



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: January 13, 2016

Subject: Alexandrov, et al. Zoning Petition

Recommendation: The Planning Board does not recommend adoption.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

On December 8, 2015, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the petition by Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov, et al., to amend the City of Cambridge Zoning Map by extending the Business A-3 zoning district one block eastward along the southern side of Western Avenue, between Jay Street and Kinnaird Street, replacing the current Residence C-1 zoning designation. After hearing from the petitioner and members of the public, the Board has the following comments.

Board members acknowledged the issue raised by the petitioners, that it is becoming increasingly difficult in Cambridge to secure affordable office space for enterprises with small numbers of employees, but which are too large or otherwise unsuited to be considered home occupations. While it is a worthy goal to consider creative options to accommodate these types of businesses, it is also a city planning objective to promote housing in existing residential neighborhoods. The area to be rezoned is currently all residential, so the proposal would allow the conversion or reconstruction of residential sites to accommodate office or retail uses.

Because the area was comprehensively studied and rezoned in 2003 through a neighborhood planning process, Board members were concerned about redrawing zoning boundaries without having undergone a similar process. Through the upcoming citywide planning effort, the city may have an opportunity to more comprehensively address ways to support small business enterprises within a competitive commercial market, and to consider circumstances where it may be appropriate to accommodate commercial uses in otherwise residential areas.

Five members of the Planning Board voted in favor of recommending that the City Council not adopt the proposed zoning amendment, with one member dissenting.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.