among Mr. Whelan's noted accomplishments were his skill as a pilot, his status as a real estate broker, his membership in various professional groups and his involvement with the Boy Scouts.

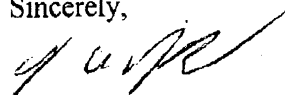
Nowhere on Mr. Whelan's resume did it mention his concern for wetlands rehabilitation (seemingly the major reason Councilor Davis supported Spaulding and Slye's hotel proposal at Alewife); his desire to provide affordable food to urban areas (seemingly Councilor Galluccio's reason for amending Alewife zoning to allow a 55,000 square foot supermarket) or his wish to provide jobs (seemingly former Cambridge Community Development Department head, Susan Schlesinger's, reason for supporting an overly large office park proposal at the Polaroid site).

The seminar's title said it all. The people in attendance, including Mr. Whelan, were interested in one thing, and one thing only, "Turning Brownfields into Gold." Helping out local neighborhoods was not even on Mr. Whelan's slides, although he did have room for capturing "Surplus Asset Value" and "Monetary Incentives."

While there is nothing wrong with trying to make money, those of us who live near these new development "goldmines" remember the devastation wreaked on the native populations during other goldrushes. We are unwilling to let Spaulding and Slye, or Lyme Properties or any other developer turn local "non-performing" properties into "maximized asset value" without regard to the horrendous costs these developments will have on the neighboring communities.

The City Council must **appropriately** rezone Cambridge's industrial parcels before still more developers join the new goldrush of '99.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Kelley

Consent Communication #8 **S-1038**

A communication was received from
Craig A. Kelley, regarding excessive
development threats at former industrial
sites.

In City Council February 8, 1999

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