

To the Honorable City Councillors
October 17, 2000

Ladies and gentlemen:

As you know I am an advocate for the Central Square site for the new, larger city library, because I believe it is the best site for our 21st century facility.

As a former member of the School Committee (1976-1984), I served during the years when our high school was being renovated and rebuilt, and two of my children attended there while the construction was going on. By coincidence, the high school is undergoing a reorganization now - as it was then (one made necessary by the merging our two high schools), a difficult time.

During that construction, a serious incident occurred, which heightened concern for student safety. With that very safety in mind, I spoke with the head of the high school security team, John Silva, just yesterday. I showed him the proposed plan and sketch (from Dennis Carlone Associates, hired by the City) of the expanded library, one which will treble the size of the present main library building.

Right away he had concerns about student egress from the buildings during fire drills (or any other reasons for building evacuation). He told me that the Cambridge Fire Department people he worked with would be concerned also, and that he was going to talk with the high school administration and his contact at the Fire Department.

I suggest that the Carlone proposal be reviewed with the Fire Department or the Building Department before the concept goes any further. Your vote without their input would be premature.

These and other concerns were raised by the School Committee as expressed in their letter to you of March 9, 1999, of which I enclose a copy.

While I am troubled about expanding the main library at Broadway for many other reasons, the question of student safety during construction and forever afterward, impelled me to write you so you may consider this.

Very truly yours,



Sara Mae Berman
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Consent Communication #4

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A communication was received from
Sara Mae Berman, transmitting
support for the Central Square site
for a new library.

In City Council October 23, 2000

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