

PLANNING BOARD
FOR THE
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

GENERAL HEARING
TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2023
6:30 p.m.

Remote Meeting
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Mary T. Flynn, Chair
Catherine Preston Connolly, Vice Chair

Louis J. Bacci, Jr.

Steven A. Cohen

H Theodore Cohen

Hugh Russell

Ashley Tan

Community Development Staff
Daniel Messplay
Swaathi Joseph
Erik Thorkildsen
Khalil Mogassabi
Drew Kane



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(6:30 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly,
Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Steven A. Cohen, H
Theodore Cohen, Hugh Russell, and Ashley
Tan

MARY FLYNN: Welcome, everyone to the June 20,
2023 meeting of the Cambridge Planning Board. My name is
Mary Flynn, and I am the Chair.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted
by the Massachusetts General Court and approved by the
Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation
at meetings of the Cambridge Planning Board.

All Board members, applicants, and members of the
public will state their name before speaking. All votes
will be taken by roll call.

Members of the public will be kept on mute until
it is time for public comment. I will give instructions for
public comment at that time, and you can also find
instructions on the City's webpage for remote Planning Board
meetings.

1 This meeting is being video and audio recorded and
2 is being streamed live on the City of Cambridge online
3 meeting portal and on cable television Channel 22, within
4 Cambridge. There will also be a transcript of the
5 proceedings.

6 I'll start by asking Staff to take Board member
7 attendance and verify that all members are audible.

8 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Lou Bacci, are you present, and
9 is the meeting visible and audible to you?

10 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Present, visible, and
11 audible.

12 DANIEL MESSPLAY: H Theodore Cohen, are you
13 present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

14 H THEODORE COHEN: Present, visible, and audible.

15 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Steven Cohen, are you present,
16 and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

17 [Pause]

18 Absent.

19 Tom Sieniewicz, are you present, and is the
20 meeting visible and audible to you?

21 [Pause]

22 Absent.

1 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell, are you present,
2 and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

3 HUGH RUSSELL: Present, visible, audible.

4 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Hugh.

5 I do see Steve has joined, so I'll just quickly
6 jump back to Steve. Steven Cohen, are you present, and is
7 the meeting visible and audible to you?

8 [Pause]

9 We'll try Steve again momentarily.

10 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan, are you present, and
11 is the meeting visible and audible to you?

12 ASHLEY TAN: Present, visible, and audible.

13 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly, are
14 you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

15 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Present, visible, and
16 audible.

17 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Mary Flynn, are you present, and
18 is the meeting visible and audible to you?

19 MARY FLYNN: Present, and it's visible, and
20 audible.

21 DANIEL MESSPLAY: And we'll try Steven Cohen one
22 more time. Are you present, and is the meeting visible and

1 audible to you?

2 [Pause]

3 Absent.

4 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Looks like Steve might be having
5 some challenges with his audio at the moment.

6 MARY FLYNN: Okay.

7 DANIEL MESSPLAY: So we'll mark him present, but
8 we all maybe check back in shortly. So that's seven members
9 present with one member absent, which constitutes a quorum.

10 MARY FLYNN: Okay, great. Excellent. Thank you,
11 Dan.

12 * * * * *

13 (6:34 p.m.)

14 Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly,
15 Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Steven A. Cohen, H
16 Theodore Cohen, Hugh Russell, and Ashley
17 Tan

18 MARY FLYNN: So the first item tonight is an
19 Update from the Community Development Department. So I'm
20 going to turn it back over to Daniel.

21 And Daniel, please introduce the Staff present who
22 are with you at the meeting.

1 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. My name
2 is Daniel Messplay and I'm the Acting Director in Zoning and
3 Development.

4 And with me here tonight from the Zoning and
5 Development Team we have Swaathi Joseph. Also, from the
6 Community Development Department we have Erik Thorkildsen,
7 CDD Urban Designer; and Khalil Mogassabi, our Deputy
8 Director, and Chief Planner.

9 I believe we will also be joined by Melissa
10 Peters, our Director of Community Planning; and Drew Kane,
11 who is a Land Use Planner in Community Planning as well.

12 The first announcement is related to the first
13 item on tonight's agenda, the Ferguson et al. Zoning
14 Petition, which we have received word that the petitioner
15 has withdrawn that petition as of today.

16 So after this Update and a little bit of
17 housekeeping, depending on the time left, the Planning Board
18 may have to recess prior to the Alewife Petition starting,
19 because that item was publicly noticed to begin at 7:00 p.m.

20 So just to reiterate, if there are any members of
21 the public that are in attendance tonight to speak on the
22 Ferguson et al. Zoning Petition, which we've also referred

1 to as The Sloped Roofs Zoning Petition, that petition has
2 been formally withdrawn, so will not be discussed tonight.
3 And after the CDD Update, we'll likely need to go into a
4 short recess until 7:00 p.m. before the Alewife hearing can
5 begin.

6 So that's the business for tonight. Next week,
7 we'll have our Annual Utility Report. That takes us
8 straight into July, and the first Tuesday of the month is
9 the July 4 holiday, so just a reminder we won't have a
10 meeting that first week in July.

11 We are also looking at a possible cancellation of
12 the July 11 meeting, just due to some quorum challenges that
13 we have, in which case the items that are currently
14 scheduled for July 11 may need to be pushed out to July 18.
15 But we'll obviously keep the Board and the public up to
16 speed once that's definitive.

17 There are no City Council updates this evening
18 because the City Council did not meet yesterday.

19 There are some upcoming Ordinance Committee
20 hearing dates which may be of interest.

21 So the Cannabis Special Permit Amendments are
22 scheduled for June 27 at 12:30. The Planning Board voted to

1 forward a positive recommendation on that zoning at last
2 week's meeting.

3 And then depending -- well, the Ferguson Petition,
4 which was originally scheduled for June 28 at three will be
5 canceled because that petition has been withdrawn now.

6 And the Ordinance Committee will hold its hearing
7 on the Alewife Zoning. So that's the petition that will be
8 discussed this evening on Wednesday, July 19 at 5:30 p.m.

9 That concludes the Update. But before I send it
10 back to the Chair, I'm just going to try Steve one more time
11 for attendance.

12 So Steven Cohen, are you present, and is the
13 meeting visible and audible to you?

14 STEVEN A. COHEN: Present, visible, and audible.

15 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Great. Thank you, Steve. All
16 right. So I will turn it back to you, Chair Flynn. Thank
17 you.

18 MARY FLYNN: Thank you. So as Daniel noted, the
19 next hearing on the agenda is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. So --
20 well, I see Ted had his hand up. Ted? You had a question?

21 H THEODORE COHEN: Well, yes. I have a question,
22 I guess, for Daniel or --

1 MARY FLYNN: Okay.

2 H THEODORE COHEN: -- Staff. So since the
3 Ferguson Petition has been withdrawn, Staff did make some
4 comments about how it raises some interesting questions, and
5 that perhaps the Zoning Ordinance ought to be amended to
6 address some of those issues.

7 And I wonder if it would be appropriate for us to
8 ask Staff to further look into that question, and maybe
9 suggest what they think would be appropriate amendments to
10 the Zoning Ordinance to address that issue.

11 I mean, it's always been an area I've never quite
12 understood how it got determined, and I assume there
13 probably are a lot of people who don't understand it.

14 And if it can be put into simpler language and
15 could promote greater light and air for owners and
16 surrounding abutters, maybe it's something that we ought to
17 be doing.

18 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Yeah. I think that's a very
19 good point.

20 Hugh, did you want to comment?

21 HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah. I guess a question or
22 comment, sort of an amendment to Ted's suggestion, which is

1 how long would it take to actually accomplish a thorough
2 review of the setbacks? It strikes me that it might be --
3 that's a question I'd like to have the Staff answer --

4 MARY FLYNN: Yeah.

5 H THEODORE COHEN: -- respond to, because I think
6 it might take a lot of effort.

7 I'd also comment that it's -- the variable -- the
8 formula setback date back a long way, I think to the 1960s.

9 MARY FLYNN: Yeah.

10 H THEODORE COHEN: And that was a time when, you
11 know, it's sort of like the way public housing projects were
12 designed in the '50s. Like, it was really important to get
13 light in there.

14 So this was a formula that helped to do that,
15 except in our city, which has been, you know, 80 percent
16 developed for residential uses in 1960 it -- you know, and
17 in huge areas of the city the houses are not conforming.

18 It's just sort of an odd thing, because we
19 couldn't do anything much about it. And in some ways, it
20 wasn't particularly fair to a new guy to have to follow much
21 more stringent rules.

22 Anyway, it's a -- I would favor myself numerical

1 setbacks, because they're easier to understand.

2 I thought the Ferguson Petition had a very nice
3 feature, because it basically said, if you've got a pitched
4 roof that's parallel to the property line, its impact on
5 adjacent structure that's, you know, one story less,
6 depending on exactly which dimension it is and what time of
7 year it is, and all that.

8 I suspect it would take a lot of work to redo the
9 system. And there may be more urgent things on the agenda.

10 MARY FLYNN: All right. Daniel, do you want to
11 respond now, or do you need a little time to sort of ponder
12 how the brunt, you know, how much time this would take, how
13 broad an impact it would have on the Ordinance in general?

14 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Sure. Thank you, Mary. And
15 it's a good -- I'll call it a single question, because I
16 think Ted and Hugh's questions are sort of threaded together
17 in a lot of --

18 HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

19 DANIEL MESSPLAY: -- ways. And I think
20 tangentially related, but also strongly related in a strange
21 way is, you know, the conversation around setbacks and how
22 we calculus setbacks in the City I think is tied directly to

1 some of the broader conversations that we've been having
2 around encouraging multifamily housing citywide and removing
3 barriers to housing production.

4 And I think that these two efforts really go hand
5 in hand in a lot of ways.

6 I do think having some basic analysis and study of
7 sort of what existing conditions are like across many
8 different neighborhoods in the city will be important to
9 figuring out then where are we starting from when we begin
10 to reconsider how setbacks would be calculated if we
11 transition from a formula-based setback to an absolute
12 number.

13 And I do think that that can take some time.
14 We've got some real wizards in our GIS team that can do a
15 lot of pretty amazing number crunching and analysis based on
16 parcel data and existing building footprints.

17 But I think we'll want to move strategically and
18 methodically through that data to be able to really tell the
19 story.

20 So the short answer is, you know, I think I can
21 hear loud and clear from the Board that this is something
22 that is of interest to the Board, and it merits additional

1 study from Staff.

2 And maybe at a future meeting when our agendas
3 lighten up a little bit, we could maybe pencil in a work
4 session or a discussion to talk kind of where we left
5 multifamily housing last, and how this might fit in, and
6 then where we think we might want to go.

7 So if that sounds like a plan to the Board, you
8 know, we're certainly happy to kind of proceed along that
9 course.

10 MARY FLYNN: Okay, I'm seeing a thumbs up from
11 Hugh and Lou, Ted, yeah. Okay. It does seem as though the
12 Board is comfortable with that sign for continuing the
13 discussion down the road. I agree with my colleagues, I
14 think simple numbers are a lot easier for everybody, but you
15 don't understand the impressions of those until you've done
16 the analysis.

17 All right. Any other questions or comments? I
18 didn't mean to cut people off before, it's just so rare that
19 we have questions, that we've got to make sure.

20 Okay. So it is now 6:45, and the next hearing is
21 scheduled for 7:00. So we will go into recess for the next
22 several minutes, and we will reconvene at 7:00. Thank you,

1 everyone.

2 [RECESS]

3 * * * * *

4 (7:00 p.m.)

5 Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly,
6 Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Steven A. Cohen, H
7 Theodore Cohen, Hugh Russell, and Ashley
8 Tan

9 MARY FLYNN: All right. Well, welcome back,
10 everyone. The next item on this evening's agenda is a
11 public hearing on the zoning petition by the City Council to
12 amend Article 20 and 21 of the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate
13 the Alewife Overlay Districts 1,2,3 and 4 and establish a
14 new Overlay District called The Alewife Overlay District
15 Quadrangle, among other changes.

16 First, CDD Staff will begin by summarizing why
17 this is before us. And then they will present the petition.
18 Then we will take public comment. And then the Board will
19 discuss the petition and decide whether or not to transmit a
20 recommendation to the City Council.

21 So Daniel is going to begin by summarizing, and
22 then also by beginning the presentation.

1 So Daniel?

2 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. So just
3 a little bit on the origination of this petition, and then
4 I'll go ahead and share my screen and we'll get right into
5 it.

6 So this is a new zoning petition by the City
7 Council. Beginning last year, the City Council adopted a
8 development moratorium in the Quadrangle until December
9 2023, or until new zoning was adopted for the area.

10 So the City following that action established a
11 Working Group of residents and business owners, developers
12 and other stakeholders who then met regularly since the
13 summer of last year to develop recommended zoning for the
14 area.

15 And tonight, I along with Melissa Peters, our
16 Director of Community Planning, will walk the Board through
17 the specific zoning recommendations of that group.

18 So now I'm going to go ahead and just share my
19 screen. Is that coming up for everybody? Good. I got to
20 see some thumbs up. Great. Okay.

21 So just maybe a quick agenda for this evening's
22 meeting. So I'm going to first pass the mic to Melissa

1 Peters to give a recap on the Planning background and
2 Working Group process that led us to this point.

3 And then I'll go through the zoning sort of cover
4 to cover and discuss the details of the individual
5 provisions that have been laid out. And then we'll take
6 public comment as Chair Flynn indicated, Board questions and
7 discussion, and then document the Board's recommendation.

8 So with that, we will jump right in and Melissa,
9 if you're able, you could take it from here. I'll move the
10 slides for you.

11 MELISSA PETERS: Great. Thank you. Thanks,
12 Planning Board for having us here tonight. We're excited to
13 intro this zoning petition. I was here a few weeks ago kind
14 of presenting the Working Group process and the public
15 process that preceded that. So this will be a refresher.

16 But I think it's really important to kind of
17 underscore the foundation and meeting process that kind of
18 is what these recommendations are built on.

19 So as Daniel mentioned, this Working Group process
20 came out a moratorium imposed by City Council to establish a
21 group to come up with zoning before the moratorium expires
22 at the end of this year.

1 And prior to that, we had spent three years that
2 culminated in 2019 with the Alewife District Plan, which
3 encompassed a lot of community process about how this area
4 should be redeveloped.

5 After the Alewife District Plan, as you all know
6 there was the Cabot, Cabot & Forbes Petition. That failed
7 on a Council vote.

8 And really, the shortcomings in that petition were
9 the Council felt that there were no guarantees in the
10 community benefits that could be delivered. And it only
11 included AOD District 1.

12 And so, we were kind of charged along with the
13 Working Group to build off of the work of the Alewife
14 District Plan --

15 You can go to the next slide, Daniel.

16 -- and incorporate lessons learned from what we
17 learned through that zoning petition, refine the Alewife
18 District Plan based on the changes that have happened to
19 date and also through Development review, and also make sure
20 that it's districtwide and there's a mechanism really to
21 avoid what people were seeing as, like, parcel by parcel
22 development.

1 So how can we have a districtwide approach to
2 Zoning that helps us to achieve our -- the goals?

3 Next slide?

4 So we convened a really broad stakeholder group of
5 residents, business representatives, property owners and
6 institutional representatives. Just kind of convene, meet
7 approximately monthly for eight months.

8 And if I were to describe this group, I'd say, you
9 know, really it was about compromise and really bringing
10 together some strong opposing opinions about how the area
11 should be developed and really building consensus.

12 And so, we're really excited about the
13 recommendations we have to present tonight.

14 Quick recap on the schedule: We started last
15 June. Worked pretty frequently monthly through December of
16 this past year as we were meeting with the Working Group
17 doing Planning and Urban Design analysis to come up with the
18 draft recommendations, and then spent earlier this year
19 really with the Zoning and Development team writing the
20 zoning language that we presented her tonight.

21 And so, to kind of summarize the Planning
22 objectives and really what we aim to achieve, obviously

1 Daniel will go into the details of the Zoning of how we
2 think this will play out. But it really was to create a
3 mixed-use district.

4 So we talked a lot about, you know, that this
5 should be a 50/50 use mix balancing economic growth with
6 housing development, but really recognizing how important it
7 is to increase our housing supply, including affordable
8 housing, and that if we were to give developers additional
9 commercial density, it needs to be in exchange for
10 production of housing, neighborhood uses, open space,
11 infrastructure.

12 We've talked a lot about the importance of the
13 bike/ped bridge connection, Terminal Road, the Commuter
14 Rail. So how can we ensure that community benefits are
15 generated through this development?

16 We talked a lot about a variety of ground floor
17 uses. If you may recall, in the 2019 Alewife District Plan,
18 there was a huge emphasis on Light Industrial District.
19 That still is retained in this, although not at the
20 exclusion of other ground floor uses. So really the mix of
21 active street life and ground floor spaces is really
22 emphasized by this Working Group.

1 Again, how can we ensure that infrastructure is
2 delivered. And so, we tie that to City bonuses. And Daniel
3 will talk about the FAR settings. But we really lowered the
4 commercial FAR, and they get back to what they were at
5 previously, in exchange delivering on infrastructure,
6 providing housing, we increased open space.

7 So really use this zoning as a mechanism to
8 deliver the community vision that we desire. Again, Open
9 Space Requirements were increased. When we talked about the
10 general development patterns, the tallest commercial heights
11 were near the railroad track at the back of the Quad, and
12 real importance of scaling down to existing neighborhoods.

13 So particularly the Cambridge Highlands
14 residential neighborhood, making sure that there's the
15 existing green and height buffer remains, and that, you
16 know, we'll talk a lot about a DPW density bonus. There was
17 a preference for lower-scale uses like DPW to higher heights
18 in residential and commercial uses.

19 So kind of to give a visual picture of that
20 vision, we really can see this as a mixed-use district with
21 new streets and bike connections. Kind of had that active
22 street life.

1 We -- you'll see here on the west, that there's
2 that -- the green and height buffer next to Cambridge
3 Highlands. There's actually a proposal there from
4 Healthpeak to DPW in exchange for additional benefits.

5 New streets -- again, talking about all the
6 critical transportation infrastructure priorities that the
7 Working Group discussed.

8 And then as we translated that about how -- what
9 is likely -- how likely it is for this to be redeveloped and
10 by what type of use, based on the zoning, we did a build-up
11 projection to 2040.

12 And we think by 2040 maybe about 3,000 new housing
13 units: that's about 600 inclusionary zoning units. And that
14 would equal about 6,000 residents. And there would be also
15 just shy of 5,000 new jobs.

16 And it's important to note that, you know, we
17 really -- the Working Group really wanted this to be a
18 mixed-use district. So where we're starting at today, what
19 we would have done with existing zoning if the zoning wasn't
20 changed, what that mixed-use would be, and you'll see about
21 41 percent residential, 39 percent commercial, compared to
22 really upping up the residential to get 51 percent

1 residential in this proposed zoning.

2 And I really think this is emphasized on this last
3 slide, where you'll see that, you know, we were really
4 keeping the commercial development the same. It's a slight
5 increase from current zoning, but a significant increase in
6 residential development.

7 And again, we're tying commercial density bonuses
8 to a delivery of residential, of open space, infrastructure
9 delivery, and active ground floor use.

10 So I'll turn it over to Daniel, and he can kind of
11 talk through the zoning of how we're able to draft the
12 zoning in such a way to deliver these public benefits.

13 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thanks, Melissa. So now we'll
14 go through the Zoning just section by section. I want to
15 start by maybe zooming out first before we zoom in. So
16 we'll spend a few slides talking about the overall structure
17 of the zoning before discussing individual Standards and
18 Requirements.

19 Just to reiterate, you know, the basis for the
20 zoning was to sort of use the Envision Alewife District Plan
21 as a launchpad. So that's sort of where we started from.

22 And then the discussion with the Working Group

1 became, you know, what do we want to take from Envision
2 Alewife? What is still relevant? What should perhaps
3 change or be updated to reflect the current status of the
4 district? Both from an economic and market perspective, but
5 also from an ownership perspective and a Planning
6 perspective.

7 That's a theme that I hope you'll see throughout
8 the zoning. And just as an example, the Working Group
9 supported adopting the Envision Alewife recommendation of a
10 height buffer from residential neighborhoods, as Melissa
11 indicated.

12 But then there's also new concepts, like the
13 concept of neighborhood uses, which we'll talk more about.

14 If we distill sort of what we've heard over the
15 past year from the Working Group, I think you could distill
16 it down to these four principles: Increase housing, promote
17 neighborhood uses so that Alewife Quad is a mixed-use
18 district, prioritize the early delivery of key
19 infrastructure, and maintain an appropriate transition from
20 the district to existing neighborhoods that the district
21 abuts.

22 For fellow Zoning nerds who like to know how this

1 is actually threaded into the existing Zoning Ordinance,
2 here's how it'll work: So the proposed zoning covers what
3 we call The Quadrangle which is Alewife Overlay Districts 1,
4 2, 3, and 4. This AOD-Q, which stands for Alewife Overlay
5 District Quadrangle, would replace AOD 1 through 4. So AOD
6 1 through 4 goes away.

7 AOD-5, which is the shopping center district, and
8 AOD-6, which is -- we commonly refer to that as The
9 Triangle, that's the area of Alewife north of the tracks --
10 will remain. AOD-Q becomes a new Overlay District section
11 in the Ordinance.

12 And then other parts of the Zoning Ordinance that
13 current reference AOD 1 through 6 collectively get updated
14 to reference AOD-Q and then AOD-5 and 6. So that's the
15 transfer of development rights, provisions, and the
16 Floodplain Overlay District.

17 Here's a chart that tries to visually explain a
18 bit of how Development Review will work. So Development
19 Review falls into sort of two categories -- the by right
20 development, which goes through Advisory Review or
21 Administrative Review, and then the type of development that
22 needs discretionary approval, meaning that that the Planning

1 Board would need to vote.

2 A traditional special permit is intended to cover
3 single-building development. We've carved out sort of a
4 suite of requirements that apply just to that type of
5 development, and the PUD process is intended to cover the
6 review of multiple buildings.

7 So there are sort of two types of PUD. There
8 could be a basic two- or three- building development on a
9 couple of parcels, which would go through the basic PUD
10 process.

11 We do know that there's also the Healthpeaks of
12 the world. So Healthpeak owns a significant amount of
13 property in the Quadrangle and may have plans for 10 or more
14 buildings.

15 A couple other things to note just from the
16 zoning: So all development that seeks a special permit from
17 the Planning Board must provide at least 40 percent of the
18 total floor area for housing development.

19 So for the single building special permits, there
20 is an in lieu of contribution that can be made, but for PUD
21 development there's no real "buyout option," quote, unquote.

22 The special permit process is not intended to be a

1 punishment. There's a lot that you get in return going
2 through a special permit. You get more flexibility, you get
3 taller heights, you get more density. And it also provides
4 the City the greatest opportunity for implementing the
5 specific land use plan vision that the Working Group has on
6 a site-by-site specific basis.

7 As we've said before, the idea is as you get more
8 density in height, that is also balanced by the delivery of
9 more significant public benefits and a more robust public
10 review process.

11 And just to beat a dead horse, to sort of recap
12 some of the information from the previous slides, but in a
13 different way. So new development generally falls into, you
14 know, smaller development that doesn't require discretionary
15 approval before it's built, and then larger development that
16 will be subject to Planning Board Review.

17 We wanted to make sure that all development is
18 contributing positively to the district. So there are
19 requirements that apply to all types of new development, and
20 we'll go over those requirements.

21 And for that larger development, the special
22 permit process provides that critical venue to implement the

1 planning goals from Envision Alewife and from the Alewife
2 Zoning Working Group on a site-by-site level, or for a
3 multiple building development, sort of at a schematic and
4 conceptual plan level, and then a more rigorous Design
5 Review for the individual buildings that are proposed.

6 So now that we've talked about the overall
7 structure, we'll get into individual standards. And always
8 like to start with Use Standards.

9 So as it is currently in the Alewife Overlay
10 District, the permitted uses will generally follow the
11 permitted uses of the base zoning, with some additional
12 permitted uses as-of-right in the district. So things like
13 residential uses, retail uses, and some institutional uses.

14 There are also uses that would be permitted only
15 by special permit from the Planning Board. Generally, other
16 uses that would be permitted in a Business B district could
17 be permitted upon written determination by the Planning
18 Board upon finding that such use is consistent with the
19 goals and objectives of the district and conforms to the
20 district Special Permit criteria.

21 Another use that would be permitted only by
22 special permit would be Principal Use Parking. Rather than

1 the having each new development provide parking that is
2 limited to just the users of that development, the Working
3 Group thought that a district-wide approach to parking that
4 serves multiple uses simultaneously could result in less
5 total spaces overall and help the city achieve it's mode
6 share targets.

7 Also, you know, having a stand-alone parking
8 garage might be easier to convert that to another use in the
9 future than trying to convert structured parking within the
10 footprint of an existing building.

11 There are specific design requirements in the
12 zoning that would need to be met for any sort of structured
13 parking, either screening that parking from visibility from
14 adjacent streets or wrapping it with other uses.

15 A key priority of the Working Group was to
16 incentivize uses that would make the Quadrangle become a
17 self-sufficient neighborhood.

18 And in our discussions with the Working Group,
19 these uses aren't just limited to retail and consumer
20 service uses; they could also include things like arts and
21 culture uses or maker spaces or health care uses or
22 coworking spaces. So we wanted to create a new category of

1 use that would be all of the things that the community
2 desire to see in a neighborhood.

3 In order to incentivize neighborhood uses, a
4 development can seek a special permit from the Planning
5 Board to exempt the floor area dedicated to that
6 neighborhood use.

7 In addition to that, a development includes
8 neighborhood uses can increase its allowable floor area by
9 the amount equal to the size of that neighborhood use.

10 In order to qualify, neighborhood uses need to
11 meet certain design requirements. So generally, they need
12 to be located at the ground story of the building and have
13 direct access to an abutting sidewalk or street.

14 The Working Group did note that some neighborhood
15 uses might be better suited on the upper floors of a
16 building, for instance something like a dentist office. So
17 the Planning Board in approving a neighborhood use can
18 approve modifications to those Design Standards on a case-
19 by-case basis.

20 For PUD developments, so a development that
21 contains multiple buildings, we included a minimum
22 requirement for the inclusion of neighborhood uses. So at

1 least three percent of the total non-residential floor area
2 must be devoted to neighborhood uses.

3 And, you know, three percent may not sound like a
4 significant amount, but remember that that three percent is
5 based on all of the floor area, not just the footprint of
6 the building; not just the ground story.

7 So across a larger PUD, it can end up being a lot
8 of floor area devoted to neighborhood uses.

9 A big focus of the Envision Alewife Plan which
10 Melissa mentioned included recommendations for the
11 preservation and inclusion of light industrial uses in the
12 district, due to the fact that they bring high wage, low
13 barrier entry jobs to the area.

14 There's also a little bit of a culture of Light
15 Industrial Uses in the Quadrangle that has sort of helped
16 solidify some of the Quadrangle's identity and character
17 over the years.

18 The Working Group supported creating a separate
19 incentive for light industrial uses above and beyond what
20 was created for neighborhood uses.

21 So in addition to the possible floor area
22 exemption, including light industrial uses in a development

1 make those uses eligible for a floor area bonus that's equal
2 to two times the size of the area dedicated to that light
3 industrial use.

4 The special permit would need to specify what
5 specific light industrial use is -- we have quite a few in
6 our Use Table -- would qualify. And then any future
7 modifications or changes of use for that particular area
8 would require an amendment to the special permit.

9 So now we'll go through some Dimensional
10 Standards, starting with height. I wanted to start with
11 height because height is possibly the most complicated
12 dimensional provision that we have in the Zoning. We've
13 addressed height sort of in two ways.

14 So first, there are different permitted heights
15 based on the scale of the project proposed. So a project
16 going straight to a building permit would be able to achieve
17 the lowest heights allowable. And a project going through
18 the infrastructure PUD process, in contrast, can achieve the
19 greatest heights.

20 The Working Group also wanted to establish height
21 subdistricts based on where in the Quadrangle the
22 development occurs. So taller heights the Working Group

1 felt would be more appropriate for the north. So we had
2 this Quadrangle North Subdistrict along the railroad tracks.

3 For the lower heights -- that would be the
4 Quadrangle West -- so the Quadrangle West regardless of the
5 size and scale of the development proposed has a lower
6 height than the Quadrangle North. And the Quadrangle South
7 is sort of our Goldilocks subdistrict. That's right in the
8 middle.

9 Here's a graphic that illustrates the allowable
10 non-residential heights, based on both the subdistrict
11 factor, which are the rows on the left side of this graphic,
12 and the scale of development, which are the columns across
13 the top.

14 So non-residential heights, depending on where you
15 are, range from two stories for base development up to eight
16 stories for infrastructure PUDs along the railroad tracks.

17 Here's the same graphic, but for residential
18 heights. So there's three stories, which are permitted for
19 base development, so a development that -- again, can
20 proceed directly to building permit. And for special permit
21 in PUD development up to 12 stories in the North and South
22 subdistrict and six stories in the West subdistrict.

1 One thing to note here: You'll probably notice
2 that the residential height limit is the same across all the
3 North and the South subdistricts for both special permit and
4 PUD development. The Working Group, again, wanted to
5 prioritize housing development in the district and make that
6 an attractive option to developers. And that's why there's
7 taller heights than are generally permitted for residential
8 in these areas.

9 The Alewife District Plan recommended a height
10 buffer from the Highlands neighborhood, which included a max
11 height of 35 feet within 100 feet of a residential zoning
12 district boundary and a max height of 45 feet within 200
13 feet of a residential zoning district.

14 So we have transplanted that recommendation from
15 the Alewife District Plan into the new zoning.

16 When we get to the next couple of slides, we'll
17 talk density bonus. As you might recall, in the current
18 Alewife Overlay districts, there's a floor area bonus that
19 allows you to get extra floor area for dedicating land for
20 public uses. Most of the time, that floor area bonus can be
21 absorbed back into the building development, without
22 exceeding allowable height.

1 So the Board may recall 75-109 Smith Place as an
2 example and 180 Fawcett Street as examples, where a portion
3 of the front -- of their front yard was conveyed the City
4 for the purpose of retrofitting some of the streets to
5 include things like wider sidewalks and bike lanes.

6 And that works well when you've got sort of a
7 small area in your front yard that you want to convey for a
8 public use. But it doesn't really address a situation where
9 a developer may want to convey a larger amount of land,
10 whether that's for a public park or, as Melissa mentioned, a
11 new municipal facility like a DPW or other public use.

12 Most likely, if a developer were to do that under
13 the current zoning, they would not be able to use all of the
14 bonus floor area from that conveyance without needing to
15 exceed the allowable height in the district.

16 So we created a mechanism which is only limited to
17 the PUD special permit, where a large land conveyance -- so
18 what we're calling one acre or more will permit the
19 developer to exceed the allowable heights in either the
20 north or south subdistricts -- not the west -- by up to one
21 story.

22 And the proposed sites for that additional story

1 would be specified at the time of the PUD special permit
2 application.

3 We've used a similar provision in other PUDs where
4 a building or part of the development parcel can see
5 additional heights subject to Planning Board Review and
6 approval.

7 I touched on this briefly in the last slide, but
8 one of the current challenges in the Zoning is that
9 development with floor area bonuses end up with excess floor
10 area that can't be utilized because the allowable heights
11 become a limiting factor.

12 What we've done here -- so the petition proposes
13 to increase the base residential FAR to 4.0 or 5.2 if you
14 add in the 30 percent floor area bonus for inclusionary
15 projects, which is not an insignificant increase, but is one
16 that the Working Group and Staff felt would be needed to
17 achieve the residential heights that are being proposed for
18 the district.

19 For the non-residential FAR, Melissa mentioned
20 we're slightly lowering the baseline so that in order to
21 achieve greater non-residential floor area and residential
22 floor area for that matter, public benefits would need to be

1 provided as part of a special permit or a PUD development.

2 Here are the density bonuses that are proposed.

3 You'll notice if you're a bit of an existing Zoning sleuth
4 that these are very similar to what currently exist.

5 So we have both of these density bonuses already
6 in the Alewife Overlay Districts. One is for the bridge,
7 and one is for conveyance of land for public use.

8 We've made, I think, two notable changes to the
9 way these bonuses work under the petition. And this is
10 based directly on feedback that we had from Working Group.

11 The first change is that the -- there is language
12 currently in the Zoning that allows for the bridge bonus if
13 you construct a bridge, but also if you incorporate
14 structural elements into a building design to accommodate a
15 bridge, and an easement to the City to make the connection
16 that the City would ultimately pursue it.

17 The Working Group wanted to shore up that language
18 so that it was clear that in order to achieve the bonus, you
19 have to build a bridge, or a commuter rail stop. And that
20 bonus is also a requirement of the infrastructure PUD.

21 So if you want to unlock the greatest heights and
22 densities in the Zoning, you have to provide one of these

1 two major infrastructure components. And the bonus back is
2 that you have a 0.25 FAR that's applied to the development
3 parcel.

4 The second change is for the land conveyance
5 bonus, we heard from the Working Group that if the City
6 wants to see things like significant public open space,
7 completion of trails and streets, the bonus needs to be more
8 than just you get the floor area, or you get the area
9 dedicated to that bonus back in floor area, and should
10 include a multiplier to really incentivize it, like we've
11 done with the neighborhood uses and light industrial uses.

12 So that bonus is now 1.5 times the applicable FAR
13 applied to the size of the conveyance.

14 The major infrastructure component, as I mentioned
15 on the previous slide, applies to either building the
16 bridge, a bike/ped bridge between the Triangle and the AOD-Q
17 district, or the MBTA Commuter Rail station.

18 And one of the Working Group's priorities is
19 ensuring that this major infrastructure component doesn't
20 get delayed and delayed and delayed until, you know, after
21 everything in a development plan is already built and
22 operational.

1 So the zoning includes timing conditions around
2 these major infrastructure components. The construction
3 must commence at 50 percent of the non-residential build out
4 of the development plan and must be substantially complete
5 by 75 percent.

6 And additional details around specific timing
7 conditions could also be part of the Planning Board's
8 special permit approval for a PUD development.

9 The Alewife District Plan recommended establishing
10 a form based approach to front yard setbacks, because there
11 are plans to retrofit existing streets and create new
12 streets to improve connectivity in the quad.

13 Our Community Planning team went back to look at
14 the street plan from Envision Alewife, and then added
15 measurements from façade to façade, which established a 5'
16 wide build-to zone.

17 And a build-to zone, it's almost like a setback in
18 reverse. So it says a portion of the building's principal
19 front wall plane needs to occupy that zone in order to
20 create a continuous street wall effect and a more walkable
21 and active urban realm.

22 So the Standard is that at least 70 percent of a

1 building's front needs to land in that build-to zone.

2 The Concord Avenue Parkway subdistrict, which is a
3 current zoning overlay that goes along Concord Ave,
4 establishes a 25' setback for parcels fronting Concord Ave.
5 And the Working Group expressed support for keeping new
6 development in line with that standard along Concord Ave.
7 So we've kept that standard.

8 As is currently in Alewife, on a case-by-case
9 basis, the Planning Board can waive or modify setback
10 requirements. And I should note that the updated yard
11 standards apply to special permit projects -- that as-of-
12 right development will continue to follow base requirements.

13 In terms of open space, there's currently a 15
14 percent open space requirement in the Quad, which would be
15 increased to 20 percent to match the standard we have in
16 many other parts of the city.

17 There's currently a 25 percent permeable area
18 requirement, which is existing and will remain.

19 The Working Group wanted both bigger regional
20 park-like open spaces as well as opportunities for smaller,
21 more frequent open spaces throughout the Quad. So things
22 like pocket parks and playgrounds and plazas.

1 We included a requirement that at least 25 percent
2 of required open space as part of a special permit or a PUD
3 be public open space or publicly beneficial open space.

4 And there's currently a provision in the Alewife
5 Overlay District that open space can be combined or pooled
6 across development to create larger, more contiguous open
7 spaces in the Quad. And the Working Group saw merit in
8 keeping that provision in. So that has also been
9 transplanted from the existing zoning.

10 In terms of parking and loading requirements, so
11 the City recently eliminated parking minimums citywide for
12 all uses. We included the parking maximum ratios, as
13 recommended in the Alewife District Plan. And off-street
14 loading would continue to follow Article 6 requirements.

15 As I mentioned earlier, structured parking we need
16 to meet specific Design Requirements if it's located above
17 grade. As with pooled open space, there's a provision for
18 pooled parking, which would live on in the new zoning.

19 And again, these strategies together are meant to
20 utilize a more flexible approach to providing parking, with
21 the hope that over time as the new bicycle and pedestrian
22 infrastructure is built, the city can continue to transition

1 away from single-occupancy automobile dependency for the
2 majority of trips in the district.

3 We're near the end. So the last bit to touch on
4 relates to building design and other standards in the
5 zoning. There's other urban form recommendations from the
6 Envision Alewife Plan that translated -- got translated into
7 the new zoning. So there's a limitation on long, unbroken
8 façades, which would require a massing recess or forecourts
9 at certain intervals.

10 There's a minimum height for first floors, which
11 could be increased, depending on what type of use is being
12 proposed for the ground story. Buildings must be oriented
13 towards and have public entrances along sidewalks and
14 abutting public streets.

15 Street trees are required to be planted at regular
16 intervals of no more than 30 feet, unless specifically
17 waived by the City Engineer.

18 The Envision Alewife Plan recommended establishing
19 a fee for non-residential development in order to fund much
20 of the public infrastructure that's planned for district.

21 In the Envision Alewife Plan that fee was
22 estimated at \$5 a square foot, which the Working Group felt

1 was inadequate to address all of the needs for
2 infrastructure in the Quad. So that fee is updated to \$20 a
3 square foot based on our current cost estimates, and it's
4 applied on the incremental density above and beyond what's
5 permitted in base FAR/GFA limitations.

6 If you're already completing a major
7 infrastructure component as part of an infrastructure PUD,
8 you're not required to pay this fee because you're already
9 providing that infrastructure.

10 In terms of sustainability, so development in a
11 district will generally need to follow the City's Green
12 Building Requirements as applicable, including applicable
13 Green Roofs Requirements, Emissions Accounting Requirements,
14 the City's new climate zoning, which includes Green Factor
15 Standards and new Flood Resilience Standards.

16 And I'm glad Melissa touched on this, I hope I
17 hope I didn't burry the lede, because a huge chunk of the
18 effort in bringing this petition forward has included kind
19 of a wholesale update to the Alewife Design Guidelines,
20 which will supplement and be a partner to the Zoning.

21 And Erik Thorkildsen and Drew Kane, who I believe
22 both are on the Zoom, undertook this sort of mammoth effort

1 to do that, and they've done a great job.

2 For any development seeking a Planning Board
3 special permit, the Planning Board would need to find that
4 the proposal is consistent with the goals and objectives of
5 the AOD-Q district, as well as these guidelines.

6 There's a ton of material that's covered here,
7 from site and building organization to build form to open
8 space to specific standards that apply to various
9 subdistricts throughout the Alewife area.

10 I'm sure there's plenty more to discuss and go
11 over, but I did want to sort of stay tight with time if I
12 could. I hope that gives you an overview of the proposed
13 zoning.

14 Chair Flynn, I will turn it back to you for the
15 next part of the hearing.

16 MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you very much.
17 Thank you for that presentation, it was very, very
18 thoughtful.

19 We're now going to move to public comment, as this
20 is a public hearing. Any members of the public who wish to
21 speak should now click the button that says, "Raise hand."
22 If you're calling in by phone, you can raise your hand by

1 pressing *9.

2 As of 5:00 p.m. yesterday, the Board had
3 received no written communications on this case. Written
4 communications received after 5:00 p.m. yesterday will be
5 entered into the record. So let me see.

6 Okay. We do have some members of the public who
7 wish to speak. So I will ask Staff to unmute speakers one
8 at a time. Speakers should begin by saying your name and
9 address, and Staff --

10 [Phone ringing]

11 I apologize. That was a phone call that came
12 through. It kicked me out. Staff will confirm that we can
13 hear you. After that, you'll have up to three minutes to
14 speak before I ask you to wrap up.

15 So if I could turn it over to Daniel, and we will
16 begin public comment.

17 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. Our
18 first speaker is Doug Brown, followed by Kelvin Moses. So
19 Doug, please begin by unmuting yourself and giving your name
20 and address.

21 DOUG BROWN: Hi. Doug Brown, 35 Standish Street,
22 and a member of the Alewife Zoning Task Force. I just

1 wanted to thank everybody for their participation over last
2 few years, and it's been a great process. I'm proud of the
3 work that we've done, and I'm glad to see it move ahead to
4 the next step.

5 I have two areas which I would like -- I would
6 suggest that maybe the Planning Board might want to
7 consider. One is around the infrastructure milestones. So
8 one of the things that we learned is that the infrastructure
9 milestones are tied to the specific level of build-out, but
10 my concern is that it's tied to non-residential build-out,
11 rather than overall build-out.

12 And my worry is that even though I don't want to
13 necessarily disincen housing or place an extra burden on
14 housing, I'm also worried that I -- I feel like it would be
15 a failure if we got all of the housing built and none of the
16 infrastructure. And that could theoretically happen if we
17 tie the infrastructure only to commercial. So that's
18 something I'd love to hear the Board weigh in on.

19 The other thing is that the map that we have,
20 because the Eversource site was historically part of the
21 shopping center in the Concord Alewife Plan, it's similarly
22 not included in this AOD-Q District.

1 And I would argue that perhaps it should be
2 included in this new district, because I feel like the
3 central issue related to the Eversource site is the
4 connection to Terminal Road from Wheeler Street. And that
5 really is a Quadrangle issue, rather than a shopping center
6 issue.

7 And I think by including it in the district, we
8 would be better able to speak to that issue. But I think we
9 would also be able to use more tools like, we have a
10 transfer of development rights within the district.

11 If Eversource could make use of their unused
12 development rights, perhaps they could, you know, use that
13 to generate some income that could be used towards that
14 project.

15 Or if they decide they're not going to ever
16 develop that site, they could make use of the development
17 rights, and vice versa.

18 So those are the only two things I might highlight
19 as perhaps worthy of some further discussion from the Board
20 but I'm excited to move this along to the next step and to
21 hear your thoughts on it. Thank you.

22 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker is

1 Kelvin Moses, followed by Ann Stewart.

2 So Kelvin, please begin by unmuting yourself and
3 giving your name and address.

4 KELVIN MOSES: Good evening. My name is Kelvin
5 Moses. I'm the Senior Vice-President of Healthpeak
6 Properties. Can you all hear me okay?

7 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Yes. Please go ahead.

8 KELVIN MOSES: Just for a little bit of
9 background, Healthpeaks is a publicly traded real estate
10 investment trust and invested in health care real estate.

11 And I wanted to start by saying I've had the
12 pleasure of representing health peak on the Alewife Zoning
13 Working Group over the past 12 months, and it has been
14 exciting to be a part of a community-based zoning process
15 alongside of all of the members of the Working Group that
16 really understand the challenges that exist in the Quad and
17 transforming the Quad, and the importance of setting a
18 series of priorities.

19 To provide a little bit more background on our
20 involvement here, we're an owner of roughly 40 acres of
21 holdings in the Quad, which we'd acquired starting back in
22 2000 -- or sorry, 2021.

1 And many of these properties come with a
2 significant number of specific challenges that are unique to
3 each site in order to achieve the outcomes that the
4 community has outlined.

5 With that said, we're in a position to come
6 forward with an PUD special permit application that seeks to
7 take on a number of those challenges through our holding
8 directly, provide infrastructure including a pedestrian
9 footbridge over the commuter rail and engage in a design and
10 development of a very dynamic public realm, incorporate new
11 streets and housing into the zoning that are required as
12 part of the zoning petition.

13 So we are encouraged by the direction that the
14 community has taken to move this process forward. And we've
15 -- you know, made a number of strategic investments in the
16 neighborhood, including acquisitions of parcels to be able
17 to bring those plans to life.

18 Melissa, Daniel, Erik Thorkildsen, all the City
19 Staff have been extremely impressive throughout the process,
20 and it's been made very clear to us that transforming the
21 Quad into a mixed-use neighborhood is the only acceptable
22 outcome.

1 And we understand the critical role we must play
2 here in order to achieve the desired outcomes for the
3 neighborhood. So we're committed to seeing this process
4 through and will continue to listen and work with the
5 Working Group and community to make the vision for the
6 neighborhood come to fruition.

7 We'd like to see the Planning Board recommend the
8 zoning petition to the City Council, and we look forward to
9 beginning the process of developing a Master Plan that
10 achieves the requirements of the neighborhood.

11 Thank you for your time this evening.

12 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker is
13 Ann Stewart, followed by Joseph Sultan. Ann, please begin
14 by unmuting yourself and giving your name and address.

15 ANN STEWART: My name is Ann Stewart. I live at
16 25-31 Wheeler Street. And I took my statistics from Iram
17 Farooq's memo to the City Council on May 17, which was
18 conveyed by the City Manager.

19 So I refer to some pages in my comment. Page 4,
20 the General Provisions, include maintaining and preserving a
21 regulated transition to a large -- larger scale development
22 in the district and nearby smaller-scale residential

1 neighborhoods and communities.

2 And I happen to live in AOD-Q South, which is once
3 -- which is the eastern side of the Quad behind the shopping
4 center -- behind one of the shopping centers.

5 And one side of Wheeler Street is lined with one
6 market-rate at 50 percent affordable rental building, a 72-
7 unit condominium, and 525 market-rate and 20 percent
8 affordable rentals in three buildings on the same site.

9 And the latter has the largest number of
10 affordable units in the city at this time. And I thank the
11 Planning Board or past members for approving 55 Wheeler
12 Street.

13 The Zoning Petition's AOD South Residential
14 Heights table allows 12 stories above grade at 145'. At its
15 tallest, 55 Wheeler Street is seven stories. And if this
16 petition bumps up against the heights proposed by the
17 Affordable Housing Overlay amendment, then affordable will
18 no longer be preferable to market-rate.

19 The petition I think should give lower heights for
20 market-rate and residential, and I would really appreciate
21 it if you would treat the edge, the eastern edge, which also
22 includes Fawcett Street, which is primarily residential,

1 with some planning kindness, because the Quad will be a
2 brand-new mixed-use community.

3 My other concern is some clarification on h),
4 which is Neighborhood Uses and Open Space Advisory Committee
5 Plan, which is something that we asked for.

6 And right now, it says that "for development
7 seeking an infrastructure PUD special permit, a plan shall
8 be submitted for the formation of an Advisory Committee
9 consisting of neighborhood residents and stakeholders to
10 provide inputted guidance." And you will be the people who
11 probably approve that.

12 But if the dominant landowner and smaller
13 landowners build without a PUD, the rezoning petition still
14 applies to the entire Quad, so I'd like the petition to
15 clarify that the Advisory Committee overseeing
16 implementation consists of neighborhood residents and
17 stakeholders from the entire Quad.

18 I appreciate CDD's help and explanations, and look
19 forward to, as Doug said and Kelvin said, working with you.
20 Thank you.

21 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker is
22 Joseph Sultan, followed by John Chung. Please begin by

1 unmuting yourself and giving your name and address.

2 JOSEPH SULTAN: I am unmuted. I am Joseph Sultan.
3 My commercial address -- we'll call it 767 Concord Ave --
4 I've got seven buildings over there and my residential
5 address is in Boston.

6 Thank you all for your time. And I wanted to say,
7 great job Melissa and Daniel, as always. I think the
8 Working Group went really well. I like the Brown's
9 description of it as a Task Force a little bit more. So I
10 think I'm going to steal that, if it's okay.

11 I -- just by way of introduction, we've been in
12 Cambridge since my dad went to MIT and taught there. My
13 mother came in the 1970s, about a decade after him. He
14 started developing in Milton, Massachusetts in the '70s. He
15 built 875 Mass Ave in the '80s. We've been in and around
16 Cambridge for 40 plus years.

17 So I just wanted to point out a couple things that
18 are sort of me-centric. I've got almost four acres over in
19 the Alewife area, which I realize tonight after listening to
20 Kelvin, I'm like a one-tenth Healthpeak, which I don't know
21 if that's a good or bad thing but the issues I've got with
22 this is that really Cambridge is a very successful city.

1 We've been a part of building the city from what it was in
2 the 1980s to where we are today. And we've been very proud
3 of that. Because of the success that we've helped achieve,
4 the commercial rents in Cambridge are very robust. And
5 business has been very good for us, especially for the last
6 10 years or so.

7 So what I'm getting at is a couple things in this
8 draft zoning language do not incentivize us to do any sort
9 of development. And most of that really revolves around the
10 street width of 77' for Spinelli, which is a little bit
11 excessive. That's probably wider than the street over at
12 875 Mass Ave, you know, where Mass Ave is. And that's a
13 fairly busy thoroughfare.

14 But the bigger one is that the neighborhood group
15 really wants to keep this area very low-density residential.
16 I know that their neighborhood itself probably lends itself
17 more to Belmont than Cambridge. I think that's great. It's
18 a really beautiful neighborhood. We've been neighbors with
19 that group for over 30 years. And I have a lot of respect
20 for them.

21 But because of that 200' no-build barrier, or
22 build 245' barrier, there's really no economic way to

1 redevelop buildings that are cash flowing so well for us
2 right now.

3 What I would like to say is we're ready and
4 willing to do this with the City of Cambridge. We've been
5 partnering with City Councils and mayors for a couple
6 generations now. This is very exciting. And we'd like to
7 take part in this as developers.

8 But the way the draft zoning language is written -
9 - and I've communicated this to CDD and Councillors -- it
10 would prohibit us from participating at this point.

11 So I'd just like to leave it on that. If
12 Cambridge wants to develop this area, if we want to start
13 the increased density, if we want to do this now, that's
14 great. If not, we are here as Cantabridgians, as
15 developers. I'll be here in 20 years, 25 years. The time
16 will come one day.

17 Thank you.

18 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker is
19 John Chun, followed by Elizabeth Feigenbaum. John, please
20 begin by unmuting yourself and giving your name and address.

21 JOHN CHUN: Sure. Good evening. I'm John Chun
22 from 48 Loomis Street in the Quadrangle, and I'm a member of

1 the Working Group. I'm here to support the passage of the
2 Alewife Overlay District Quadrangle Zoning Petition.

3 The City and the Working Group have been working
4 hard during the past year drafting this petition. We
5 represented diverse backgrounds and competing interests. I
6 for one have been advocating for lower building heights,
7 given the fact that the Quad is in a flood zone landlocked
8 by all sides, except Concord Avenue.

9 My concern has been focused on the overdevelopment
10 that could lead to traffic congestion and gridlocks around
11 the rotaries that are already congested. The zoning
12 petition tonight does not reflect the lower height limits
13 I've been advocating, especially for special permit and PUD
14 development. However, I believe it is a good outcome that
15 compromises (sic) the diverse interests from the Working
16 Group.

17 While I'll continue advocating for lower height
18 development in the future, I give my support tonight for
19 this draft petition and moving it forward. Thank you.

20 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker is
21 Elizabeth Feigenbaum, followed by Mike Nakagawa.

22 Elizabeth, please begin by unmuting yourself and

1 giving your name and address.

2 ELIZABETH FEIGENBAUM: Hello. My name is Lizzie
3 Feigenbaum. I live in the Cambridge Highlands, and I
4 support the petition. I also was a member of the Working
5 Group.

6 The Working Group considered and weighed many
7 factors, and in the end came up with recommendations in
8 which none of us got exactly what we wanted, but that we
9 could all agree to. And it's a very good thing, because it
10 created a well-balanced plan that did not prioritize one
11 factor over another.

12 As somebody who's watched 30 years of planning not
13 to come to fruition, it's really exciting to see this moving
14 forward. I want to speak to the polarized discussion that's
15 been happening in our city about increased building heights
16 for more housing. And there's no question that we need more
17 affordable housing.

18 I work as an R.N. in Community Health supporting
19 families with young children in Cambridge and Somerville and
20 encounter families daily who need housing. My sons -- adult
21 sons -- can't afford to live here. However, Cambridge is
22 doing its part. And our housing crisis is regional, and we

1 need a regional solution.

2 So I urge the Planning Board to accept and
3 recommend the petition as it is and not to increase heights
4 in the Quad.

5 I want to speak to open space. Everybody in the
6 Working Group knows that that was something I talked about
7 -- livable neighborhoods and open space.

8 So rates of depression, anxiety and behavioral
9 health concerns have increased significantly even before the
10 pandemic, and even in very young children. And spending
11 time in nature is now being prescribed by medical providers
12 as a way of increase well-being.

13 Access to nearby open space matters not only for
14 creating beautiful cities, but for our health. And the sky
15 is our most accessible connection to nature. If you're
16 stuck in the house with little kids, if you're elderly and
17 you can't move very well, so home times have you each taken
18 solace or felt a sense of awe watching the clouds, a full
19 moon hanging low in the sky, the pinks of sunrise and
20 sunset?

21 So I'm asking you to not limit our access to the
22 sky by further increasing heights in the Quad, and to make

1 sure that the tallest buildings are in the north district
2 along the railroad tracks and in the South district
3 centralized in one area, so that there's significant and
4 thoughtful lower height transitions to all abutting
5 neighbors and conquer that.

6 So thank you for your time. And I look forward to
7 seeing this move forward.

8 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker on
9 our list is Mike Nakagawa.

10 Mike, please begin by unmuting yourself and giving
11 your name and address.

12 MIKE NAKAGAWA: Hi. My name is Mike Nakagawa, 51
13 Madison Avenue in the north area of North Cambridge. Thank
14 you for giving me the opportunity. In case anyone missed
15 who may be listening, everyone who spoke thus far, including
16 me, was on the Alewife Zoning Working Group.

17 And none of us on the Working Group live in
18 affordable housing. And I just want to keep that in mind
19 when we're -- when you're thinking about this.

20 I do want to start off saying that I appreciate
21 all the work that Healthpeak has done trying to work with
22 the community. And it's mainly through their efforts that

1 something -- that we came up with things that are -- can be
2 seen as good.

3 There are many things that I could focus on.
4 Usually I'm on the environmental side, but I want to focus
5 on the light industrial aspect, because light industrial was
6 a whole section of the Alewife District Plan, they cannot
7 have envisioned.

8 And there's a whole section explaining the
9 importance of light industrial, of how it creates jobs,
10 diversity of jobs, jobs that pay four times what service and
11 retail jobs pay for those who work in non-corporate
12 environment who need a career.

13 Now, light industrial is almost an afterthought.
14 And originally in the Envision Alewife Working Group
15 discussions, we established light industrial as
16 foundational.

17 And then at the end of the process, CDD added
18 three stories of commercial on top of the light industrial,
19 supposedly to support having light industrial uses.

20 Now that commercial base is the base value that we
21 use, and we're incentivizing all kinds of things to make up
22 for the loss of value for things like light industrial or

1 housing or amenities. And originally commercial was added
2 to support light industrial. And now it's incentivizing the
3 incentive.

4 And now there's so many bonuses for all kinds of
5 things. I can't even figure out what's allowed after you
6 add up all the bonuses together. And I don't think that a
7 FAR of 5.2 plus whatever bonuses is really low-density
8 housing.

9 I was talking with my kid today. And just to
10 note, the Quad is the last area in Cambridge that has well-
11 paying, noncorporate career jobs. I was talking with my kid
12 this evening who's in college but grew up in the city. And
13 they say they don't want to come back to live because the
14 diversity is gone. His friends are gone. They can't find
15 jobs. They can't afford to live in the jobs that they --
16 with the jobs that they have.

17 I'm concerned about the amenities and businesses
18 for people in the nonluxury units who are noninclusionary --
19 nonluxury, inclusionary units that will be in this area.

20 And I just want you to consider how much total
21 development is in this area. I think it comes out to
22 several John Hancock buildings with new develop, and how do

1 we fit that all in this area that's kind of cut off from
2 anything with Alewife as being at the end of the line for
3 public transit.

4 So thank you very much. I wish I could say I was
5 more supportive of this. Thanks.

6 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. Chair Flynn, that
7 concludes the speakers on the list, so I will turn it back
8 to you.

9 MARY FLYNN: Thank you very much and thank you to
10 the members of the public who spoke. So we're now going to
11 turn to Board questions and discussion.

12 So let me first start with questions. There's an
13 awful lot of material here, so it's always difficult to
14 figure out where to begin. Okay. Here we go, thoughts.
15 Okay, Ted, let's start with you.

16 H THEODORE COHEN: Thank you. It's an incredible
17 job. And, you know, I'll preface my questions by saying
18 that obviously -- I've been on similar task forces and know
19 that it is the subject -- the final product is the subject
20 of a lot of compromises and a lot of discussions, and that
21 it's very difficult to just pick out any one small thing and
22 try to address it.

1 And I really don't intend to do that. I don't
2 want to do that. But I do have a couple of questions based
3 on the actual text that I'm just curious how things -- some
4 of the things work.

5 I'm pleased to see in the text it constantly
6 refers to the pedestrian bridge. And I know in the past
7 there have been discussions about whether a bridge should be
8 pedestrian or a pedestrian and bicycle, or only bicycle.

9 In the presentation tonight, I think it was pretty
10 clear that it is pedestrian -- a bike/ped bridge; that it is
11 for both uses.

12 I think the language could be made a little
13 clearer that it is for both uses, rather: There's, the
14 preference is pedestrian bridge, and there's references to
15 bike paths. And I'm happy that it is for both uses. And I
16 think that could be clarified a little bit.

17 There is also a reference to certain uses being
18 for noncommercial galleries. And I'm not quite sure what is
19 a noncommercial gallery, and why not any type of gallery
20 would be acceptable neighborhood use. Just didn't quite
21 understand it.

22 In one section it refers to measurement by the

1 street line, but everywhere else it refers to measurements
2 by the center line of the street. And I was wondering if
3 that was an oversight or was very intentional.

4 Another section, 5593, talks about waiving -- the
5 Planning Board, I believe, can waive certain rear yard
6 requirements, but it's in a section where there says there
7 is no rear yard requirement. And so, I'm wondering if I
8 missed reading that, or whether that's just something that
9 got overlooked in final reviews.

10 There's reference to that things have to comply
11 with the Alewife Design Guidelines with the specific date,
12 and I'm a person who likes to allow for updating guidelines
13 and not having to go back and amending the Zoning Ordinance
14 to do it.

15 And so, I'd suggest that the reference be made to
16 those guidelines, or as they may be updated, so that if
17 something is -- you know, if you're looking at a 17-20-year
18 build-out maybe five-10 years from now, you'll decide that a
19 guideline ought to be changed.

20 Anyway, those were really -- you know, my
21 suggestions. There is -- and either there is a sentence
22 missing in the very beginning at Section 2.1.e) and f). I

1 think they were really intended to be one section. And that
2 if that's the case, then it should be e) and then what's now
3 g) should become f). But it, you know, it's an
4 extraordinary effort.

5 And, you know, I applaud everybody who's been
6 working on it and acknowledge that I might prefer some
7 changes here or there, but that as the product of a lot of
8 effort and a lot of compromises, I'm not willing to put my
9 two cents in and say this should be changed to something
10 else, because of it not being subject to all of the
11 discussions that went forward as to why something is one way
12 and not another.

13 But thank you.

14 MARY FLYNN: All right. Thanks. Daniel, rather
15 than collecting questions until the end, it might be better
16 in this case, given technical issues, et cetera, to answer
17 as we go along.

18 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Sure.

19 MARY FLYNN: Ted had sort of a combination of
20 questions and comments, but --

21 H THEODORE COHEN: Yeah, sorry.

22 MARY FLYNN: No, no, that's fine. That's fine.

1 But just if you could answer the questions, and if you want
2 to respond to any of the comments, that's fine.

3 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Sure. Thank you, Chair Flynn.
4 And I appreciate that as well. I try to take as good notes
5 as I can, but it certainly -- I start falling behind with
6 multiple --

7 MARY FLYNN: Right.

8 DANIEL MESSPLAY: -- comments and questions come
9 in. So Ted, thank you for your questions. You asked I
10 think first about clarification about bridge access and
11 whether it would be guaranteed for both bicycle and
12 pedestrian access. And we will certainly do a scan of the
13 zoning to make sure that's clear and make sure our
14 presentations are clear.

15 We define major infrastructure component, and
16 specifically the bridge in Section 7.3 Subsection a) and
17 specify that it must guarantee pedestrian and bicycle
18 access. But we will absolutely, you know, make sure that
19 that's clear.

20 Great catch on the noncommercial gallery question.
21 That's actually -- it's a Use category in our Table. I
22 don't know historically why the city differentiated

1 galleries this way.

2 If, you know, certainly we want to encourage I
3 think both commercial and noncommercial galleries as
4 potentially neighborhood-supported types of uses. So we'll
5 make sure that, you know, both are included.

6 Also, great catch on having one front yard
7 standard that references this street line as opposed to the
8 center line. That was intentional. That street line
9 measurement is for development that fronts on Concord Ave.

10 And development efforts on Concord Ave, as you
11 recall, will have a 25' setback measured from the street
12 line, as that is what the standard is in the Concord Avenue
13 subdistrict. And that's what the Working Group wanted to
14 preserve.

15 And then elsewhere in the city, that -- or, excuse
16 me, elsewhere in the district, that front yard setback would
17 be measured from the center line to establish that build-to
18 zone.

19 I'll take a look. I don't have the waiver, the
20 yard requirement waiver clause in front of me, but
21 absolutely agree if there would be no point in having a
22 waiver of a standard that doesn't exist.

1 So we'll take a look at that as well. And also
2 appreciate your sign about trying to find a way of making it
3 some language that maintains flexibility should the Design
4 Guidelines be updated. I think that's an excellent
5 suggestion.

6 I know this Board has wrangled with having to find
7 development in Alewife complying with a plan that I believe
8 is now 18, 17 years old, 18 years old. So that is certainly
9 a challenge. And if there's a way that we can do that,
10 we'll coordinate with our Law Department on specific
11 language. But I think that that would be an excellent
12 improvement.

13 And then the last bit, I think you're absolutely
14 right. I'm not sure how the formatting error happened, but
15 in Section 2.1 e) and f) I believe are supposed to be
16 combined into a single provision.

17 So thank you again for your comments and for your
18 questions.

19 MARY FLYNN: Great. Ted always does a great job
20 at finding details. It's much appreciated. Some of us are
21 much more general, so it's good to have you here to do that,
22 Dan.

1 Hugh, let's hear from you next.

2 HUGH RUSSELL: Sure. On the last point that --
3 when you talked about problems, there's an extra carriage
4 return in the middle of the word, "larger." It's just a
5 typo.

6 MARY FLYNN: Okay.

7 HUGH RUSSELL: The paragraph 3.2, there's a phrase
8 at the end dealing with special permit authority which says,
9 "-- or by other provisions in the Zoning Ordinance."

10 I can't figure out what that means, but it's -- so
11 I think that needs to be -- the language needs to be
12 rethought, because I can't figure it out. And I figure if I
13 can't figure it out --

14 MARY FLYNN: Mm-hm.

15 HUGH RUSSELL: -- others will have the problem.
16 And similarly, on 3.3.1, there appear to be two different
17 date standards in the last sentence. I can't -- again, I
18 can't figure out which is what. So, you know, I don't care,
19 I just want to know which one it is but I think it should be
20 clear.

21 Now, on 5.1.3.2, under the "Other contribution,"
22 there's a contribution rate of \$90 per square foot. And I'm

1 just curious as to how that was determined. It's certainly
2 much less on the construction cost; is it some kind of
3 differential cost that will incentivize somebody to do it
4 themselves? Anyway.

5 I'm going to skip through the build design
6 discussion and come back to that, because that's my major
7 comment. It conflicts. I don't understand it. It doesn't
8 make sense.

9 On Section 8.4.3 under, "Criteria for the Planning
10 Board" and end of paragraph b) there's a reference for, the
11 "Principles of the Alewife Zoning Working Group 2023." It
12 wasn't -- the principles were not attached as a document so
13 I can't tell whether those are inconsistent with the other
14 documents. I'd look into that and find some way of making
15 clear what those are because we as a Planning Board end up
16 going -- churning through every criterion; if we don't know
17 what they are, it's hard to do that.

18 Let's see. So we come, then, back to the build-to
19 zone. And so my first observation is that the street width
20 of the primary street, the secondary street, are much wider
21 than one would expect and so, I'm wondering what's included
22 on the street. Is that the edge of the pedestrian pavement?

1 You know? And then outside of that are pedestrian and bike
2 lanes and vehicle lanes and maybe street parking?

3 Because if it -- if that's the case, then there's
4 a big problem. Because people get -- they have to set their
5 building in that first five feet. There's no space for
6 landscaping.

7 Now on Fawcett Street, the existing development is
8 set back -- residential development is set back about 10
9 feet. Now, you'd say, "Well yeah, but we've got the street
10 trees." Well, yes, eventually you'll have the street trees
11 if the City continues to be diligent about supporting them
12 while they're growing.

13 Because I once paid the City to install 20 street
14 trees. This would have been 30 years ago. As far as I
15 know, none of those trees are alive today. That was a
16 memorial to my first partner.

17 The other use is if you've -- on the street that
18 has -- I guess the other ones with the blue dashes on the
19 Vision Plan map. Those seem to be -- there are no street
20 names. So I'm not quite sure what the streets are named,
21 but I think those are intended to be pedestrian shopping
22 streets, community-centric streets, a place where there

1 might well be cafes.

2 And I don't think we want to have people be
3 putting Jersey barriers out in the street. We provide café
4 seating. And if a building at the most allows five feet,
5 there isn't room for a table in front of a cafe, let alone
6 landscaping.

7 So I think the build-to zone should be 10 feet
8 back from the sidewalk, rather than 5 feet, especially in
9 the residential uses. I think in the pure commercial areas
10 where there aren't going to be a lot of retail, you can
11 build right up to the sidewalk, particularly with a street
12 of this width, the street that's spelled wrong -- seems like
13 "Cambrian" (sic). But I think you have to change the build-
14 to or revise that concept in some way.

15 Now, I'll take a step backwards, or maybe it's
16 forward from your point of view. I think this is a really
17 outstanding effort. I think the list of principles on the
18 second or third page you showed us is clear in what you're
19 doing and what the language does. It's speaks to those
20 principles.

21 And to me, the reason that they're 12 story
22 apartment buildings is because we're setting a really high

1 priority to build housing. We can't take away much
2 commercial entitlement, or it doesn't make sense to do that.
3 So in order to get the housing, you have to provide that
4 incentive. That's driving a lot.

5 And then once you have the housing, you have to
6 make it a decent place to live. Yes, it's going to be a
7 relatively high-density residential neighborhood. And,
8 well, so what? It could be a very nice reasonably high-
9 density residential neighborhood.

10 Just look across the tracks, the one that isn't
11 quite as tall --

12 MARY FLYNN: Mm-hm.

13 HUGH RUSSELL: -- architecturally it's pretty nice
14 but fell way down on the Neighborhood Use. I'm sure you
15 did. That's why they're on this side, on the south side of
16 the tracks.

17 So I feel this is a really serious effort. I
18 really like thank the members of the Working Group for
19 hammering out a good compromise. And I think we should
20 refer this to the City Council favorably, making comments on
21 whatever things we find need a little -- need tweaking.

22 MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you.

1 HUGH RUSSELL: So that's it.

2 MARY FLYNN: Okay, thanks. Daniel, again, do you
3 want to address any of the issues that Hugh raised, or
4 questions?

5 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Yeah, absolutely. And thank
6 you, Hugh, for your -- again, your thoughtful and detailed
7 comments and questions. I think for a couple of your
8 questions, I might have to call in some of our bench from
9 Community Development. So I'll probably look to Melissa and
10 Eric to talk a little bit about it. But before we get there
11 --

12 HUGH RUSSELL: Well for some of them, I just --
13 you know, like, the first couple, you can just figure it
14 out, you know.

15 MARY FLYNN: Mm-hm.

16 HUGH RUSSELL: Because I think that's all I'm
17 asking you to do is to work it out.

18 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Sure. Just to clarify, Hugh,
19 would you like me to address any -- like for instance I was
20 going to speak to the two different date standards, question
21 that you had, and the principles of the Alewife Zoning
22 Working Group and the criteria clause that you raised. I

1 could -- I'll speak to those maybe quickly.

2 So the two different date standards -- so that's a
3 good thing that you picked up on -- that is part of a clause
4 that requires that if you're developing more than 250,000
5 square feet of non-residential development, that you have to
6 go through the PUD Review procedures.

7 And we landed at the 250,000 square feet because
8 we felt like that is probably bigger than any individual
9 building would be able to be in terms of non-residential
10 floor area in the district without them having to be split
11 into multiple buildings.

12 And what the Working Group was concerned about was
13 okay, you've got a developer that owns a few different
14 parcels, and they don't really want to go through the more
15 robust review process that's associated with a PUD review.

16 So they'll go and they'll get a single special
17 permit for one site, you'll then apply for a second special
18 permit for another site, and now we're kind of going along
19 with this piecemeal site-by-site development approach that I
20 think all of us wanted to avoid.

21 And so, what this says is that if you're going to
22 be over that 250,000 square-foot threshold, then you need to

1 go through the PUD procedures.

2 And we also wanted to include a time period by
3 which if you do develop above that threshold, this clause
4 would trigger. So that's why there are sort of two dates.
5 There's a start date, and then there's an end date for that
6 five years.

7 So the start date would be the date of application
8 for the special permit, and then five years from that would
9 be the end date. And I realize that it says the beginning
10 on the date of adoption of this section, which is sort of
11 confusing, because if the zoning is effective, then this
12 clause would be effective. I don't know if we needed to say
13 on the date of adoption.

14 So absolutely hear you there; we'll take a look at
15 that.

16 And then on the "Criteria for Principles of the
17 Alewife Zoning Working Group" yeah, that was -- that was --
18 so before the Working Group started -- before we started
19 actually drafting the zoning petition, we wanted to make
20 sure that we had consensus on sort of the main points from
21 the Working Group and we used this framework as a guidance
22 document. It should be included in this package. So I

1 apologize that it's not.

2 I think that there weren't significant changes or
3 departures from the themes in that framework document.
4 We'll go back and take a look just to make sure, but I think
5 the plan was so that we had something beyond just the Design
6 Guidelines and the Special Permit Criteria that this Board
7 could use and point to when granting a special permit as
8 sort of overall planning guidance. So that's -- we'll make
9 sure that that's, you know, out in the world.

10 For the \$90 a square foot, this is where I meet
11 lean on Melissa a little bit. But we developed that figure
12 in collaboration with our Housing Staff. And I wish we had
13 Chris Cotter here from the Housing team, because he could
14 probably much more eloquently explain it than I can.

15 But from what I understand, it costs the City to
16 build an affordable unit -- roughly \$450 a square foot.

17 And so, the \$90 a square foot is the amount of
18 subsidy that would be required for an inclusionary unit,
19 which is 20 percent of the overall floor area. So the \$450
20 is a simple arithmetic of \$450 x 20 percent.

21 Melissa, did I -- tell me I got that -- okay,
22 you're nodding, so that's --

1 And then for the build-to zone requirement, we
2 agonized a lot about this as Staff. It's a much more
3 difficult requirement to write into zoning when you don't
4 have a form-based code already.

5 I do want to say the width, it's probably not a
6 good idea for us to call it "street width" because then you
7 think that that's pavement width. And what that is is
8 actually façade-to-façade width. So there's a bunch of
9 other stuff that gets included in that space between
10 building façades.

11 And I'm going to actually ask Eric if you're able
12 to maybe quickly highlight some of the things that we were
13 looking at when we were thinking about what the -- what all
14 needs to go in between the two building façades.

15 ERIK THORKILDSEN: Yes. Thanks, Daniel and Hugh
16 for question.

17 Right. The width that we're giving are façade-to-
18 façade widths. And so a whole lot of things go in that
19 width.

20 The street itself, street parking, parallel
21 parking, street trees, sort of a street tree planning zone,
22 the sidewalk itself and a sort of flexible zone that can be

1 used for front yard planting or other uses right next to the
2 building façade.

3 Compared to the Alewife District Plan, pretty much
4 what we did was we allowed wider sidewalks and reduced the
5 pretty large -- they had about a 10 or more square-foot
6 depth between the sidewalk and the building with the small
7 planting in there.

8 So trying to keep the -- you know, the façade-to-
9 façade with the same. They're pretty wide façade widths,
10 since that's -- others have commented on that compared to a
11 lot of typical streets in Cambridge.

12 So we were trying to balance several different
13 things, trying to remain close to the overall façade-to-
14 facade width that we had in the Alewife District Plan,
15 trying to have something that was consistent enough that you
16 had a reasonable amount of continuity of the street wall, as
17 you move along the street, and recognize that we don't know
18 whether a particular building might be commercial building
19 or a building with retail on the ground-floor or a
20 residential building that might or might not have retail on
21 the ground floor.

22 And so, and we want to provide some flexibility

1 for what happens in the front -- the front zone of the
2 building between the sidewalk and the building façade,
3 especially for residential where you really do want to have
4 a kind of landscaped zone along there and kind of interface
5 between the private interior and the building.

6 So basically, trying to come up with a system that
7 would kind of compromise all these things without excessive
8 street width but have enough continuity of the street façade
9 and the continuity of the street trees that it really feels
10 like -- the street feels like a significant public space.

11 We didn't include the -- all the sort of
12 subdivisions, all the dimensional strings that run across
13 from façade to façade for all those zones. We're going to
14 take another, more careful look at exactly what all those
15 details want to be.

16 Oh, and actually when I was listing the list, all
17 the different things that may -- that we want to go in
18 there, bike lanes are one of them. I think I forgot to list
19 that.

20 So then finally, this build-to zone, we said that
21 applies to say 70 percent of the length of the building's
22 façade. So that means the other 30 percent can be set back

1 a greater amount, or it could be set back to form a
2 forecourt.

3 So the idea that those larger setbacks for a
4 portion of the building façade could accommodate the sorts
5 of outdoor dining and so on that Hugh was talking about.

6 So that was the thinking. Does that answer the
7 questions?

8 DANIEL MESSPLAY: I think so. Thanks, Eric. And
9 not to speak too much for Hugh, but I think, you know, well,
10 we'll continue to take a close look at that and make sure
11 that we got those numbers right. Because that's an
12 absolutely critical part of making sure that the future of
13 the Quad is creating an active and inviting and pedestrian-
14 friendly public realm.

15 MARY FLYNN: Great. Thank you.

16 HUGH RUSSELL: Just if I could comment?

17 MARY FLYNN: Sure.

18 HUGH RUSSELL: Well, it's -- I think we're
19 basically on the same wavelength. And I know -- remember on
20 NorthPoint, there are dozens and dozens of sidewalk and
21 building sections that end up getting developed. It's a
22 very, very scientific kind of thing.

1 And so, if you're confident that we've got room to
2 put in a planting strip in the residential -- that the
3 things we want to have happen in between the building and
4 the curb line is enough room, then I'm satisfied.

5 ERIK THORKILDSEN: Hugh, I think it is. We'll
6 continue to look at the specific numbers. And it's -- it
7 really starts to matter down to a foot or even less than a
8 foot, to make sure that there's enough room for planting and
9 enough room for sidewalk width.

10 Actually, subsequent to this, we've had a series
11 of different investigations and some of us have gone out and
12 measured sidewalks and just got a feel for what sidewalk
13 widths make sense in what sort of an area, and also, we have
14 comparing to Boston's standards.

15 So we'll take a -- we'll continue to look at it.
16 And so, thanks for your pointing out this very important
17 issue. Thanks.

18 HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah.

19 MARY FLYNN: Lou, you're next.

20 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Everybody's pretty much got
21 all of my questions. But I want to stick on this one. So
22 Erik, you're saying that outside of that 5' dimension of the

1 sidewalk, there is including that planting strip for trees?
2 Because a 5' sidewalk area doesn't seem adequate for street
3 trees. So are we talking about another 3' or 4' planting
4 zone and then a bike lane?

5 ERIK THORKILDSEN: Yeah.

6 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: We seem to be putting a lot
7 in this package. And I agree. I think the setback and the
8 -- from the sidewalk, we're trying to get more planting and
9 so forth in some of these buildings.

10 I don't know if we need a larger setback, as you
11 were saying. That 10' is kind of tempting. Just because
12 these hard walls up against sidewalks and no planting and so
13 forth, it's not as advantageous, I think.

14 But so if you're -- you're saying you included the
15 planting strip for trees and so forth outside of the
16 sidewalk area. I guess that's adequate. But it seems like
17 that would be somewhere in the 9' to 10'. So I'd just like
18 to hear what you have to say on that.

19 ERIK THORKILDSEN: Yeah, it's -- the street tree
20 zone is on the street side of the sidewalk, and that -- I
21 think we allowed it was either 4' or 5' which is -- the DPW
22 is happy with. And basically, assuming that they are more

1 or less continuous, as we've been doing elsewhere in
2 Alewife. It's not individual, you know, sort of square tree
3 pits, and, you know, for greater infiltration and kind of
4 keeping the trees happy. So that's one thing.

5 Then on the building side of the sidewalk, either
6 the building -- the idea of the build-to zone, rather than a
7 build-to line is that the building façade could be within
8 that five feet.

9 It could be tight against the sidewalk, as you
10 might want to say in a -- you know, a retail area like
11 Central Square or Harvard Square, or it can be set back by
12 up to 5', allowing obviously not a serious tree zone, but a
13 sort of a planting hedge, low planting zone and actually,
14 you know, smaller-scale trees could be in a zone like that.

15 So in addition to that, those two zones, there's
16 the option of 30 percent of the building's face being pulled
17 back farther -- really at the discretion of the designers
18 and the developer to further increase that zone, which could
19 be used for planting, or it could be a paved area for
20 dining, or -- you know, some combination or really anything
21 else that was appropriate for the project.

22 So yeah. That was the thinking. So yeah.

1 Thanks. I think your concerns are, you know, good concerns.

2 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes. No. As long as it was
3 all included and we didn't just get 5' sidewalks and try to
4 stick trees in, that was -- I understood the building zone.
5 I think you probably have enough small plantings along the
6 back of the sidewalk. But as long as the trees were
7 included and so forth, we're all set.

8 ERIK THORKILDSEN: Okay. Thanks.

9 MARY FLYNN: Any other questions from Board
10 members at this point?

11 Okay. Seeing none, I know we've already had some
12 comments, but are others -- are there other comments from
13 Board members in regard to the overall petition, or in or
14 around the action that we might want to take tonight?

15 Catherine?

16 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Thanks, Mary. So I
17 just want to kind of lend my voice to Ted's earlier words
18 where, you know, having served on various committees, Task
19 Force Working Groups over the years, I think it is no small
20 feat to achieve the kind of unified vision that has been put
21 forward here with, you know, lots of committee members who
22 have shown up this evening to support it.

1 And, you know, while -- as, you know, I think
2 there are technical corrections that should be made. In
3 general, I am very hesitant to tinker with what's being
4 recommended, because it is such a delicate balancing act.
5 And it's appropriate.

6 You know, Committee members noted that while they
7 support the petition, they're going to continue to advocate
8 for their point of view and before the City Council, because
9 the City Council will tinker, and that's ok, that's their
10 job.

11 But I really worry that, you know, the more
12 tinkering that either we or City Council do with such a
13 presentation to us after so much process and thought and
14 care and frankly exactly the kind of thoughtful deliberation
15 between reasonable neighbors that one would hope for in this
16 kind of process goes on.

17 If we then, you know, disregard -- not that anyone
18 here is suggesting that we do, but I think it's so important
19 that we support what they've come up with, because it could
20 be seen as disregarding what they -- the careful compromise
21 that's been worked out.

22 And, you know, it makes service on those

1 committees seem less important than I think it is. And I
2 think you hear from a lot of voices that we might not
3 otherwise hear from.

4 And, you know, I just -- I feel like we lose a lot
5 if we lose the confidence that the City -- and trust that
6 the City puts in committees that do think of work.

7 And so, you know, I really appreciate the careful
8 reading that my colleagues have done, in particular of the
9 documents to make sure that, you know, there aren't
10 conflicts -- internal conflicts in the language and those
11 kinds of things.

12 But I personally would recommend it as written
13 with those technical corrections and no other tweaks,
14 because I so want it to reflect the value of the work --

15 MARY FLYNN: Mm-hm.

16 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: -- that the Committee
17 has done to get to this point. And, you know, and it's not
18 like they did it in isolation. They had guidance from the
19 City Staff from all different departments, and certainly
20 input from other neighbors -- I'm sure from Councillors.
21 And I just -- I think that's tremendously important. And I
22 want to support it as is. My two cents on the matter.

1 MARY FLYNN: And very well put, as always. So
2 thank you so much. I'm seeing smiles and thumbs up from
3 other Board members. So if there's anyone who disagrees
4 with that approach, or wants to add their additional
5 comment, please do so now.

6 All right. So I'm, therefore, assuming based on
7 what Catherine and others have said, and quite honestly,
8 Catherine, I mean I agree with you. I mean, to me there are
9 things that maybe could be tinkered with, but I wasn't on
10 the Committee.

11 I don't know, again, sort of how that balance was
12 crafted. They do. Staff does. They went through all of
13 it. And there are, you know, again, some technical
14 corrections which people are always very good and thorough
15 about reading it and picking those up.

16 But I don't see any reason why we can't put forth
17 a recommendation tonight to adopt the package as is with
18 technical corrections, you know, following up on those that
19 have been noted tonight and that may come out in further
20 discussion, to be sure that it really achieves the
21 objectives of the committee intended it to.

22 So if people are -- if the Board is comfortable

1 with that, and somebody else would like to make a motion to
2 that effect, I'd be happy to hear it. We can take a vote.
3 Is there a motion?

4 STEVEN A. COHEN: Yes. Steve, so moved.

5 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Louis second.

6 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Any questions from anybody
7 before we do the vote?

8 No. Okay. All right. Then Daniel, are you clear
9 on what we're voting on?

10 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Yes.

11 MARY FLYNN: Okay, good. All right. Then may we
12 have a roll call, please?

13 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Roll call on that motion: Lou
14 Bacci?

15 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

16 DANIEL MESSPLAY: H Theodore Cohen?

17 H THEODORE COHEN: Yes.

18 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Steve Cohen?

19 STEVEN A. COHEN: Yes.

20 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

21 HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

22 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

1 ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

2 DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

3 CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

4 DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

5 MARY FLYNN: Yes.

6 [All vote YES]

7 DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's all members voting in
8 favor.

9 MARY FLYNN: Wonderful. And I would just like to
10 add my thanks to the Committee. It is a tremendous amount
11 of work. It was very carefully thought out, and to Staff.
12 I think, you know, you've done a great job of, you know, not
13 only doing the analysis but coming up with a petition -- you
14 know, well ahead of the deadline that was set.

15 So I commend everybody involved and look forward
16 to this moving forward.

17 So thank you, everyone.

18 That concludes the business on our agenda this
19 evening. Does Staff have anything they would like to add at
20 this point?

21 DANIEL MESSPLAY: No. Just thank the Board for
22 all of their thoughts and comments and questions this

1 evening. Thank you.

2 MARY FLYNN: Okay. Staff -- yeah, now Planning
3 Board, anything additional?

4 No. Okay. Well, thank you all very much for your
5 careful review. And we'll see you soon. Goodnight,
6 everyone. We are adjourned.

7 COLLECTIVE: Goodnight, everyone.

8 LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Great work.

9 COLLECTIVE: Goodnight. Have a good evening.

10 [08:44 p.m. End of proceedings.]

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E R R A T A S H E E T

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I have read the foregoing transcript of the Planning Board meeting, and except for any corrections or changes noted above, I hereby subscribe to the transcript as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Name

Date

CERTIFICATE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middlesex, ss.

I, Michele Dent, Notary Public in and for the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby certify that the
above transcript is a true record, to the best of my
ability, of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am neither related to nor
employed by any of the parties in or counsel to this action,
nor am I financially interested in the outcome of this
action.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this

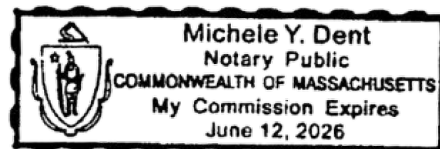
fifth day of August, 2023.



Notary Public

My commission expires:

June 12, 2026



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