

September 26, 1983

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Mr. Paul Healy, Clerk SEP 28 3 30 PM '83
Cambridge City Council
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Honorable Councillors:

The Cambridge Electric Light Company (CELCO) has proposed constructing a substation at Putnam and Western Avenues and laying underground cable beneath Memorial Drive to connect its distribution system to the proposed substation. As President of the Cambridge Civic Association, a non-partisan citizens' organization representing over 1,500 Cambridge residents, I strongly oppose this proposal.

First, the site of the substation is presently occupied by over fifteen units of rental housing for moderate-income tenants. CELCO proposes to demolish this housing without providing any replacement housing. There are tremendous pressures on Cambridge's limited supply of housing, particularly for modestly-priced rental housing. The city attracts a broad spectrum of people -- new immigrants, professionals, academics, young working people whose families have lived in the city for many years, and students. Furthermore, Cambridge is perhaps the most densely populated city in the Commonwealth, so that there are few opportunities to build new housing. Therefore, the loss of even fifteen housing units is more than our residents can afford.

Second, CELCO's proposal to lay cable under Memorial Drive would seriously endanger the trees which line the Drive. Cambridge's density means that open space and recreational areas are extremely valuable. The grassy area between Memorial Drive and the Charles River, shaded by the bordering trees, is the largest single piece of open space available to our citizens. Endangering the trees which form an integral part of this space is a risk we should not take.

I therefore urge you to reject CELCO's proposal as it now stands.

Sincerely,


Frederick R. Levy

President, Cambridge Civic Association
649 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Comm. from Frederick R. Levy, Pres., Cambridge Civic Association in opposition ~~to~~ the construction of a substation at Putnam Ave. & Western Ave., as proposed by the Cambridge Electric Light Co.

In City Council,

October 3, 1983

10/3/83
- Placed
on
File