



City of Cambridge

Comm #1

IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDERED:

That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to Consult the Community Development Dept and provide the City Council with a ~~text~~ report on the location^{ies} of Affordable housing in the city

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City of Cambridge

Consent Communication #1

IN CITY COUNCIL

March 6, 2000

COUNCILLOR DAVIS

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to consult the Community Development Department and provide the City Council with a report on the location sites of affordable housing in the City.

In City Council March 6, 2000.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

C A S C A P I N C

678 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE 10TH FLOOR CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS 02139
PHONE 617.492.5559 FAX 617.492.6928 TTY 617.234.2992

BY HAND

February 11, 2000

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: 8 Bigelow Street

Dear Cambridge City Councillors,

I am writing to update you on CASCAP's 8 Bigelow Street redevelopment project. This project will create ten (10) units of affordable housing in Cambridge and will be developed under CASCAP's Affordable Small Apartment Preservation (ASAP) Initiative which is sponsored and supported by the City of Cambridge. To-date under the ASAP Initiative we have forty-one (41) units of housing either completed or in process. The 8 Bigelow Street project will be our fourth ASAP project and will preserve the historic use of the site as affordable housing; for many years the building has been used a lodging house with 13 units. The units at 8 Bigelow Street will be affordable to individuals whose income is below \$33,450; we anticipate that the majority of individuals will have incomes below \$21,950.

As you may know, we have been engaged in a dialogue around the Bigelow Street project with neighbors and abutters. We have met with neighbors twice to listen to their concerns about this redevelopment as we have been preparing our application for zoning relief via the comprehensive permit process. I am enclosing copies of our correspondence with neighbors for your reference. We filed our application for a comprehensive permit on February 9th, and expect to present the project to the Planning Board on February 15th, and to the Board of Zoning Appeal on March 9th.

As you will see from the enclosed correspondence, we feel that neighborhood concerns have centered on the following issues: adding to the existing building; density; property management; and parking. We were pleased to receive this helpful input which proved to be quite valuable as we moved forward with completing the building design. We feel we have been able to address many project-specific issues that were raised in our discussion with neighbors.

- Adding to the existing building: While we had originally proposed an addition to the third floor of the building to ensure that we could fit ten self-contained studio and one-bedroom units in the building, we have since been able to incorporate ten units into the existing envelope of the building by reducing to size of most units and reducing the number of one-bedroom units from nine (9) to seven (7). Any construction outside of the existing building envelope will therefore not be necessary unless it is required for egress or to comply with applicable building codes.
- Density: We are also pleased that this project, while preserving the historic use of the site as affordable housing, will reduce the density of units at the site. Over the years, 8 Bigelow Street has contained six (6) self-contained apartment units and seven (7) SRO units for a total of thirteen (13) dwelling units. Our design for the building includes ten affordable units, one of which will be set-aside for an on-site resident manager. While we feel this reduction in density to ten (10) units is an important consideration, we understand that neighbors may view this issue differently and may focus on recent years when the building has been less than fully occupied.
- Property Management: The on-site resident manager will be of critical import in the management of the property after the development project is completed. We appreciate the stated concerns about the need for quality property management. As you know, CASCAP is committed to providing high quality housing at all of our sites and has a department charged with ensuring that buildings are maintained to our high standards. CASCAP's Property Management Department is also responsible for tenant selection, which includes criminal background (CORI) checks and landlord and personal reference checks—all of which have been requested by Bigelow Street neighbors.
- Parking: While the issue of parking is clearly an important concern for the Bigelow Street neighborhood, our experience has been that residents of CASCAP properties do not own cars. We feel the two spaces included in the design will be more than adequate for resident and visitor parking at Bigelow Street. The seven parking spaces included in our recently completed Harvard Place project on Harvard Street are utilized by one resident, the resident manager, and the service professionals who access the building to provide services to the twenty-one elderly residents. We have requested that the comprehensive permit for Bigelow Street restrict the use to affordable housing. We hope this restriction, coupled with the deed restriction and affordable housing covenants our lenders will require, will satisfy any lingering concerns about the long-term use of this property as affordable rental housing. Likewise, while we do not anticipate that parking will be a problem, we have committed ourselves to reassessing the situation with neighbors after one year of occupancy. If at that time, the parking is a problem, we will increase the number of on-site parking spaces.

As you know, over the past twenty years there has been a significant loss of affordable housing in the neighborhood surrounding Bigelow Street. Statistics show that in 1979 there were 206 SRO

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units in the Bigelow, Lee, Clinton, and Inman Street area; there now remain 31 units, 7 of which are at 8 Bigelow Street in addition to the 6 self-contained units at the site. This represents a loss of 85% of these affordable units over the past two decades. While it is difficult to recreate the affordable units that have been lost over the years, we are pleased that this project will preserve the affordability of the units at 8 Bigelow Street, and renovate the building in an historically accurate manner to ensure that the units will be of the highest quality.

Thank you for your commitment to creating and preserving affordable housing in Cambridge and for your ongoing support of CASCAP's Bigelow Street project. We appreciate the particular attention the Council has paid to this project as we were negotiating to acquire the building to preserve its use as affordable housing. We look forward to completing this project in partnership with the City and neighbors in order to guarantee the long-term affordability of the ten units of housing at 8 Bigelow Street.

Sincerely,



Michael Haran
Executive Director

Enclosures.

cc: The Honorable Jarret Barrios, Massachusetts House of Representatives (w/ encl.)
Christopher Cotter, Interim Director of Property Development, SHARE
Associates/CASCAP, Inc. (w/o encl.)
Marcia Hannon, Consultant, SHARE Associates/CASCAP, Inc. (w/o encl.)
Robert Healy, City Manager, Cambridge (w/ encl.)
Scott Levitan, 11 Bigelow Street (w/o encl.)
Charlie Myer, 12 Bigelow Street (w/o encl.)
Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager, Cambridge (w/ encl.)
Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development, Cambridge
(w/ encl.)
Scott Slater, 10 Bigelow Street (w/o encl.)
Elizabeth Sternberg, Housing Project Planner, Cambridge (w/ encl.)

EXHIBIT No. 2

List of Requested Exceptions to the Ordinances In Effect in the City of Cambridge For the Proposed Project at 8 Bigelow Street

CASCAP Realty, Inc. is in the process of assembling city, state and federal financing to develop and manage ten (10) affordable apartments for low income individuals at 8 Bigelow Street. The site is currently occupied by a two and one-half story residential building, which contains six (6) apartments and seven (7) lodging units. The new use will involve the rehabilitation of the existing multi-family dwelling to provide ten (10) apartments. The site is located in a C-1 use zone, and multi-family dwellings are a permitted use in that zone. In addition to affordable rental housing, CASCAP Realty will provide a driveway, two (2) parking spaces and a rack for five (5) bicycles. CASCAP Realty will substantially upgrade the (presently near) vacant and dilapidated building and will also make landscaping improvements. However, the proposed rehabilitation will not increase the exterior dimensions of the building or the floor area ratio within the building.

Zoning Exceptions Required

Based upon the plans submitted with this application and upon the Zoning Ordinance as amended through Ordinance No. 1227, the proposed project requires the following exceptions:

1. As indicated above, while no interior or exterior dimension of the building shall be increased, the building remains a nonconforming building under the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. Further, while the number of units in the building shall be decreased, since the present configuration of the building includes seven lodging units and six apartments, Section 5.26 of the Zoning Ordinance may be interpreted to mean that the proposed use of the building for ten apartments is an increase in the number of dwelling units in the building if only the existing six apartments in the building are counted as dwelling units under the Zoning Ordinance. In the event that Section 5.26 of the Zoning Ordinance is interpreted to mean that the proposed Project results in an increase in the number of dwelling units from six to ten apartments (and that the existing seven lodging units are not to be used in computing the present number of dwelling units in the building), then, in spite of the fact that the dimensions of the building are not being increased as a result of the proposed rehabilitation, Section 5.26 of the Zoning Ordinance requires that all dwelling units in the proposed Project satisfy the minimum lot area per dwelling unit, maximum floor area ratio, usable open space and off-street parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. If this is the correct interpretation of Section 5.26, then since the proposed Project shall not satisfy the requirements of minimum lot area and off-street parking required by the Zoning Ordinance, an exception from the provisions of this section is required.

2. Section 6.12 (b) of the Zoning Ordinance states that when the intensity of the use of any structure is increased through the addition of dwelling units, off-street parking shall be provided as required for such increase in intensity of use. As indicated above, although the present use of the building consists of six apartments and seven lodging units, for purposes of the

Zoning Ordinance only the six apartments are recognized as part of the present use in the building. Since the proposed use of the building as multi-family housing containing ten apartment units results in an increase in the number of dwelling units from six to ten, Section 6.12(b) requires that the additional four new units meet the off-street parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. As indicated above, the proposed Project shall include two off-street parking places. To the extent that this number of off-street parking spaces does not meet the requirements of Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance, an exception from these requirements is requested.

3. Section 6.44.1 regulates that location and layout of off-street parking spaces. Subsection (a) prohibits off-street parking within ten feet of a wall containing windows in a residential structure. Subsection (b) prohibits parking within five feet of any side lot line. Since the proposed two off-street parking spaces as shown on the plan that accompanies this application do not satisfy these requirements of Section 6.44.1, an exception from these provisions is required. (Section 6.44.1 (g) authorizes the Board of Appeals by special permit to allow for modification of the above factors in the discretion of the Board.) (Section 6.35 of the Zoning Ordinance also authorizes the Board of Appeal by special permit to reduce the number of off-street parking spaces if the Board determines and cites evidence in its decision that a lesser number of parking will not cause excessive congestion in light of the additional considerations in Section 6.35.1-6.35.5.)

4. Section 6.42 regulates dimensions of parking spaces. Section 6.44 regulates the layout and setback requirements for off-street parking spaces. Section 6.47 requires screening of parking spaces. Section 6.48 requires landscaping to be installed around off-street parking spaces. Section 6.52 requires the submission of a parking plan. Section 6.55 requires a statement of certain information regarding the proposed land use as well as additional information to assist in determining the appropriate number of required off-street parking spaces. The plans for the Project contain relevant information which describes the location, layout and landscaping with regard to the proposed two off-street parking spaces. To the extent that the requirements of these sections of the ordinance are not met, exceptions are requested.

5. Section 8.22.2(c) regulates the alteration or enlargement of a pre-existing, non-conforming structure. As described above, the project involves the rehabilitation of the pre-existing, non-conforming multi-family dwelling on the site. Section 8.22.2(c) authorizes the Board of Zoning Appeal to grant a special permit for the alteration of the pre-existing, non-conforming structure, provided that the alteration is not further in violation of the dimensional requirements of Article 5 or the off-street loading and parking requirements of Article 6, and provided further that the non-conforming structure will not be increased in area or volume by more than twenty-five percent (25%). Since the alteration will require exceptions from the dimensional requirements of Article 5 and the off-street parking requirements of Article 6, an exception from Section 8.22.2 of the Zoning Ordinance is required.

6. To the extent that the Zoning Ordinance has either been amended or proposals to amend the Ordinance have been advertised for hearing but not yet adopted or acted upon, all subsequent to the adoption of Ordinance No. 1227, in the event that any such amendments or

proposed amendments contain provisions which would require the project to meet requirements not presently satisfied by the project, exceptions from any such provision(s) are requested.

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C A S C A P
I N C

678 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE 10TH FLOOR CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS 02139
PHONE 617.492.5559 FAX 617.492.6928 TTY 617.234.2992

By Hand

February 15, 2000

City of Cambridge
Clerk's Office
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Sir/Madam:

Enclosed is a letter to the members of the Cambridge City Council. We would appreciate your registering this as official correspondence to the Council.

Please call me at 492-5559 with any questions. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Michael Haran
Executive Director

Enc.

STAMPED: FEB 16 2000
LOG - 1007

Consent Communication #1

A communication was received from Michael Haran, Executive Director, CASCAP, transmitting an update on CASCAP's 8 Bigelow Street redevelopment project.

S-39

In City Council March 6, 2000

PLACED ON FILE

Report from CDD on Location
of Affordable Housing in the City.

3/7/00

Sent to CDD