

Minutes: Meeting to Discuss the Future of the 238 Broadway Site
Wednesday, September 18, 2002
6 PM, Sullivan Chamber

The meeting was brought to order by Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi. Mr. Rossi gave a description of how the City came to acquire the 238 Broadway site for use as a park.

- In May 1998, the City Council requested that the City Manager establish an Open Space Acquisition Fund to help remedy the shortage of open space in parts of the city.
- In September 1998, the City Council ordered the establishment of a Green Ribbon Open Space Committee to establish open space acquisition priorities to meet the needs of the neighborhoods most under-served by parks and recreational open space.
- This Green Ribbon Open Space Committee met from February 1999 to March 2000 to set priorities for open space acquisition. These priorities included a neighborhood and community park in Area 4, and a school park for the Fletcher-Maynard Academy. While Sennott Park was identified as an important community resource, it was considered over-used.
- In November 1999, the City Council approved the use of Open Space Acquisition Funds to purchase the 238 Broadway property.
- A community process was initiated in December 1999, and included many community meetings until March of 2002. Through this process a design was developed.

Darcy Jameson, the City's Housing Director, then spoke about some of the affordable housing that has been recently developed in Area 4, including the Squirrel Brand property and the housing on the corner of Harvard and Windsor. The City and Homeowners Rehab are working to negotiate the preservation of 42 large family size units at the CAST Building. Several years ago, the City purchased the Bedrick properties (many of which are in Area 4), and worked to develop the Hampshire/ Columbia condominiums. The Housing Division will continue to work to create affordable housing throughout the city.

Mr. Rossi stated that the creation and maintenance of affordable housing is one of the City Council's and the administration's goals, as is the development of open space. The City tries to do what it can to effectively meet both of these needs. He then opened the meeting for public comment.

Robert LaTremouille, 182 Harvard Street, said that he could not believe that the City would reverse its position after so much process. While there is a need for housing and open space, the City should not deny the poor open space. This park will benefit Washington Elms, Newtowne Court, Harvard/ Windsor, and Squirrel Brand residents.

Lydia Vickers, 45 Cherry Street, acknowledged the need for open space. However, the recent adoption of the Community Preservation Act added new opportunities for funding. Because the property at 238 Broadway is next to an existing park, why not create housing and open space? A lot of money has already been spent on the buildings at 238 Broadway. Perhaps the Neighbors

for a Better Community would be willing to allow a field on their lot [located at the corner of Harvard and Moore Street]. That way there could still be affordable housing. She has a vision of gardens, trees, a library, and a community center (which could have intergenerational and intercultural study groups).

Sharon Stentiford, 305 Washington Street, stated an interest in both open space and affordable housing. However, if the site is turned into affordable housing, she would like to see it be for the elderly.

Barry Zevin, 67 Hampshire Street, feels that at least the brick building at 238 Broadway should be preserved. He feels that housing is a better neighbor than a park. He would like the City to negotiate with Neighbors for a Better Community for their lot, in order to be able to preserve an existing building and existing open space.

Ethan Ford, 220 Windsor Street #3, is an abutter of the site. He feels that Area 4 has a great deal of affordable housing and insufficient open space. There are many children and adults who will benefit from open space. He purchased his condominium believing a park would be built on the site, and now cannot afford to move. When he attended meetings of the Area 4 Neighborhood Coalition, they seemed to support a park, but now have changed their minds. He feels the neighborhood deserves a park.

Carol Bellew, 257 Charles Street, was co-chair of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee. The Committee spent a great deal of time considering their recommendations, and found that Area 4 desperately needed open space. Neighborhoods should have a mix of things, and open space is hard to find. There is a school in the area, and parks are important for children. The Committee had tried to be fair and equitable in their recommendations, and she hopes that the City will stay the course. There is lots of affordable housing in Area 4, but open space is really needed.

Karen Gillespie, 167 Harvard Street, supports open space and affordable housing. However, she believes that the City could improve the existing park while maintaining the buildings as affordable housing. She is concerned that the City spent a great deal of money to renovate the buildings for the temporary office buildings, and only city workers will be able to use them; this money belongs to the tax payers, and should therefore should be used for housing. Her biggest concern is that other abutters want nice views, and that open space advocates who do not live in neighborhood are expressing their opinions. She believes that tearing down these buildings for a park will only hurt children, because it will lead to crime. She has lived next to the 238 Broadway property for 25 years. Police protection has been promised in the past, and has not been consistent. People who do not live next to the park do not have to experience that. She believes that expanding the park will only lead to more violence in the neighborhood. Housing or a community center would be much better for the children and adults in the neighborhood. Such facilities would make the neighborhood more attractive to families, not just help those outside the area.

Richard Rossi explained that the City bought the 238 Broadway property for \$2.65 million. When it had to be used for interim offices, approximately \$250,000- 300,000 was spent to install carpeting, office systems, and address mold and asbestos.

Clifford Truesdell, 29 Essex Street, said that the City bought a building that had been fully renovated and should not tear it down. The brick building is of a type that is not built anymore, and should be preserved. The City is not being creative, and should pursue the Neighbors for a Better Community lot in order to expand open space on the site. It is easy for those who have housing to say that there is enough affordable housing in Area 4. Many neighbors have had to leave during the past 25 years because of the rising cost of housing. There is no greater need than affordable housing. He prefers a limited equity model that ensures long-term affordability but helps people become homeowners.

Maryann Doiron, 33 Market Street, said that she has lived in the neighborhood for 9 years. She has seen many units of affordable housing built. The 238 Broadway site presents a rare opportunity for open space. A larger park will really help the students at Fletcher-Maynard who now have to walk to Sennott Park.

Anne Strong, 44 Cottage Street, was on the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee. She has volunteered for 20 years with youth sports, including increasing access for children who live in Newtowne Court and Washington Elms. It is a challenge to help youth get involved in sports when there are no fields nearby. The Green Ribbon Report looked at the need for open space citywide. She feels the city needs more open space in eastern Cambridge and more affordable housing in western Cambridge. The open space that is currently available is not sufficient for the Fletcher-Maynard Academy. The only form of exercise available is jogging around the block, which is very boring for children and quickly makes them dislike exercise. Obesity is increasingly a health problem among children. Students at most other schools in Cambridge have field space. The School Department did a study several years ago that found lower than average high school sports participation in eastern Cambridge. In western Cambridge, a higher level of participation in high school sports was found. This was linked to access that children had to places to play in their neighborhood. High school sports opens many doors for people, not the least of which is physical fitness.

Jackie Dobson Adams, formerly of 143 Clark Street, has been a resident of Area 4 for over 50 years. When she lived on Clark Street as a child, they would walk to Sennott Park to play. Area 4 has been promised many new things and has been disappointed. She and her children have had to move into public housing because they cannot afford to live in the neighborhood. Giving open space to people who paid too much for their housing is a form of snob zoning. The park that is currently on the site has caused her mother, who is an abutter, many problems. People in the park make noise late at night and break windows with balls. She does not feel the Harvard Street Park or the Fletcher-Maynard School yard are safe after dark. She feels the neighborhood has made strides to become more unified and that this issue could become divisive. Homes that sold recently in the neighborhood should have been bought for affordable housing. She would like to have a meeting of neighbors to discuss affordable housing and open space.

Mahmood Firouzbakht, 97 Moore Street, agrees with a lot of people on both sides. He went to the Cambridge Public Schools and has been a teacher there for five years. He feels that more affordable housing will take away from quality of life. Area 4 is one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the city. Adding more people to the neighborhood only increases the risk of violence. It is not fair to children, the elderly, or homeowners who bought land after the promise of a park to change the plans. The city needs affordable housing, but should look in other areas neighborhoods. There should be increased police presence on foot and government involvement in keeping the park safe, but the plan to create a park at 238 Broadway should go forward.

Shahla Haghayegih, 97 Moore Street, stated that as a taxpayer she would like to see more open space in this area because there is already so much housing.

Regina Jones, 140 Harvard Street #2, is the president of the Washington Elms/ Newtowne Court Tenant Council. She supports affordable housing, and feels that people misrepresent those who live in affordable housing. She described the accomplishments of her own family to show that those who live in affordable housing can be successful. She also supports open space, but feels that those in the neighborhood can walk to Sennott Park for exercise. What she feels is most important in this neighborhood is a library. She does not feel the 238 Broadway site is large enough for a park or suitable for housing. The neighborhood used to have a library and a book mobile, and now they have nothing. If someone had asked what the neighborhood wanted, they would have heard a library. The City should have bought recently sold units in the neighborhood and converted those to affordable housing. She feels more outreach should be conducted to those who speak other languages and those who live in public housing. She also feels there should be a renaming of Area 4 to something that does not make the neighborhood seem like just a number.

Brian LeClerc, 39 Dickinson Street, said that the City should follow through on its promise to build a park.

Lena Dobson, 143 Clark Street, is a direct abutter of the park. She is tired of enforcing safety issues at the current park. She thinks it is despicable that there is no library in Area 4, because there are so many immigrants. There used to be a library in Area 4 (where the Windsor Street Health Center is) that was never replaced. There are many parks in this neighborhood, but not enough resources for youth to get the education and job skills they need.

Karan Marsh, 100 Pine Street, has lived in the neighborhood for over 23 years. While she has always been a strong advocate for open space, she feels the need for housing is greater. Many people have been forced to move out of the neighborhood. She supports the creation of open space elsewhere, and will donate 100 oak trees to help create a forest (perhaps at Danehy Park).

Esther Hanig, 136 Pine Street, has lived in Cambridge for 22 years. She has always appreciated the diversity of the city, but she has seen this diversity reduced since the end of rent control. The need to create affordable housing is great. There is a lot of open space in the neighborhood. There is drug-dealing in Columbia Park and there have been shootings on Pine Street in the past. People will not be happy with the negative behavior that happens if a new park is built.

Barbara Hayes Harrison, 143 Prospect Street, feels that the neighborhood needs a library. First the library on Windsor Street was eliminated, then the bookmobile was eliminated. The City should give back what was taken. A park could be put on the roof of the library.

William Iacono, 218 Windsor Street, has lived in Area Four for about 20 years. He is an abutter who supports the open space that has been planned. He brought a signed petition from eight people on his block (from Izzy's Restaurant to the parking lot across from Fletcher-Maynard) who support the creation of the park as planned [attached].

Bonnie Larkin, 220 Windsor Street, stated that she and her husband support the creation of the park as planned. She does not oppose affordable housing, but is opposed to more density in this area.

Vincent Dixon, 287 Harvard Street #64, understands that there are competing priorities within the city. However, the original purpose of the 238 Broadway site has changed due to the temporary offices there. He supports housing and a library on the site (similar to the facility on Huron Avenue). Money should be reallocated to find open space elsewhere.

Kathy Irving, 218 Windsor Street, stated her support for the park that has been planned for the site. Cambridge has more affordable housing than any other community in the state. The increase in density over the years has caused problems over the years, especially with parking.

Hatch Sterrett, 12 Boardman Street, lives in the Squirrel Brand Apartments. He favors the 238 Broadway site primarily for affordable housing, with some landscaped area, community uses, or a library. The end of rent control took away economic diversity throughout the city. In response to people's concern about density, he cited Jane Jacob's book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which equates a certain level of density with a vibrant city.

Mark White, Cherry Street, supports preserving the buildings. He has worked with the Haggerty School preschool for the past ten years, and he has found that those children are able to walk ten minutes to Glacken Field. The students at Fletcher-Maynard Academy should be able to walk to Sennott Park.

Mr. Rossi stated that the minutes to the meeting will be typed up and distributed to the City Council members.

Councilor Kenneth Reeves stated his belief that the full range of the opinions of the neighborhood should be measured, perhaps through some sort of census or multiple meetings. While he respects the planning for the park that has taken place, the adoption of the Community Preservation Act might mean they should re-evaluate the situation. He believes that the neighbors should determine what should be done.

Councilor Marjorie Decker stated that she would continue to think about what had been said at the meeting. While her own passion is for affordable housing, she also sees the need for such amenities as open space, a community center, and a library. She said that density alone does not

lead to crime, but that crime is connected to many other issues, such as poverty. She also described how the City tries to create affordable housing wherever possible, but that the real estate market limits their options. She encouraged residents to introduce themselves to neighbors they had never met before.

Councilor Timothy Toomey described how the City Council has worked to create open space for residents of eastern Cambridge. The Council ordered the creation of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee, and acted upon their recommendations when the unique opportunity to purchase the 238 Broadway site came about. The City worked with the community to create the park. This is a small city with the need to balance housing and open space. He will look at other options, but he feels that the City made a commitment to open space that he wants to honor. He is not opposed to affordable housing or a library, and he feels that if people continue to work together all three can be accomplished.

Mr. Rossi stated that the park design has essentially been completed and would go out to bid a year from this fall. The land was purchased for municipal open space through a friendly eminent domain taking for \$2,658,000. Because it was acquired as open space, any change to this use of the site would require a home rule petition supported by a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate.

Councilor Reeves said that because the taking was not hostile, the legislature might be more amenable to passing the home rule petition. He feels the Council should still remain flexible.

Councilor Brian Murphy was not a member of the City Council when the decision to acquire 238 Broadway was made. For this reason, he would like to continue to gather information and weigh the different needs of the community before making a decision. He would also like to ensure the neighborhood is involved in the process.

Mr. Rossi stated that the City paid approximately \$300,000 to renovate the 238 Broadway building for temporary office space. This investment has to be weighed against what it would have cost to rent office space for City employees. If the City does decide to construct affordable housing on the site and this is approved by the legislature, the open space money that was spent on the site will have to be reimbursed from the City's affordable housing funds. The City has spent approximately \$150,000 on an open space design contract.

Jackie Dobson Adams, formerly of 143 Clark Street, asked what the potential to change the plans for the site is. She also asked to see the records for all meetings held about this project.

Councilor E. Denise Simmons said that this discussion will not end tonight and that the Council will continue to discuss ways to meet all of the community's needs for open space, affordable housing, and a library (possibly looking at bringing back the book mobile as a short-term solution). They could also begin a process of a neighborhood renaming if the community would like. Future meetings about 238 Broadway should take place in the neighborhood with translators, child care, and snacks. The issue of potential school mergers must be discussed before any decision can be made to create a park for Fletcher-Maynard. The issue of safety must

also be further explored. She would like to look at having more process in the neighborhood, and would like a chronology of meetings to be made available.

Mr. Rossi described the many meetings that have taken place within the neighborhood and with abutters. The level of participation in these was very high. He feels that the community was listened to in the development of the design.

Lydia Vickers, 45 Cherry Street, said the City had done an excellent job with the park planning. However, at that time the Community Preservation Act had not passed, and the option of keeping the building was not presented. Other options should now be revisited.

Mr. Rossi stated at the time community process happened for 238 Broadway, the fact that the site would be open space was a given, due to the nature of the Council Order.

Karen Gillespie, 167 Harvard Street, wanted to clarify whether there is a chance that the plan could be changed, and whether people should contact their City Councilors in order to bring about this change.

Mr. Rossi responded that the City Council would be the ones to set policy regarding 238 Broadway, and that the City Manager's Office will carry out that policy. A great deal of work has gone into planning for a park, but should the plan change a similar effort will go into planning for housing. This topic will most likely be discussed by the City Council on September 23 or 30. If the City is interested in pursuing housing on the site, a more detailed evaluation would have to be done to determine what the cost would be to renovate the existing structures versus demolition and new construction.

Gerald Bergman, 82 Elm Street, stated that he thought the park process had been excellent. However, he felt the issue had initially gone through the Council very quickly, and that people were so excited about the potential for a park they did not weigh the different options. He would like to see the City negotiate with Neighbors for a Better Community for their lot. Overall, he thinks the planning process has been fair. [Written comments are attached.]

Council Simmons asked that notice of the City Council meeting to discuss the future of 238 Broadway be sent to those in attendance tonight. Mr. Rossi said that the sign in sheet would be forwarded to the City Clerk.

Additional written comments submitted regarding the future of 238 Broadway are attached.

Sign In Sheet
238 Broadway Meeting
September 18, 2002
6 PM
Sullivan Chamber

	Name (please print)	Address	Phone	E-Mail
✓ 1	ROBERT J. LATREMOUILLE	182 HARVARD ST	617-576-9780	ROBLAT@KALCO.COM
✓ 2	Linda Vickers	45 Cherry St	617-547-1256	
✓ 3	Sharon Stentiford	305 Washington	617-547-8689	sstentiford@exponent.com
✓ 4	Barry Zarin	67 Hampshire St	617 492 3321	
✓ 5	Ethan Ford	220 Windsor St #3	617-285-8267	ethanfore@mit.edu
✓ 6	Anne Strong ^{Carol Bellet}	44 Cottage St ^{257 Charles St}	617-576-4732	strongat@attbi.com
✓ 7	Karen Gillespie	PO Box 390357 Camb	617	KAREN90213@YAHOO.COM
✓ 8	Clifford True	[167 Harvard Street]		
✓ 9	Maryann Doiron	[29 Essex Street]		
✓ 10	Carol E Bellet ^{Anne Strong}	[33 Market Street]		
✓ 11	Jacqueline Dobson-Adams	[44 Cottage Street]		
✓ 12	William Ives			

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	Name (please print)	Address	Phone	E-Mail
✓ 13	MAHMOOD [Frouzbakht] FROUZBAKHTI	47 MOORE ST	612-945-0941	
✓ 14	SHAHLA HAGHAYEBI	" "		
✓ 15	Regina Jones	140 Harvard ST #2	617-621-1466	
X 16	DICIC BROWN	12 FLORENCE	491-5110	
✓ 17	Brian Leclerc	39 Dickinson	617-872-0319	
✓ 18	Jay Corral Kera Dobson	143 Clark St. 36 Market St	857-205-7222 617-88	
✓ 19	Karan Marsh	100 Pine St	617-864-6218	
X 20	HELEN PAUMER	100 Montgomery St	617-876-5987	
✓ 21	Esther Hanig	136 Pine St	617-864-4014	
✓ 22	Barbara Hayes Harrison	143 Prospect St	617-547-1304	
✓ 23	William Iacono	218 Windsor	617-497-5525	
✓ 24	Bonnie Larkin	220 Windsor	617-492-2014	
X 25	JAMES WILLIAMSON	17 PERRY ST. (02139)		
26				
27				

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	Name (please print)	Address	Phone	E-Mail
✓ 28	VINCENT L DIXON	287 Harvard St NO-64	617 621-1500	d.xonen@aol.com
✓ 29	Kathy Irving	218 Windsor St	497-5555	xaloo.com
✓ 30	Hugh Sterrett STERRETT	12 Boardman	661-8092	cuzzin7@hotmail.com
31	Mark White	Cherry St		
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Colvin &
Speakers

Ken
MACJERIE
TIM

Dewise

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Deliris Colon, born and raised in Cambridge, and a single mother of two young girls, one of which plays soccer with Cambridge Youth Soccer (CYS) and is in her 5th season. She absolutely loves soccer. I am writing this note since I couldn't make it to the Wednesday, September 18, 2002 meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Sullivan Chamber in City Hall with regards to the 238 Broadway site.

With the growing number of obesity and juvenile diabetes in youths today, we, more than ever, need more parks for recreational and sports team use. My daughter has been able to keep active and her energy level up by playing soccer, among other things, and it would be great to have another playing field in this part of Area IV.

It would most definitely be advantageous to the community and the children of the Fletcher/Maynard Academy, Washington Elms, Newtowne Court and surrounding neighbors:

Thank you.

Deliris Colon
17 Plymouth St., Apt. 1
Cambridge, MA 02141

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge, MA

September 18, 2002

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to object to Order #13, a request for a moratorium on the destruction of 238 Broadway.

I support the City of Cambridge and the park proposed for the Site.

According to the Green Report Area 4 and Central Square need every type of park studied by the Open Space Committee. Razing 238 and its' parking areas go far in addressing these many community needs. The park will provide organized playground space for the Fletcher-Maynard School. A large community park will help serve as a border between the High-Tech hi-rises marching down Broadway from Boston and the living community of Area 4. And a large park will provide open space and trees for the members of our Community.

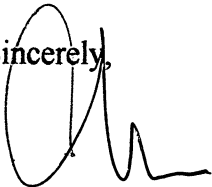
I live beneath 238 Broadway. My beloved garden has often served as an ashtray and trashcan for the people in the offices above. But, more importantly, it has provided a pleasure to the people who overlook it. A park could only offer more of such beauty to others.

Despite my security concerns, I am thrilled with the Design of the park. The majority of 238's Abutters and my neighbors are thrilled. I am equally sure that the kids at Fletcher-Maynard School are thrilled.

I, as well as many of my neighbors, believed that the primary yea or nay decision of park or no-park was taken long ago. The space was purchased for a park. Cambridge and Area 4 were looking far into the future and addressing a vital need of her people, and most especially a need of the many children in our neighborhood. Where, may I ask, might we find an equally large piece of property. And when?

Please, build our park. Please keep to the committment of our Park.

Sincerely,



Constance Sawyer
218 Windsor St
Cambridge, MA 02139

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge, MA

September 17, 2002

We, the undersigned, both residents of Area 4, and close neighbors of 238 Broadway, here signal our opposition to Order # 13.

We support the design and building of the park as planned and hope that there will be no further interruptions to the razing of the buildings at 238 Broadway and subsequent construction of the park. Our neighborhood, our schools, and our children need this park.

Bonnie J. Larkin 220 Windsor St
MIKE LARKIN 220 WINDSOR ST.
Ethan Ford ~~to Ford~~ 220 Windsor St. #3
Rose Krueger ~~Roe Krueger~~ 41 Dickinson St.
Connie Sawyer 218 WINDSOR ST.

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge, MA

September 17, 2002

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1 William Taccone 218 Windsor

2 Kathy J. Irving 218 Windsor

3 Loretta A. Filice 226 Windsor St

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for discussion on September 18, 2002

238 Broadway/Harvard Street Mixed Use Neighborhood Plan

- ✓ The Neighborhood Plan would incorporate the Neighbors for a Better Community (NBC) site (10,000+ sq. ft. on Moore and Harvard Street) which would be purchased by the city at a fair negotiated price. The city must report back to the community about the results of negotiations with NBC for that parcel.
- ✓ A written assessment must be made regarding the cost-effectiveness of preserving the one building closest to Broadway for affordable housing. This written assessment would be preliminary and would be done by a trusted non-profit housing organization.
- ✓ The Neighborhood Plan suggests that the tennis court and handball court be moved to the current NBC land, converting vacated space seen on the City of Cambridge final plan to open field space or playground space/water area space (or some combination).
- ✓ The Neighborhood Plan suggests that the passive open space on the City Plan bordering on Broadway (fragrant plants, seawall etc.), which is currently parking, could be used as parking, (bordered by bushes/plants and trees), for affordable housing.
- ✓ The City of Cambridge must return to the next meeting with preliminary drawings indicating what options might be available for a mixed use site incorporating the NBC land and preserving the one building closest to Broadway.
- ✓ All future meetings must be held in Area 4, at a reasonable time of day, with adequate multi-lingual outreach, available childcare and translation services, and refreshments (if it is a dinnertime meeting).

For more information contact: Gerald Bergman, 82 Elm Street



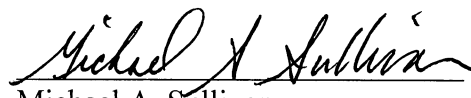
City of Cambridge

October 4, 2002

Dear Councillor:

You are hereby notified to attend a *Special Meeting* of the City Council and School Committee for **Tuesday, October 22, 2002** at 6:00 p.m. at the **Gustave M. Solomons Transportation Center, 1st floor, 456 Broadway, Cambridge, MA.**

By order of His Honor the Mayor.


Michael A. Sullivan
Mayor

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss current education issues in Cambridge.

This meeting shall be subject to the Rules of the City Council as amended.

S-305
October 22, 2002

Species City Council meeting
and School Comm meeting