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CAMBRIDGE MA.

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL:

A review of my letter of September 4, 1986, has found an error of editing which resulted in an error of substance.

Please delete "and the area from Washburn to Brookford" from the end of the third paragraph. The paragraph refers to areas where retail zoning is substituted for residential. This phrase, however, originally appeared in a draft where I also spelled out the areas being upzoned from BA to BA-2. I dropped those details from my analysis, but I, unfortunately, stuck this particular phrase onto the Residence to Retail analysis.

Sincerely,



Robert J. La Tremouille

Comm. from Robert J. LaTremouille, Esq., transmitting a correction to his letter dated September 4th; which letter was transmitted to the Council as a comm. on September 8th; the content of which was in opposition to the petition of Charles R. Lavery, Jr. & the North Mass. Ave. Advisory Committee to establish a new Mass. Ave. Overlay District.

In City Council,

September 4, 1986

*Referred to the Petition*

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OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

1986 SEP -4 AM  
CAMBRIDGE MA  
348 Franklin Street  
Cambridge, MA. 02139-3731  
Telephone 491-7181  
September 4, 1986

City Council  
City of Cambridge

Presently pending before the City Council is a major upzoning of Massachusetts Avenue from Waterhouse Street almost to the Arlington line. This proposal is the latest in a series of 15 upzoning proposals or recommendations on or near Massachusetts Avenue which have had Development department influence since approximately 1980. All but one, the recent Harvard Square upzoning, have died. Please record me in opposition to the latest proposal.

The proposal fits basic Development Department goals: convert Cambridge from a city of squares to a city with one big retail street: Massachusetts Avenue, on which buildings would be constructed as near as politically possible to the sidewalk, as near as politically possible to each other, and with the maximum building floor space which is politically possible.

This latest upzoning would legalize retail starting on the Little Common at Waterhouse Street and running almost to Shepard/Wendell Streets. In North Cambridge most of the area from Cogswell Avenue to Hollis Street would be converted from residential to retail, and the area from Washburn to Brookford.

Blocks and blocks of the areas proposed to be converted from residential to retail lack retail. This has not impacted Development Department influenced proposals in the past. The reality of the present situation does not impact this proposal.

Most people would consider placing retail in residential districts unusual. North Cambridge residents have been very distressed at the obvious traffic impacts of major retail expansion. That aspect of reality does not impact the development department. The staff has been fighting for years for these major changes. They know, as with the Harvard Square vote, that one bad vote can eradicate years of responsible voting.

Most flagrant in the proposal is a new zoning district: Business A-2. This will upzone areas presently zoned Res. C-2 and Bus. A. The development department's claims that the proposal increases residential are blatantly false when one merely looks at the impact of this new district.

The district replaces large areas presently zoned Res. C-2.

The district replaces areas zoned Bus. A which constitute perhaps half the area affected by this proposal. In these areas the proposal will increase building size by as much as 75%.

Present zoning has a strong residential bias. For every square foot of lot space a developer has a choice. He can build one square feet of commercial or 1.75 square feet of residential. The upzoning changes the tradeoff to a 1.75 to 1.75 tradeoff. Retail is worth a lot more than residential, so, of course, a lot more retail will be built. The enclosed chart shows possible development at all ranges of possible mix between residential and retail. The upzoning impact is clear.

10,000 SQUARE FOOT LOT  
COMPARISON, BUSINESS A TO BUSINESS A-2  
BASED ON 1,000 SQUARE FOOT INCREMENTS

Business A				Business A-2				Difference		
Retail	Residential	Total Square Feet	Total F.A.R.	Retail	Residential	Total Square Feet	Total F.A.R.	Total Square Feet	Total F.A.R.	Per Cent Increase
0	17,500	17,500	1.75	0	17,500	17,500	1.75	0	0	0
1,000	15,750	16,750	1.68	1,000	16,500	17,500	1.75	750	.07	4.48
2,000	14,000	16,000	1.60	2,000	15,500	17,500	1.75	1,500	.15	9.37
3,000	12,250	15,250	1.52	3,000	14,500	17,500	1.75	2,250	.22	14.75
4,000	10,500	14,500	1.45	4,000	13,500	17,500	1.75	3,000	.30	20.69
5,000	8,750	13,750	1.38	5,000	12,500	17,500	1.75	3,750	.37	27.27
6,000	7,000	13,000	1.30	6,000	11,500	17,500	1.75	4,500	.46	34.62
7,000	5,250	12,250	1.22	7,000	10,500	17,500	1.75	5,250	.53	42.86
8,000	3,500	11,500	1.15	8,000	9,500	17,500	1.75	6,000	.60	52.17
9,000	1,750	10,750	1.08	9,000	8,500	17,500	1.75	6,750	.67	62.79
10,000	0	10,000	1.00	10,000	7,500	17,500	1.75	7,500	.75	75.00
9,429	1,000	10,429	1.04	10,000	7,500	17,500	1.75	8,071	.71	67.80
8,857	2,000	10,857	1.09	10,000	7,500	17,500	1.75	6,643	.66	61.18
8,286	3,000	11,285	1.13	10,000	7,500	17,500	1.75	6,214	.62	55.06
7,714	4,000	11,714	1.17	10,000	7,500	17,500	1.75	5,785	.58	49.39
7,142	5,000	12,143	1.21	10,000	7,500	17,500	1.75	5,357	.54	44.12
6,571	6,000	12,571	1.26	10,000	7,500	17,500	1.75	4,929	.49	39.21
6,000	7,000	13,000	1.30	10,000	7,500	17,500	1.75	4,500	.45	34.62
5,429	8,000	13,429	1.34	9,500	8,000	17,500	1.75	4,071	.41	30.31
4,857	9,000	13,857	1.39	8,500	9,000	17,500	1.75	3,642	.36	26.28
4,286	10,000	14,286	1.43	7,500	10,000	17,500	1.75	3,214	.32	22.50
3,714	11,000	14,714	1.47	6,500	11,000	17,500	1.75	2,786	.28	18.93
3,143	12,000	15,143	1.51	5,500	12,000	17,500	1.75	2,357	.24	15.56
2,571	13,000	15,571	1.56	4,500	13,000	17,500	1.75	1,928	.19	12.38
2,000	14,000	16,000	1.60	3,500	14,000	17,500	1.75	1,500	.15	9.38
1,429	15,000	16,429	1.64	2,500	15,000	17,500	1.75	1,071	.11	6.52
857	16,000	16,857	1.69	1,500	16,000	17,500	1.75	643	.06	3.81
286	17,000	17,286	1.73	500	17,000	17,500	1.75	214	.02	1.24
0	17,500	17,500	1.75	0	17,500	17,500	1.75	0	.00	0

NOTE: Lot size chosen for ease of calculation and to provide some base of comparison. The BA district has yard requirements which increase with building size. These make extremely large buildings impossible on small lots. The BA-2 proposes to do away with this protection.

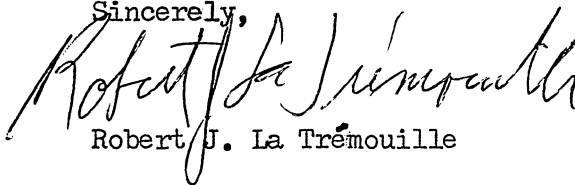
The upzoning of the little common and the blocks immediately north of them is buried in the fine print of the Overlay District. Items buried in fine print in Development Department proposals are normally the most important items.

Also accomplished is (1) an increase in the size of the development proposed between Washburn and Gold Star, (2) a change in the zoning of a portion off the former Holiday Inn which increases allowed floor space on that portion by from 42% to 150% while continuing to allow retail because of the fine print buried in the overlay district, and (3) the legalization of a hotel in the parking lot of the Porter Square Shopping Center.

There have been major objections to the harmful effects of existing retail zoning on this neighborhood. The development department chose certain of these people to negotiate with. It put them on a committee selected 100% percent by people, them, biased in favor of developers, and consisting 50% of developers. The people the development department selected to discuss zoning with were put into a room or rooms in which they had no friends, no experts who could explain these upzonings from the point of view of someone who loves Cambridge. It is no surprise that a major upzoning resulted.

Fortunately the vote is the total responsibility of the City Council. Zoning and development is one area in which the city council has complete control. All the city council has to do is to implement the stated positions of its members.

Sincerely,



Robert J. La Trémouille

Comm. from Robert J. LaTremouille, Esq., in  
opposition to the petition of Charles R.  
Lavery, Jr. & the North Mass. Ave. Advisory  
Committee to establish new zoning districts  
on North Mass. Ave. & a North Mass. Ave.  
Overlay District.

In City Council,

September 8, 1986

*Referred to the  
Petition*