

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD

IN RE: GENERAL HEARING

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS:

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Thomas Anninger, Board Member
Hugh Russell, Board Member
Patricia Singer, Board Member
Steven Winter, Board Member
Charles Studen, Board Member
H. Theodore Cohen, Board Member

ASSOCIATE BOARD MEMBERS:

Les Barber, Director of Zoning
Roger Boothe, Director of Urban Design
Susan Glazer, Deputy Director
Stuart Dash, Director of Community Planning
Liza Paden

- held at -

City Hall Annex
Second Floor Meeting Room
344 Broadway, McCusker Building
Cambridge, Massachusetts
Tuesday, April 21, 2009
7:30 p.m.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Welcome to the April 21st meeting of the Cambridge Planning Board.

We have two items of business tonight. One is a determination for a fast order food establishment at 675 West Kendall Street, and the other is possible sign ordinance revision changes that we'll have a discussion on later.

We'll start with our update from Beth.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Thanks, Bill. I don't have too much to announce.

The next meeting would have been May 5th, but we are canceling it because we don't have any timely business in front of us.

So, we'll next meet on May 19th, and

at that time, I believe we're holding a public hearing on the car share zoning, Liza, and then we will meet on June 2nd and 16th, and right now we're scheduled for July 7th and 21st and we'll see how business develops especially around July 7th, if there's not a lot of business, we may cancel that meeting and I believe that is everything.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you.

Liza, you are doing the first item?

LIZA PADEN: I'm going to introduce the first item.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay.

GENERAL BUSINESS

PB#141 Cambridge Research Park,
675 West Kendall Street, determination of a
Fast Order Food Establishment use for bubble
tea in the ground floor retail space as
consistent with Special Permit decision
and district objectives

LIZA PADEN: For people on the
Planning Board, the item that we're talking
about is Cambridge Research Park, which is a
Planning Board Special Permit, and it is a
number of buildings with ground floor retail,
and in the past, the Planning Board has
approved, through a determination process, on
whether the use that was not specifically
listed in the Special Permit is
appropriate.

For example, the Farmer's Market,
which is a seasonal open air market, was
found to be appropriate because it added to

the liveliness and the activity that was going on.

And what I have before you tonight is a proponent for a bubble tea fast order food establishment on the first floor of the Vertex building, and the determination process is laid out in the memo that I sent to you last week.

The proposal is located within that PUD 3 zoning district and it conforms to the controls that are set forth in the zoning ordinance which allows any use that's not listed specifically in the permit or in that zoning list to be found to be consistent by the Planning Board; otherwise, this would be a fast order food Special Permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

And the proponents are here. If they want to come forward and give an

explanation of the use, where it is and any signs drawings you have, and we are going to ask you to use the microphone, okay?

BILL CLUTIER: My name is Bill Clutier. I'm representing Ken as the contractor.

I'm going to supply just some of the elevations with the signage on the drawings.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: You might want to explain what bubble tea is.

KEN HUANG: Bubble tea is like tapioca, Asian tea, like green tea, black tea and the bubble tea is -- "bubble" means tapioca.

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN: Give your name for the stenographer.

KEN HUANG: My name is Ken Huang.

THE REPORTER: Spell your last

name.

KEN HUANG: H-U-A-N-G.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So does all the tea have tapioca in it?

KEN HUANG: It is optional. I have the finalized menu items.

BILL CLUTIER: The approximate square footage is about 800 square feet.

STEVEN WINTER: Chairman, can we ask questions?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: You may.

STEVEN WINTER: Are there chairs? Do customers come and sit?

KEN HUANG: Approximately like 13 chairs at this point.

STEVEN WINTER: So it's cozy?

KEN HUANG: Yes.

CHARLES STUDEN: What was in this location before?

BILL CLUTIER: It's been vacant.

CHARLES STUDEN: Oh, it's been vacant. Well, this seems like an improvement.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: I don't think there's ever been any retail use in that building.

CHARLES STUDEN: The intent was to have retail on that ground floor?

LIZA PADEN: Yes, Cafe El Tuna --

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Cafe Luna.

LIZA PADEN: Okay. Sorry.

-- is currently on the first floor and this is additional retail space, and it was designed and intended to be retail space. It is just this particular use is why they have to come back to the Planning Board specifically.

CHARLES STUDEN: Do you have other locations or is this your first one?

KEN HUANG: This is my first

location.

HUGH RUSSELL: This seems like a no brainer.

CHARLES STUDEN: I agree.

HUGH RUSSELL: Just the sort of thing we want to see there.

PAMELA WINTERS: Yep.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: It is only drinks?

KEN HUANG: Only drinks. Hot and cold.

CHARLES STUDEN: We need a motion.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes.

CHARLES STUDEN: I'm happy to make a motion that the Planning Board has found this use is consistent with the objectives of the PUD 3 district and is necessary to support the predominant uses in the district.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Do we have a second?

THOMAS ANNINGER: Seconded.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: All those
in favor?

(Unanimous.)

All those opposed?

(No one opposes.)

STEVEN WINTER: Before we close,
Mr. Huang, we want to wish you the very best
of luck.

KEN HUANG: Thank you.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Possible Sign Ordinance revision discussion. A review of options for updating the 1991 sign ordinance text reflecting administrative and Board experience with its administration in the past

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So who is going to spearhead the sign ordinances.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Les Barber.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Please be assured that whenever you get tired of the subject we can end and resume at another time.

I certainly encourage from everybody in the room a discussion about how they feel about these various issues, and it certainly is a subject that everyone can legitimately have an opinion on, and it's very easy to incorporate whatever we want in the sign

ordinance.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Just a process question.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Yep.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Any recommendations we make is similar to zoning meaning we can make a recommendation?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Yeah. Any changes to the current ordinance will require submission of an amended proposal to the City Council, and it will go through the normal hearing process and would have to be adopted by City Council.

HUGH RUSSELL: But at the moment we're trying to decide what, we, as a Planning Board, should submit?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Should be recommending. And I've -- in the text, I've recommended lots of language and

you are free to suggest alternates, disagree, or suggest something else.

I'm trying to lay out the issues that I have seen and experienced over the 17 years of administering this ordinance and the Board has frequently come into contact with the ordinance when people come in to ask for variances on a number of occasions.

STEVEN WINTER: And, Les, could you also help us understand what work has gone into this -- excuse me -- what work has gone into this to date, and is there a timeline that we are proceeding on that we would like to stick to?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): There is no specific line. The issues have been percolating for some time, and the several that we'll talk about up front, which I've called "major policy initiatives," have been part of the Planning Board discussion

for probably three or four years.

And we haven't acted on a solution to the issues that I think the Board has identified, but -- and a lot of other things are recommendations I have made to correct some ambiguities that have been obvious when you administer the ordinance and to make some refinements to the regulations which may not rise to policy -- significant policy changes that I think would help people understand the ordinance better over time.

Beth asked if I was going to explain how the ordinances -- how it works now. I wasn't going to go into elaborate detail on the current ordinance, but maybe as we talk about particular issues, I can indicate what exists now and how we're varying from that.

And I wanted to make the point up front that I think that the ordinance in its

basic elements works pretty well now. I think the amount of signs we allow, the type of signs, the character of the signs, how we regulate them, I think, generally works pretty well, and it's a good balance between the public interest and the private interest.

I think the assumption is that signs are good in the city. They make our commercial districts interesting when they're well-designed, they're really very nice to have. It's nice to have a variety of signs.

So, we're not trying to tamp down the use of commercial signs in the city, but trying to make it -- provide the appropriate incentive so we get as good signs as is possible.

So we're not proposing to change the total number of signs that are allowed, the

amount of signage allowed on a lot. It's actually based on the frontage of the building facing the street, and it simply is one times whatever that frontage is gives you the amount of signage that you're allowed either on a storefront or a building.

The kinds of signs that we allow aren't changing, free-standing, projecting, wall signs, the illumination standards aren't changing.

Free-standing, which is essentially a sign just standing by itself on a lot, or a projecting sign, obviously something projecting from the building, can't be internally illuminated, but signs on the wall of a building can and that is a proposed change.

For the most part, the size of signs that we regulate now are not being proposed to change either, and signs that are

non-conforming now would remain that way and subject to the current regulation.

(Starting Slide Show)

But up front let's talk about some of the several major changes that the ordinance is proposing in terms of policy and these are the basic five here.

Signs in the public way, I'm not sure the Board had to deal with that issue particularly, but it awkwardly dealt with it in the current regulations, so there's a proposal to make some changes there.

Building identification signs, the Board has seen many times, these are signs way up at the top of the building that many major businesses and property owners have wanted for a long, long time. The Board has typically acceded to those desires when application is made to the Board of Zoning of Appeal for a variance which is almost always

required.

Museum and theater signs, these are basically the big banners that we've seen popping up, particularly in the Harvard museums, and as the Board has reviewed those variance requests, there has been a desire to perhaps just allow them in an appropriate way without having people go through the variance process.

Corporate branding, this is something that some citizens have approached us about. This is the notion that many corporations use color and patterns to identify their operations.

Bank of America uses a red background on their signs.

Citizens Bank uses a green background on their signs.

Kentucky Fried Chicken, the whole building is sort've a brand.

The question is: How should we incorporate those kinds of specific identifiers into the way we've organized the sign ordinance.

And then the fifth issue is, particularly on complex sites, large sites, multi-building sites, One Kendall Square, Tech Square, Cambridge Research Park, Porter Square Shopping Center, maybe it makes sense to have some flexibility in the way signs are designed and not rigidly conform that require people to rigidly to conform to the regulations which are really designed for smaller sites and individual buildings. So, can we think of a way of allowing some flexibility within the scope of the plan?

So, those are the major issues, policy changes that I would like to talk about, and then I got 45 other slides talking

of somewhat less important issues, which would be nice to deal with, but perhaps we don't have to talk about them tonight if we get tired.

Signs in the public way, the ordinance, as it's organized, is based on private property buildings facing on public streets, and it isn't well-organized to regulate signs in the public way, and there are lots of them. And I'm sure you're familiar with them and I'll have some examples here.

The proposal is essentially to exempt signs in the public way from the ordinance, and that's essentially what we do now.

The option obviously would be to develop some kind of regulations to determine what is allowed in the public way. Currently they essentially get approved by City

Council.

Here are a host of them on the upper right, you know, a banner across the street advertising the Greek Festival in Central Square, some similar activity.

When there's a major region-wide activity, like the head of the Charles in the fall, frequently, the sponsors want to put lots of little banners, like up on the left, on street poles, string them up and down the streets, whatever.

The signs that sit in the middle of Main Street in Kendall Square advertising Kendall Square, but certainly could be something else.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Excuse me, Les. Those signs now have to be approved by City Council?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Yeah, anything in the -- even if we were

regulating them, they would have to be subject to approval by City Council because they're in the public way, and you need permission to make use of the public way.

And I think for the most part the Council wants to approve many of these things. They see the sponsoring agencies as worthy and the signs as a way of encouraging the activities identified.

Most recently we've had signs located on the bus shelters, which have gone up all over the city. These are somewhat different from the others in that the signs are actually internally illuminated and you've probably seen them on many city streets.

The regulation, as proposed here, doesn't say that you can have internal illumination, although that would be

something that we might want to permit if people have no objection to that.

And then you may notice many of the A frame signs that pop up in front of storefronts.

The A frame signs perhaps are a little different than the other signs in that they could be tied directly to the stores that are sponsoring them in the ways that other signs can't be tied to any particular property adjacent to them.

I'm not sure it's worth the effort to define that, but that's the sort of thing we should think about. The Public Works Department approves the locations of all of these to make sure they're not interfering with the public use of the sidewalks.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Could you just clarify, these are all variances now?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

No. These are -- we've interpreted the ordinance because it's so hard to apply it to signs in the public way that all of these signs are exempt from regulation of the zoning ordinance.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: I see.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
The proposal is to make that explicit in the ordinance so there's no confusion about it.

The alternative would be to say that you can have signs in the public way, but only so many and of a certain size.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: You're proposing to keep them --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
The proposal is to keep it as we've administered the ordinance currently.

I think proposing specific regulations is complicated because they're so

variable in the character of the signs.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: So we could enumerate standards?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
No.

We wouldn't particularly enumerate standards. We would simply -- although we could, we would simply say that signs in the public way are not subject to this ordinance.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Oh.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
It's as simple as that.

And we could say signs in the public way, as I have written it, signs in the public way are not subject to this ordinance, but they may not be internally illuminated, since we have been approving a number of internally illuminated signs that may be an odd limitation and we might simply want to

allow the illumination.

CHARLES STUDEN: I'm thinking we should allow it.

Wouldn't it be make all the bus shelter signs non-conforming?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): It would, yes.

CHARLES STUDEN: Have there been objections to those signs?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I think initially people thought maybe they wouldn't work so well, but I don't think we've heard reactions negatively to them recently, and I actually, for the most part, find them fairly pleasing.

CHARLES STUDEN: I rather like them, too. In fact, I think they increase security at night in those bus shelters --

PAMELA WINTERS: I agree.

CHARLES STUDEN: -- like some

spill-over in the illumination makes it seem less dark and forbidding.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): All of these signs are still subject to City Council approval, and if there's an objection to something outrageous, it could be denied.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: I don't mean to be dense, but what would the change be that we don't feel they're subject to now?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): The change would be to make explicit administrative interpretation has --

BETH RUBENSTEIN: I see.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): -- applied over the past five or six years that these signs are not subject to the sign ordinance.

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN: Could I just can add a little

footnote?

I'm not sure everyone's aware that the bus shelter signs actually pay the revenues into the company, and the city gets some revenue out of it as well, but they provide -- the bus shelters are only provided if they're allowed to do the advertising.

So, we had quite a whole big program of trying to figure out how much was too much and they say how much is too little. So the City's staff did work quite a bit with this company to come up with this whole system.

So, it's definitely a little bit different from any of the other signs.

CHARLES STUDEN: Roger, was the internal illumination a condition of that?

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN: It was. They were adamant about

that particularly for nighttime visibility as such.

I personally was worried about it, but I find that they blend in better than I had thought.

CHARLES STUDEN: I do as well.

I would support Les's suggestion we exempt these from the requirements of the ordinance and allow the City Council to, as they currently do, make a determination as to their appropriateness.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Can you talk about these A frames because I'm a little puzzled by them.

I find that a totally different animal. Are you suggesting that any store can just put out an A frame and be exempt?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): They have to get City Council approval. They

have to apply to the clerk.

The Council has delegated to Public Works the responsibility of reviewing their proposed location, a determination that they don't interfere with the public use of the sidewalk, but, otherwise, they have been exempt.

It tends to be an issue that generates passions one way or another, but -- and, as I say, because they are typically sponsored by an abutting store, you could say that the A frame was subject to the sign limitation of the storefront to which it was accessory.

(New slide.)

Building identification signs, now, these are the signs at the top buildings and our ordinance currently limits signs to no higher than 20 feet, and actually, when there were two floors on a building, it can be less

than 20 feet because you have to be below the sill line of the second floor.

PATRICIA SINGER: Les, can I stop you for a minute?

We are discussing this and we're asking questions, but I don't know how to support or bring this to some kind of a closure or whatever we would normally do -- normally, we vote -- as you move through all these points.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Yeah. I think it's probably useful to introduce you to the issues and the questions and please have a discussion about how you feel about it. And then maybe we come back subsequently when we've heard what you've had to say, and you can tell us whether you want to proceed or not with any particular set of regulations.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I agree.

I think we could -- just give us the changes you're proposing and then we can...

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
And then you can go back and actually read the language and see how comfortable you are with it being proposed.

PAMELA WINTERS: Les, can I ask you one other question? Does this also include billboards or not?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Billboards are part of the sign regulation. And we'll actually to get to that a little later.

PAMELA WINTERS: Okay. All right.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): We have months and years of extensive agony over other billboards and finally gave up on trying to regulate them because they have non-conforming status, they have to be

approved by the State Outdoor Advertising Board, they're very difficult to get rid of through an administrative regulatory process, but, in fact, they have been disappearing fairly regularly and slowly as sites get redeveloped, so I don't think it's an issue I would have high on my agenda as something to get involved with.

So, the proposal is to actually allow these signs and there are some details in the language I've presented to you.

Up to two signs per building. You know, if you front two or more streets, you can have two signs.

And limitations on area of the sign, these are wall signs, so normally they're limited to 60 square feet. I suggest if they're above 100 feet, you can go up to 90 feet. And there are many that have been approved in the City.

You probably can't see them.

The pointer, Roger, where did it go?

There's one here for -- is it Dynex in Tech Square? There's this sign at Biogen. The MXD district actually is exempt from our sign ordinance so that sign was simply approved by the Redevelopment Authority.

The Genzyme sign received a variance. I think there's another one on the other side.

This one actually is above the roof. It's on the mechanical equipment. In the regulations I put together, I said you can't go above the roof which is a universal limit in the City ordinance. If you think this kind of arrangement is okay, we could explicitly allow that.

Museum signs, we've had many -- several requests from the Harvard museums, mostly to put up banners of fairly large size

indicating continuing or upcoming exhibits and events at the museum.

The sign ordinance simply doesn't provide for that. We in, residential districts, where many of these located, limit the sign area to 20 square feet, I think, the total on the site.

So, the proposal is to allow these signs, which come in many forms. There are several free-standing signs, there are projecting signs and wall signs, and the regulations I've suggested actually take the sizes that were common in the variance requests and sort've sanctify those.

STEVEN WINTER: Are these types of banners generally seen as temporary banners?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): The notion -- no, I don't think they're temporary. As a feature, the notion is they

would be changed, and I think I suggested once a year or something so that they're truly not identifying the building necessarily, but the activities that are going on in it.

I suggested that they be flexible materials so they feel like banners and so forth.

So, I have no idea how the signs on the art theater have got approved. Maybe there was a variance at some time, but there's nothing in the ordinance that particularly allows that kind of sign.

These banners were granted by variances was that free-standing sign.

So I've taken the area and heights of these various banners as just to --

STEVEN WINTER: Just to remind you, the ART never does anything traditional.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

They have a host of banners there. There's the one that gets rotated as the events rotate in the theater, and then there are the other projecting banners as well.

CHARLES STUDEN: Les, I notice in 17.16.23 you do suggest that this limitation and condition be placed on these banner signs, that is, that the signs are temporary in nature and are replaced at intervals not to exceed one year.

You may recall that I actually was involved when I was working for Harvard in the University Planning Office in the variances that the Board granted for both the Fogg Art Museum as well as the Museum of Natural History on Oxford Street, and those signs are -- were very expensive and they weren't really intended to be temporary because they identify a function that's

ongoing on the building as much as the temporary nature of any kind of exhibition.

So, I don't know, I think we might want to think about this, I think, from an institution's point of view, this might be somewhat problematic because I'm not sure they are temporary, but, then again, I'm guessing.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
And certainly the fact that there's a banner there isn't intended to be temporary. The notion is whether these should be altered on occasion perhaps, maybe we don't have to be explicit. Maybe we don't have to deal with the issue at all.

CHARLES STUDEN: Yes.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Can you give a guesstimate of some of the sizes of these so that when I'm looking, you know, what 60 feet

and 100 square feet --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Yeah.

These (*indicating*) -- my

recollection is that these were at the lower scale, 20 feet tall and 50 square feet in area.

CHARLES STUDEN: That's my

recollection, too.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

And these look as if they might be a little bigger than that.

That's a fairly big sign. I don't know. That's a 100 or more square feet. 200 square feet, I don't know.

STEVEN WINTER: Les, if I could, one of the things that all of these have in common is that while they are banners, they're not streaming in the wind, they're really attached in some very formal way, well

they are cloth and they're temporary, they're still attached in some very fun way.

I think it would be important to keep that part of the sense of --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): As opposed to flags.

STEVEN WINTER: As opposed to something that was held up by strings.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Yeah.

Did someone want to say something?

HUGH RUSSELL: The only comment I had was in response to Charles.

If there -- I think you should make it clear that if someone has a banner, they can change the banner when they want to change it without having to have it reapproved.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Yeah.

These were some banners put up at the MIT museum in Central Square, I think pretty much -- those are probably -- what do we think those sizes are?

HUGH RUSSELL: Seven feet square, eight feet square.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: What did you say, Hugh?

HUGH RUSSELL: Seven or eight feet square. 50, 60 square feet.

PATRICIA SINGER: I think that some of these banners are banners in order to avoid being signs, and in that case, I would say that one year is too long, and maybe I'm not expressing myself clearly, that, you know, it seems to me that something like this is associated with a special exhibit, and as long as that special exhibit is going on, it probably can be up there, but the ART sign is really intended to be up

there more or less for perpetuity until it's tattered or whatever happens to signs, and that I feel just is an avoidance and I don't really like it.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

There is another sign on the other side, I'm not sure about the one that was illustrated, where the event of the play being shown is the current banner, it's taken down and put up. I think they may put up the art theater banner up when there isn't anything going on. But we should discuss how we want to treat these.

There is a basic allocation for identifying the building. It's fairly modest.

In the case of the MIT museum here, they're in a commercial district, so they can have a fairly large sign. The others are in residential districts and the signs can't be

that large.

And then the issue of corporate branding. Here is an illustration of Citizens Bank in Central Square.

On the left, you may recall they wanted to put up the signs on the right, but needed a variance to do that. So, in the interim they put up the banners on the left which have no graphics on them and we didn't treat them as signs. Obviously, they're in the green color because that's the bank's color.

And you can tell how important these things can be to the corporations when you tell them, well, just change the color and they really resist because they want -- obviously, they're marketing their operations with all of the details of the graphics uniform throughout their marketing area. So, it can be important to them.

So, the question is -- well, let me show you some other examples.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Les, before you leave that one, where does the clock have fall in this? I remember that issue came up.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): The ordinance exempts a clock unless it has an advertisement on it and then it becomes a sign.

H. THEODORE COHEN: So if it says Citizens Bank on it?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Then it would be sign.

In this case, it's sitting in the public way and it would be exempt.

Here is Au Bon Pain, clearly the corporate color is yellow. And then the proposal is somehow to say that if you're applying text to the corporate color in the

background, and all of that background counts, you can't exclude that from the area of the sign, and the complication is something like the awning here where there's -- you probably can't see it, but there's a little line of graphics there which might indeed be exempt under the current sign ordinance, but if you require them to count the whole awning as the sign, it's much too big and it's not permitted, and it's certainly true of the awnings here.

And actually, we have not tried to regulate these little umbrellas which pop up everywhere. Technically, they're all free-standing signs, and you couldn't have all of those signs even under the current ordinance.

But the question is, you know, do you want to get into the business of first defining what the -- whether something really

is a corporate logo of some sort or the color scheme, and then saying that wherever that color is associated -- you could actually say that if you put a banner up that's simply yellow without any words on it, well, that counts, too, because that identifies your business, or as I think proposed here, that's only an issue if you put words on the sign.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: So, you're proposing if it's words, it becomes a regulated sign?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I'm not sure I'm proposing it, but that's the -- that's the outline of a proposal.

H. THEODORE COHEN: The umbrellas, too?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Well, I haven't dealt with the umbrellas specifically.

HUGH RUSSELL: Could be that the awnings might be handled with differently.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Yeah. The other element here is the background on the wall sign, which is somewhat easier to deal with.

HUGH RUSSELL: You mean, in that case it's a historic building with a sign band of that size, if you take that sign down, it's a piece of copper behind it.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): We're going to talk about that if we get to it that today, that issue as well, which I think is something worth talking about.

Here, the Sunoco canopy, that really is a sign. It isn't very subtle. It isn't just a color, it's really a whole graphic element.

I just put in the car variance here because that's a very colorful building. One could imagine that replicated in 15 or 20 locations, but in this particular circumstance in a single location, we simply would treat that as a colorful building and not a corporate.

STEVEN WINTER: Les, I just want to bookmark something here that is on my mind.

The corporate graphics part of where the Sunoco is, I wouldn't call that flashy, I would call that garish and shocking, and often corporate graphics are garish and shocking simply to catch the eye of the customer. So, I just want to bookmark that to see if there's a way we can stop that while allowing the corporate branding.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Could I address that?

I was about to remind people that -- I kinda like that, and I was about to remind people that the Historical Commission is in the process of landmarking the Shell sign on Memorial Drive, and clearly, we all love the Citgo sign and we lament the loss of the Coke sign on Storrow Drive.

STEVEN WINTER: Yeah.

H. THEODORE COHEN: So that, you know, things that we may think are garish today, take on a certain historicism and appeal as time goes by, and we get used to them and they become landmarks.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I think what's even worse is the physical plain white canopy over gas stations. I think that to me just looks more garish.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
And part of it comes down to a question of fairness, you know, is that their sign or is

that all their sign.

Even if you like it, no one else gets that amount of signage for this canopy.

They get something like this little sign on the corner so just because it's a -- the question is -- it's not that they can't have their corporate system, it's just that it's subject to the limitations that everybody else is subject to. And so we don't --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: That's what we're here to talk about, though.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Yes, right. That's the basic issue.

PAMELA WINTERS: I have to say I kinda agree with Ted, I kinda like it.

CHARLES STUDEN: I do, too.

And, you know, I'm wondering whether the Sunoco Gas Company, I mean, they spent a lot of time on these kinds of

branding things, and is this the only sign that looks like this in the world? I assume this appears everywhere in other cities and so on.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

That particular design you mean?

CHARLES STUDEN: Yeah, that kind of design.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I think it's a new design.

I thought the one on Alewife was an old design that was being replaced, but I discovered there's one on Alewife and they put this other on Mass. Ave. fairly recently.

CHARLES STUDEN: My fear would be -- well, the difficulty of trying to regulate something like this, of course, cities have done it with McDonald's and fast food restaurants, arches and trying to keep them

from building with some success, I know Boulder has done that, but it turned into a huge struggle and consumed an awful lot of time and energy, and sometimes you have to weigh that against what you're really achieving, so...

And I think it's, I don't know, this will be an interesting discussion.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Neither of these came in for sign certification.

Had they, I would have called those signs and told them they couldn't do it because it was too big.

THOMAS ANNINGER: What happens if they don't come in?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Well, unless someone complains, they just stay up.

HUGH RUSSELL: Another point is

that the one on the right is in a parkway, and it grabs -- it's rather consistent with the parkway character that we are attempting to establish; whereas, the other one needed a jolt of energy in a pretty dull corner of this.

CHARLES STUDEN: Exactly.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): So this is a building that is replete with repeated themes from building to building.

We call this a sign, we call this a sign (*indicating*), but should that whole thing be called a sign and the whole awning because that's a theme that's repeated from location to location.

And then the Special Permit waiver, I think generally it would be nice particularly on large sites, but even on fairly small sites where there are multiple

signs, sometimes variations from the ordinance, not including increasing the area of the signs or the height above 20 feet, but simply the variations in illumination and size of signs within those limitations can be very positive, and indeed, we've tried this out in Harvard Square where we just have the overall area of signage at the height of 20 feet, but within that the Historical Commission can waive any of the other provisions.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Would that be by Special Permit?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): As proposed, it's by Special Permit from the Board of Zoning of Appeal, but as -- the Planning Board is free to issue a Special Permit for projects that they issue a Special Permit for, the Board might actually see a number of these presented to

them.

Porter Square got a variance to essentially do that same thing. Obviously Fresh Pond would be a logical location.

Holyoke Center got some variances to provide some flexibility. Particularly with free-standing signs, which currently are very limited in terms of area and numbers on a very large site and it makes sense to have free-standing signs, so you know the locations, so you could grant that kind of variation. And all these other locations as well are obviously good candidates for that sort of thing.

One Kendall Square, I don't know, eight, ten buildings over eight or ten acres, it probably makes sense to allow them more than 30 square feet of free-standing sign in one or two signs, and variations in the wall signs as appropriate.

And now, those are what I think would be considered major changes to the way we regulate signs now.

All this subsequent discussion are various proposals to either clarify or refine or give some further guidance to how we regulate the signs currently and the ordinance.

One could argue whether some of the changes are major or minor. I think, for the most part, they're within the spirit of the existing ordinance and would just provide an outgrowth of our experience administering the ordinance over the past 15 years.

I won't go through list here. We'll just look at them.

interior signs and signs on windows, we don't define -- well, a sign that's viewable and intended to be viewed from a public way is a sign regulated by the

ordinance.

You can see signs deep into a store and I don't think we're intending to regulate those kinds of signs.

H. THEODORE COHEN: For instance, all the liquor signs in liquor stores, are they all individually regulated?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): They're all subject to the sign ordinance and they're almost all universally illegal not conforming to the ordinance.

There's an issue of how you count the -- determine the area of the signs and we'll talk about that later, but, here, I'm trying to address a number of issues with regard to signs in windows.

These are very difficult to regulate and, quite frankly, very -- I can't say I would know when the city ever

went out and told somebody to get rid of the signs in your window.

I think they have in the past, but you know, it's just something that's very, very hard to regulate.

But on the first issue, my suggestion simply is that if a sign is more than -- and I've variously over time suggested five feet, two feet and now one foot. If you're one foot or more into the storefront, then we're not even going to consider that a sign regulated by the ordinance.

There are a variety of signs. The upper left and the right are probably a foot or a little more off of the sign face.

The CCTV sign, obviously, is visible from the street and is, you know, 25 feet into the store.

The Citibank signs, obviously, we're not wanting to regulate those, but they're clearly visible from the public way.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Is there an -- I guess you get in that area of what is a sign and...

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Yeah.

You know, I think a display, if you put a Cheerios box in the window, you don't count the Cheerios on the box as a sign because that's part of a product, but if you put a sign up "we're selling Cheerios" then that's subject to the sign ordinance.

Window signs frequently, you know, if they're well-designed can be fine.

The one on the right (*indicating*), there's a lot of words there, but it's fairly nicely done and the one on the left probably

is fairly close to the existing regulations. *Toscannini's* is a simple straightforward sign. It's probably bigger than is allowed under the ordinance.

And then there's the whole issue of signs that sort've reflect what is going on in the store, but aren't necessarily explicitly in terms of words, advertising anything.

In the case here, these are graphics that are put on the Whole Foods Store down here on Prospect Street. Clearly, it's showing food which is being sold inside, and I would have in the past told people that these are signs. You know, these are being put up as screens, and the alternative for them is simply to put some blank paper, or the equivalent, on the windows so they can't see in, or you have the display stacks up against the window and you can't see in.

So, people, when they do that, want to present a slightly different face to the public.

STEVEN WINTER: Les, in the Whole Foods example, are these permeable to the eye, and if not --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I don't think so.

STEVEN WINTER: -- are there certain kinds that are or not, use a type of screen, some you could see through some you could not?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I think there are some you can see through.

I think principally stores put them up because they don't want you to see what's behind there.

Here there is a film school covering up a similar area to the small area on the right. Clearly, this is the

video store down on -- Blockbuster Video in Central Square clearly related to what's going on.

The stuff at Walgreens here is less charming, I think, and more clearly advertising like, but it's similar in nature.

If you want to consider this sort of thing, I'm simply suggesting you could do this as long as there are no words or numbers or anything that is strictly graphic that's going up there.

And I know Roger feels strongly that this is terrible and wouldn't recommend it.

But, you know, if people are going to block up the windows with other things, sometimes this might be a better alternative than that option.

PAMELA WINTERS: At least the Whole

Foods was a little more aesthetically pleasing than the other.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Yeah, yeah.

The trouble is, though, we're not regulating the design. And you can get some very bad stuff as well as some creative and attractive stuff.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We also have the issue that a lot of times you want the windows so you can see in.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Well, I think where we regulate the permeability of the window, you couldn't do this in any case. These are in locations where currently the ordinance doesn't do that.

There's a whole variety of issues around awnings and banners, which I'll just go through here.

A similar issue came up with this awning on Ryles in Inman Square.

Clearly, it's a set of piano keys on a site that is a musical venue. I actually, in my capacity as sign dictator, said I would not regulate that as a sign because it's abstract enough, but I think you could argue with me. But perhaps we might think about allowing that kind of graphic on an awning even if it's somewhat related to the venue if, again, they're not words and numbers and overt advertising on it because it results in some interesting graphics on the sign.

We've got a number of these kinds of awnings which are just colorful and unrelated to what is going on inside unless there's something about the Indian restaurant that I don't know about. I'm assuming this is just a floral display, and I think this

may have been one of our projects through the sign program. There was another one on North Mass Ave, another Indian restaurant, the same theme.

HUGH RUSSELL: The sign with the store name got a variance.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Yes.

HUGH RUSSELL: It was an illegal sign and it went and got a variance.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
That's right. The wall sign above the --

HUGH RUSSELL: My view is they should've put the name of the business on the awning and not put the wall sign up.

PAMELA WINTERS: Definitely, yep.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I think awnings are -- they're an animal in themselves and we should really think about what's -- just variable ways that we

can deal with it, but I think it's going to be hard to come up with some rules that apply to every awning and how to works, but I think we should definitely think about awnings as a piece of the -- it kinda compliments the architecture, so to speak, it's a different ball of wax, I think.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Yeah, and in this case, it's not the physical form of the awning that we're talking about since we don't regulate that.

We treat awnings as -- like a wall and the awning itself is not a sign, it's the graphics that are put on the awning that becomes the sign.

Here are another series of awnings that were part of our program, and again, I was willing to consider the -- I think perhaps, except for the restaurant sign here, the others are abstract enough that we could

consider them simply -- and that the elements on the awning weren't part of a logo or anything else, but simply a design. This is a bike shop and that's sort've a spoke wheel.

I'm forgetting -- this is a pizza shop and probably little vegetables across the awning there. And this is a sign that actually may be called -- I'm not sure -- Jerusalem Cafe, okay, but that's an olive tree branch.

I think generally those pure graphic elements provide interest to the awnings. I mean, one can also appreciate simple awnings are unadorned otherwise, but the issue before you is whether you would want to consider to be flexible if the graphics were fairly abstract, but still related to the activity in the storefront.

Then just to clarify that when we're talking about the graphics on an awning, we're not talking about the traditional stripes or other abstract graphics, the stripes here on these awnings. That's not what we mean as being part of the sign.

Banners are quite a different thing, I think. Awnings have a function. Banners are explicitly advertisements so the notion is that if you put something on a banner, the whole banner counts as the sign, there's no ifs, ands or buts about that.

And we do regulate the amount of square footage. They're considered projecting signs, so you can have only 13 square feet of graphics. Later on, we'll talk about how you measure that.

But awnings are very susceptible to graphic overload. Some of these are fairly

modest. But, you know, the one on the right here, it's practically a newspaper. It has more advertisement on that that you could possibly imagine, as is the Pupu Hot Pot down there. Cinderella's, on the other hand, is, you know, fairly straightforward, and obviously those are fairly quite modest.

HUGH RUSSELL: Perhaps too modest.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

These are the same people who have opened Torrey Row in Harvard Square and that awning has a very simpler look to it.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Is that a restaurant or bar?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

I'm not quite sure. I looked in and couldn't quite -- they were serving food, but I don't know the nature of the food.

Sign bands, an interesting issue.

The ordinance says that the area of the sign is both the words and the background that is different from the building face upon which it's placed.

The complication is that many -- there's a logical place to have a sign band and you find that in many stores either explicitly or implied, and sometimes that sign band feels like it -- logically it ought to be completed when you put up a sign, but if you do that, the sign is too big. So what they do is make the sign itself smaller, and you get this odd sign band area in the back that looks a little odd and strange.

So, I'm sort've suggesting that if we'll allow a background that's quite different from the building itself and doesn't have to be replicated the same from store to store as long as that

background is simply a single color and it's unadorned in any way. And I think probably we call all of this the sign in Jasmine when Jasmine Solo came in. The suggestion is that we would consider just this the sign and then the rest would be a colorful sign band.

Here (*indicating*), in these two locations, you can't see it, but there are two little signs here (*indicating*). The background really is different from the building, but it's so modest and tasteful, it seemed unreasonable to consider that the sign and not just that little bit.

So, somehow or other I'm suggesting that maybe when we have a situation like this, we can be a little more flexible and just count the sign -- the words as the sign.

STEVEN WINTER: Les, let me

interrupt.

Is the intent that, for instance, where Jasmine Solo sign we wouldn't want to say to them, Your sign has to be smaller. If that, in fact, is the size of the sign that looks the most appropriate, but the text doesn't cover the whole sign, what we want to say is, It's okay, we're not worried about that.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Right.

I think it sign conforms in every way without this requirement -- this provision, but I'm not sure that would be the case in these two down here.

HUGH RUSSELL: Now, this building is actually across the street from my office, and the copper on the MDF in Motto is actually flashing. It dates from, I believe, the 1930s when the building was built. I

believe it was built with a sign ban, it is now non-conforming, and so, the Jasmine Solo sign, which is just around the other side, on the same building, covers that copper flashing the way the building initially intended it.

So, the problem is that, in 1935, if there were regulations on size, they were conforming, they were conforming up until probably 25 years ago, and there were two stages of reduction of sign areas, I think.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
'91 was the most recent and then sometime in the late '80s.

It went from five to two to one, the current one.

HUGH RUSSELL: Right. And these are kind of two feet high, and so, in some ways it argues for -- I mean, that's in the

Harvard Square district, it's controlled by the Historic Commission there, but it sort've argues for a Special Permit to -- when you get a building that really wants a design for a sign to allow you to do the right thing for the building and only get a Special Permit.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I think we always want to be careful that we don't regulate the signs too specifically across a whole storefront because it gets very boring very quickly.

And I think frequently property owners think that the same kind of sign in each location about the same size is what everybody wants or what I want because it looks neat and clean, but in the end, it doesn't have the animation and interest that something like the Brines Block here with each one slightly varied, but more or less in

the sign band, as anticipated in the building design is probably what we want. Again, Brine's Block on the left here (*indicating*), the sign band essentially all around this little storefront ATM, and in this case, it's all internally illuminated so I certainly wouldn't say that we would count all of that as the sign and not just the Bank of America. This, again, comes back to the issue of branding because the red is the Bank of America color.

Here is one up on Mass Ave and this sort've illustrates the point I was making.

There is essentially a sign band there. I don't know how much it was thought of as a sign band, but what you get is -- there's sort of a feeling that you ought to be able to fill in the brown here, but you can't do that because in many

circumstances the sign is too big then, if you count the background as part of the sign.

So, my suggestion was we would allow even the variable colors as long as you're not bordering the background, it's just one color, and that we just would count, as in the case of Milo, I think it is there, just that, rather than the green area around it. So, just a -- just something to think about.

Here further up Mass Ave a whole sign band in yellow, clearly, it's a different color from the building. As I was suggesting, the regulations, if that were just simple yellow you wouldn't count it as part of the sign, but with all this checkered graphics in it, you would consider that part of the sign.

And then the issue of how we

calculate sign area. The ordinance is a little confusing at the moment. So it has actually been reorganized a little bit, but one of the elements of the ordinance says that you put a single geometric shape around the sign and count that as the sign area as long as you're encompassing all of the graphics.

In many circumstances, the result is it makes it more logical to have a simple square sign without any variations because that's the maximum amount of text you can get in that area rather than putting a square around the dolphin sign and counting a lot of empty space as part of the graphics.

So, as I'll show you in a minute, the proposal is to not require a single geometric shape, but any series of shapes that take up all of the graphics involved, so

that we can encourage signs that have some variation in them.

CHARLES STUDEN: Would you go back to that slide, please?

In my view, the fact that the design -- that that design expression of the Dolphins Seafood is currently discouraged under our regulations.

It's a shame because what the simple shape that is encouraged to my is a --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: It's a shame.

CHARLES STUDEN: Exactly. It's a shame.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: This is a classic example of what the sign ordinance is creating just bad signs, the ones below at least.

CHARLES STUDEN: I agree.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So that's

one of the things we need to be --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): In fact, the dolphin sign was allowed because they had enough square footage to allow it, but it was wasteful in terms of the design.

So the proposal is to rather than do the top, you would do something like the bottom (*indicating*), and then you would -- I don't know why this -- in the version on my computer that's all enclosed, but it's not here in any case.

But, you know, do you this and you can use any one of those geometric shapes in order to add up to the sign area. I think it allows flexibility and would encourage better signs.

PATRICIA SINGER: I would like to suggest that there would be some limitation on the number of geometric units because

you don't want something that plays all over the front of the building and is comprised of 20 little triangles for the sake of argument. I'm not quite sure how to address that.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

It probably wouldn't be a problem, but I could see what you're identifying as a concern.

And here, while we would allow that for wall signs, we wouldn't allow it for banners, so that if there's graphics on the banner, the whole banner counts. It's limited to 13 square feet. There's just one geometric shape for all graphics on an awning so you don't get the graphics that is run all over the place here. As a projecting sign that's limited to 13 square feet.

And as hopeless as this may be proposing that all signs behind a window

are encompassed by a single geometric shape and that that shape be no more than 20 percent of the area of the window.

If that were observed, in fact, I think that would be a fairly reasonable regulation, but, quite frankly, it doesn't; it's not observed very often.

Here is an example of what Ted was talking about. So, the notion would be, you know, you take that band of neon-lighted signs and put a rectangle around it, and as long as that's no more than 20 percent of the window area, that would be okay.

Here is an example of an awning where the graphics go all over the place, so the notion is that we wouldn't use multiple geometric shapes to encompass that area, it would be just one rectangle and it should encompass everything.

And then some cleaning up of the

confusing regulations for stores in residential districts, and my proposal is to reorganize it a little bit so we have two categories of signs. The basic sign to identify a building where there's an entrance and you go into that single entrance and whatever is in there gets currently two signs up to 30 square feet. One can be 20 square feet, one can be ten square feet.

Essentially, it's signs that would identify individual buildings on a university campus that sort of thing.

The problem comes in with where you have non-conforming retail businesses, essentially ground floor establishments, and there are a couple of confusing regulations that if it's non-conforming, it's subject to one regulation; if it's permitted by variance, it's subject to a different

regulation.

My suggestion is that we have those two signs that apply to a building as a whole and then a set of regulations allowing 15 square feet for each one of these individual storefronts.

And we've had some experience with these kinds of storefronts in our signage and lighting program where you have a fairly simple wall sign and then a fairly discrete projecting sign which tends to add up to about 15 square feet.

The current regulation generally is ten square feet of sign. I was simply suggesting to up that a little bit to get a little more variation.

These signs can be internally illuminated and there's no change in that regulation.

Signs on mansard roofs or gable

roofs, actually, simply not a major issue, but when these signs are put on a slopping roof like this, they look rather unattractive.

The notion is if you want to mount a sign on this building you put it below the roof, and if you don't want to do that, get rid of the fake mansard and you can put it anywhere you want on the wall.

Non-conforming provisions, just making explicit a lot of administrative interpretations about how you can change signs.

This was a sign, it was a White Hen Pantry, the sign was internally illuminated and my recollection of it, it was fairly bright.

Free-standing signs can't be internally illuminated now, but we do allow that illumination to continue and I

arbitrarily tell people that, as in our current wall sign regulation, when you replace the face, it has to be -- the background has to be opaque. The proposal is simply to make that explicit.

And make -- we have gotten rid of all the references to billboards down here simply because legally we can't do much about them, but, as I indicated, they're disappearing one at a time as the sites get redeveloped. And make it clear that just by preserving that little metal band around the outside of the sign, you're not preserving the non-conformity of that particular sign.

If you take down banners or you take down awnings, you throw the sign away, and when you put the banner or awning back up, it has to conform to the new regulation.

And we do allow, you know, if you're really just repainting the face of that sign, you can do it. If you take the background off, throw it away and put a new sign up, you have lost your non-conforming status.

Lots of other non-conforming signs. Here (*indicating*) individual letters on a sign. If you take that sign down and put up a new one, you've lost your non-conformity and you have to conform.

So, I think they're fairly straightforward provisions, but a lot of them are simply not exclusively stated in the ordinance, so that the result in -- had resulted in interpretations of the ordinance.

Slight change in the proposals currently for free-standing signs. We allow 30 square feet of free-standing

signs, and the last revision we adopted we said you could have two of those, so you could have one totalling 30 square feet, one -- two at 15 square feet and one at 20 and one at ten.

There were actually many circumstances where it makes sense to have multiple free-standing signs. So, my proposal is just not to limit the number, but keep the 30 square feet.

In this case, there are several signs here. I'm not sure they really fall under the regulations, but on large sites, I'm thinking of the commercial building on Sherman Street, the industrial building that was converted to retail and office use, each one of the little storefronts has a sign, a free-standing sign in front of them, they're this, you know, high (*indicating*) and five square feet or something or other, but

there are several of them, and if they had more than two, they have too many of those signs, so...

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN: I don't know if people know this building, it used to be the Kennedy Biscuit Bakery in Cambridge Port between Green and Franklin Streets and those signs are actually cookies.

Those are Lorna Doone cookies right there on the two posts and Fig Newtons up in the other, so it's a very clever way to do signs. So just a footnote if you're ever walking around.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I never saw them as signs, I saw them more as ornaments.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): And I'm not holding that up as indicator of a problem that I just -- that was the

only picture I had of multiple graphic images.

Currently, the sign ordinance says you can have a free-standing sign of 30 square feet and 15 feet tall.

And my experience or my reaction has been that that's awfully tall in a lot of locations in the City, particularly on a traditional pedestrians streets.

So that maybe if you're closer than 15 feet to the property line, we ought to lower the scale of those free-standing signs, and my suggestion was 15 feet -- ten feet and 15 square feet just as an illustration.

These kinds of signs feel much more comfortable next to the pedestrian walkway than these signs.

This one I know is 15 feet tall. Store 24 is much taller than that. This is

probably close to 15 feet.

You know, out on the highway that's a very fairly modest sign, but in the context of the inner city and our core commercial neighborhoods, it struck me that utilizing the full height and square footage is a little larger than would be desirable.

Projecting Signs, sort've the same thing. We allow a store to have one and it can be 13 square feet. But if they have an awning that has ten square foot graphic on it, sometimes they want a little projecting sign as well.

I'm simply suggesting you get the 13 square feet and you can divide it up as you want as illustrated by these little beer signs, which are in violation because they're above the sill line of those windows, but certainly the scale of the sign is fairly appealing.

Wall signs, there's a provision which says as the Fresh Pond Shopping Center is, you're more than 100 feet from the street.

It's actually double the area of the signs that you're allowed to have. But we don't double or we don't modify any of the other provisions, such as the maximize size of the sign, which is 60 square feet, or the height of an internally illuminated sign, which is 30 inches.

I'm suggesting, I think by increasing the area of signs allowed, the notion is that we don't want more of them, we're just suggesting that it might be appropriate to have slightly bigger signs at that location.

I was suggesting allowing the maximum area to go up to 90 square feet and the dimension of an internally illuminated

sign go up to 36 inches rather than 30.

A provision like this could be handled through the Special Permit process for allowing variations on a large site, so you might deal with the issue that way. And then we're all done actually.

The issue of gas stations and maybe some other kinds of things. The gas stations simply don't seem to be willing to conform to any of the regulations, they go seek variances, usually they get them.

I don't know whether we ought to establish a whole different set of regulations or just allow if we were to adopt the Special Permit process just allow a gas station to come in and suggest a whole regime for the site which would accommodate their needs and the City's needs. So that's it. I appreciate your attention.

PATRICIA SINGER: One thing that I didn't hear you talk about, Les, that I'm encountering more and more often are truly projected signs like projection, and so far, I haven't really seen any until quite recently, I was in another city in a restaurant and projected an enormous display of -- kinda like a U shape and they were projecting it on this one that you would see from the road. So it almost -- this is a way exaggeration, it sort of looked like a drive-in. And I don't really have any thought about it, but I can see how at some point it might get out of hand.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): We don't specifically call that type of sign out, but it would be considered a sign, and certainly if it were permanent it would be subject to the regulations.

We had to make an interpretation of

an art piece, I don't know whether it's actually -- whether it was staged or not at Harvard where they were going to project the text of the universal declaration of human rights or something or other as an art piece in various buildings throughout the campus, and we had to decide that those were -- that was art and not signage subject to the ordinance.

PAMELA WINTERS: It was temporary, too, probably.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): It was temporary, but the ordinance certainly is broad enough to include almost anything even newly imagined things, but, you know, as new things come along we should be considering whether we want to be flexible about a new idea or not.

CHARLES STUDEN: I was going to just comment, Les, that I think what you're

proposing here is really quite excellent and I appreciate your having put together this red lined version of the sign ordinance.

I know from, again, working at Harvard in the University Planning Office on a number of occasions having to work with the existing sign ordinance, it does present some difficulties.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN:

Challenges.

CHARLES STUDEN: Challenges, exactly, and I think that there's nothing like the experience that you've had and the Department's had in all the different situations that you described this evening, and that that experience is reflected in what you're suggesting here, these changes, and so, I think this is really helpful.

Again, I did take some time to look at it over the weekend, and this is a very difficult topic and you can -- when you start getting into it, goodness, it's just quite amazing. So, anyway, this is a very good start.

I guess what I'm suggesting here is sort've like, yeah, I like this. I think these are great changes, we should move toward adopting them because this could go on for a long, long time otherwise with no changes which I don't think is to anybody's real advantage.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
I'm almost reluctant to suggest making any changes because people feel passionately about signs, and you get people arguing back and forth about what is good and bad, and we were certainly not looking for perfection.

We're going to get lousy signs as well as good signs. I think we're just trying to be reasonably flexible because signs, I think, are a positive thing in the environment, but we want to prohibit the really bad signs.

Things like the branding and the vinyl on the windows, I don't have a strong feeling one way or another, so I would be delighted to hear from you about how you feel and any of the other details.

So if you can -- I understand it can put you to sleep, but if you can manage over a few days to read the text and give me your sense of what is good and what is bad, I would really appreciate it.

H. THEODORE COHEN: I have a couple questions.

Is my understanding, correct, that we don't allow flashing lights or moving

words?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Right, yes.

H. THEODORE COHEN: So a couple questions: The liquor store sign in Central Square that they renovated, doesn't that flash?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): It does.

I don't know whether that was determined to be -- I don't think it had been flashing for a long, long time.

H. THEODORE COHEN: I don't remember the name of it.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Which one? The old one or new one up by Purity Supreme?

H. THEODORE COHEN: Down by --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): It's near Hancock Street.

LIZA PADEN: Dana Hill.

HUGH RUSSELL: That sign's been there...

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): The sign has been there for a long time.

HUGH RUSSELL: I've lived there in the '60s and that sign was there.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I think it was determined to be non-conforming.

I don't think it had been blinking for some time, but maybe they made the case they were within the non-conforming provision. I'm not sure that's really the case.

H. THEODORE COHEN: So a ticker tape scroll not allowed.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I believe not allowed.

HUGH RUSSELL: There was a ticker tape scroll in Harvard Square, and it

did get a permission, special permission to do it.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Also, it seems to me there used to be a couple of signs that had like three faces that would change the advertisement.

HUGH RUSSELL: There are billboards like that.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Have they disappeared in Cambridge? I mean, there's still one down by --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Oh, yeah.

There is -- based on our experience what was then -- what was the travel agency called way back?

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN
DESIGN: Crimson Travel.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Crimson Travel. When they put up the big

electronic sign which could change, the electronic text could change electronically, that actually --

H. THEODORE COHEN: That actually turned up large billboards where they had --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): No, I understand that, but I don't think that conforms to the ordinance.

HUGH RUSSELL: I think we went to court on that one.

I remember the judge standing on one corner, the proponents on another corner, the city on yet a third corner and we called across to talk to the judge. And they had a permitted sign which they replaced with a larger sign that was much more animated.

And we won that one, but it was complicated and now they're renovating the building and we don't know what's gonna happen.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Are you talking about the Crimson Travel
sign?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
That process identified a hole in the
ordinance and that we didn't define basically
what animation was. If you change that face
of the sign, once a day, was that in
violation of the ordinance sort've thing, so
I've tried to write in provisions that if you
don't change it more than X number of times
in a day and the interval is no more than
five or six hours, I forget the details, then
you can change the face without being in
violation of our ordinance.

H. THEODORE COHEN: The sign on the
Science Museum, is that Cambridge or is that
Boston now?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Half and half.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Because that layout is changing constantly.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): The line is pretty much down the middle of the complex, so I don't know where the sign is that you're talking about.

HUGH RUSSELL: I guess I would comment that I've been involved for 30 years in the City and was on the Zoning Board and 20 years on the Planning Board, and I think these proposals, were they to be adopted exactly as submitted, would be a modest improvement to something that is pretty good already.

But I suspect we can actually tweak things and make them slightly better, but I don't have a lot of zest for that myself because I really think Les has done a terrific job.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I don't really understand the process. Can you sort've walk me through it a little bit?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
The process of approving a sign?

THOMAS ANNINGER: That's right, but maybe different parameters here.

If you're opening a business and you want to establish a sign, then they come into your department and they ask you does this comply?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Our Department under the ordinance is charged with reviewing zoning compliance for signs -- actually signs of 25 square feet or more. The practice has been to have every sign come over to the department and we do the work that Inspectional Services would normally do in terms of determining whether a sign conforms or not.

If it does, either Liza or I fills out a form saying that and they go down and get a permit from Inspectional Services.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So Inspectional Services wouldn't allow them to put it up unless they have a permit or -- because a lot of signs go up without --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): A lot of signs nothing asks anybody, they just put up the sign. And that's a fairly common occurrence.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Very common.

THOMAS ANNINGER: That was the point of my question. I don't understand -- it seems to me like the teeth in this are somewhat frayed and weak.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Yeah.

All complaints -- all violations of the zoning ordinance, even significant ones, are complaint driven. The City doesn't go around inspecting things on a routine basis.

It is a problem, but I have to say I think over the life of this particular ordinance, there's been significant improvement in the sign landscape in the city in many areas and I think lots of significant signs do come in and get approval. We have an opportunity to talk to people about what they might do, so I must say that while there are lots of violations, I'm not particularly discouraged.

I think that there's a steady improvement over time, and as I said, I think our ordinance is well-balanced so we get fairly good signs when they're conforming to

the ordinance.

THOMAS ANNINGER: And when does the Zoning Board get involved, when does the Planning Board get involved, how does that work?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): You get involved when Liza or I tell them that you don't conform to the ordinance, you need a variance because your sign is too big or it's too high or it's improperly illuminated, and then they go to the Board of Zoning Appeal and seek a variance from the requirements of the ordinance.

We're not making judgments about whether it's a good sign or not, we're simply saying that there are these dimensional parameters and you're not meeting them. There isn't any discretion or flexibility. We're just saying it's an

inch too big or a foot too big or it's internally illuminated when it's not allowed to be.

And then the Board of Zoning Appeal, as in any regulation in the ordinance, can grant a variance from that provision.

That's when you see it as a BZA case being circulated before you.

HUGH RUSSELL: Can you do the sign review on Special Permits that the City grants?

Can we do this on a review like a PUD?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Yes. I think that's the nice part of that, if there were a Special Permit provision to be flexible, you could take jurisdiction whenever you issue the Special Permit for a building.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Is that the case

now?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

There is no provision for sign waivers by Special Permit now.

But there is a provision in the ordinance which says the Planning Board can issue a BZA Special Permit if they have initial jurisdiction.

So, in a PUD or any building that you've issued a Special Permit for, the property owner could come in and provide you with the plan and you could review it.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Didn't you do that with Genzyme as part --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Well, Genzyme received a variance.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Was that looked at by the Planning Board?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Well, it was looked at by the Planning Board at this time and they made comment.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: But only commented at that time, they didn't take under their jurisdiction?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
Right.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Do you happen to know the Trader Joe's building in Fresh Pond?

They seem to be building around the Ground Round sign, are they doing that to protect a grandfathering status?

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN: Could be, but I haven't noticed.

H. THEODORE COHEN: I mean it seems odd the way they're leaving it there.

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN: Yeah.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I think that might actually have been a conforming sign, but I don't remember.

STEVEN WINTER: Les, if I could I've got three questions I want to ask.

I know that wayfinding signs are not this commercial sign category, but are the requirements for wayfinding signs, are they the same type of requirements?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Well, we have an exemption for directional signs up to six square feet as long as they were not internally illuminated.

And I added a little sentence in there that says there could be a minor identification of a company when you want to say *loading zone* and you could say *loading zone for Tech Square* or something in the bottom, as long as it's not prominent part of the sign.

Those kinds of signs, for example, the wayfinding signs, I think would be part --

STEVEN WINTER: The other question I wanted to ask is: Is there any situation where a video feed is allowed into a terminal that is actually a part of a sign?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): You mean a screen that has moving images on it?

STEVEN WINTER: Yes.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Not currently, no.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I think might happen more in the future.

STEVEN WINTER: I misunderstood. Is there any provision that forbids it?

HUGH RUSSELL: It would be internally illuminated, so I guess it would be a wall sign.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): If it were in the face of a storefront behind the glass, it would be considered a wall sign. If it's moving --

STEVEN WINTER: Part of the sign above the awning that was still within the parameters of what it should be, we would not permit anybody to have a --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): If it's a moving image, no.

The issue always arises when someone wants to put a television set or something in a window, what is that?

STEVEN WINTER: (*Joking*) How are we going to watch the ball games in Harvard Square?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I think I punted on that question several times.

STEVEN WINTER: I also want to ask

-- I want to compliment you, actually, on the thoughtfulness of the provisions for the arts organizations, and I do want to spend more time looking at them, but I think it's terrific and that's the kind of support that they need.

And, let's see, and I also wanted to tell you how grateful I am that you have the content depth to walk us through this. This is a really interesting issue.

It's like quick sand, you could go right down in this and just talk about the minutia for a long time, but I really appreciate that. I feel like I know more about it.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: May I suggest an approach to -- as I look at this, there's easily 85 to 90 percent of which you have done I'm in agreement, and there are only a few things that strike me and I think

maybe when we sit down to review this, we could just quickly try to get that out of the way and just, you know, things like the museum signs or something, and if everybody is agreeable, we just move off it.

I bet you different people on the Board might have different issues on some of them. But I don't think we need to minutely kinda go knit-picking. You could just walk us through it.

I like the way you arranged it, that here are some major things that you think are important, and then here are some minor things that have come up that we might want to do some stuff, and I think we hit those major things and get people's reaction.

I think that would work pretty well and we can get through this relatively quickly, I think.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Well, we can give you some time to look at it so that not too much time passes, so we don't have to re-remember things, we can come back to it.

HUGH RUSSELL: This is an odd year so there's a municipal election, and if we -- I was thinking about the general timing. If we manage to get this filed -- when do we file it? We file it in June. There isn't enough time to really consider it because of the Council vacation, and in the middle of a campaign season may not be the best time to do it.

Do you want to wait and file it in October or something?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
That's fine.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: There also are going to be a couple of other zoning changes that the Planning Board and Council

are going to be looking at, such as the so-called zip card or car share zoning and the wind power recommendations, I think are going to be introduced this coming Monday, so we'll have a couple of other ones in front of us.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I had one more. On this branding issue, I remember Ron Fleming coming in and feeling strongly about it.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): He was one of the people advancing this as a proposal.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I'm trying to remember just what he wanted.

Did he want to go so far as to declare a whole building if it has color or architectural identity to it, even wordless, that you would declare that as a sign somehow regulated by the dimensional

requirements?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): I shouldn't speak for Ron, but I suspect he would be an advocate for going fairly far in that direction.

His desire is that each location be fairly unique and that you not encourage the replication of the same identification from place to place to place. So I think he would be a fairly strong advocate for a fairly tough regulation.

But I can't say that I'm having a hard time with that one. I don't know exactly how I feel about it.

It's a complicated way, I think, to administer that.

PAMELA WINTERS: Les, could I ask you a question that has nothing to do with signs?

THOMAS ANNINGER: Before we finish,

let me stick with that.

PAMELA WINTERS: I'm sorry, Tom. I thought you were through.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I guess if we went down that path, and I'm not at all saying I would like to do that, on the contrary, I feel like you, I think it would be a very difficult one.

The only way I think we could ever deprive somebody of doing what they want that would be through a Special Permit process here at the Planning Board, I think.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): It really is not a matter of depriving them, as I've recommended it, it's not depriving them of their brand, it's simply that your brand, if you have a brand, that has to fall within the parameters that everybody has to live with with regard to the area of the sign, so

you can't have a -- if you're Bank of America -- a red band all around the building but just call Bank of America in one corner as your sign. If that's your color, that's a sign, but you can still have your red background in your sign.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Suppose Apple comes in and builds a building that is all white and glass that looks just like an Apple building, like the one on Newbury Street -- it's not Newbury, it's Boylston -- is the idea that's -- that entire building is a form of brand and ought to be discussed and --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): You may remember that years ago there was a famous case in the New York legal system where -- was it Seagrams -- the courts determined that it was reasonable for the City of New York to tax the Seagrams building

at a higher rate than they were taxing other things because of the quality of the building was sort've a brand -- was an advertisement for the company and it was reasonable to tax that.

And so it's sort've of that thing. I'm not sure -- yeah, I don't want to get into that regulating, you know, style of building as a corporate brand or good taste as a corporate brand.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I guess I would think it's too difficult.

In an area that already doesn't have a whole lot of teeth to it to try to do something as radical as that, I think would be more than Cambridge could handle.

PAMELA WINTERS: If it was an Apple building, I am sure it would be very cool, I'm sure.

HUGH RUSSELL: You could also -- I'm

thinking of the -- distinguishing between single colors and graphic designs is one thing.

Another thing might be to say that you can, you know, if you got, say, a green background, that maybe you can have more green background if it's just plain green than the sign ordinance allows. You could have say twice as much and it all counts as sign, but you can have more if there's no text on it.

THOMAS ANNINGER: That's a theme that runs through here, is your wordless theme, which I kinda like, I think that makes a lot of sense.

Say there are no words, but there are symbols, where does that fall?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Well, it's broadly interpreted if it's a symbol related to your activity, it's a sign

and we regulate it. The attempt --

THOMAS ANNINGER: Symbols are like words.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Yeah.

The attempt in several of the sections was to be if it's more -- if it isn't your logo, but just sort've of an infinity related to your activity, you know, it's just a graphic, then we would could be a little more flexible in allowing that.

PAMELA WINTERS: Could I ask a question that has nothing to do with the signs?

You had a picture up there of a group of stores at the bottom of Chauncy Street, the pizza place and as I drive by there, I know they're all vacant now, and do you have any idea what is -- I think

they're owned by -- that block is owned by Harvard.

So, do you have any idea what is going to be happening there or is there going to be anything happening there for awhile?

BETH RUBENSTEIN: We had a request from the City Council to talk about this as well. But what happened was, I think in the process of building the new building at the law school, Harvard discovered they had some environmental conditions there that were -- that needed to be addressed that weren't safe. And so, they have basically -- without discussing the details of every lease, they basically felt it was the prudent thing to do, to vacate, and at this point they haven't been able to tell us when it's all going to be remediated and what will happen afterwards.

I think in a general way Harvard has understood the quality of the retail storefronts is really important to the neighborhoods. I think in a general way they get that and understand that.

But at this point they're not able to say who is coming back and when. So, it was really related to an underground environmental condition, I believe related to a dry cleaning business that had been there for a long time.

PAMELA WINTERS: Thank you for that.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So are we done with this?

Shall we go to the BZA cases?

Any comments or questions for Liza?

BZA CASES

LIZA PADEN: I just want to point out that Case No. 9771, which is 9 Sibley Court that while they're asking for a Special Permit to park within the front yard setback it's a rather peculiar site in that the Sibley Court is off of Sparks Street, it's in the block behind Mount Auburn Street, and the court itself is a private way that goes down.

I'm going to send out the plot plan and highlighted in yellow is the house. It's not a traditional house lot and the lot itself isn't very deep, it's very wide, but it's not very deep. While they're parking in the front yard, I don't think the lot is deeper than -- the lot is 38 feet deep and 100 feet wide.

STEVEN WINTER: Liza, is it a discussion of putting parking in a front yard

setback on a private way different than if it was a public way?

LIZA PADEN: I think if you look at the configuration of the lot, it makes a little bit of a difference because this is not as if it was on Sparks Street or Mount Auburn Street where you have the pedestrian character. This is -- they're the only property at the end of Sibley Court and it's 38 feet deep.

STEVEN WINTER: Thank you.

HUGH RUSSELL: A somewhat related question, people on the corner of Harvard and Sturbridge Street started parking in their front yard, and there's an -- I just drove up over the pedestrian ramp and on the bark mulch and the car is right on the corner of the street. It's kinda gross.

That same house, I think, has a non-conforming front yard space farther down

Harvard Street and then it abuts the condominium building that has some front yard parking that was illegal, but when it was litigated, the City lost.

So, I mean, it's a mess that's growing, and to me, it's a great example of when you -- if you had won the first case on Harvard Street where Christian Van Ives (phonetic) converted her house to a condominium and let people park in the front yard and moved out, you know, now it's spreading.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

It's a big yellow house?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah, I think it's a rental property. I think it's a tenant that's doing it. But is there some way we can get Inspectional Services to --

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Yep.

CHARLES STUDEN: And toward that regard there's a similar situation in Cambridge Port on the corner of Peters Street and Allston, a conversion of what was an apartment, I believe, into three condominiums and they're parking, I don't know, same thing as far as I can tell.

It's on the corner and they got a car parked effectively it's in the front yard, it looks just horrible.

And, in fact, they park, I think, two cars there and I just wondered about that as well.

I know someone who lives on that street who is asking me about it and I said, "It doesn't look like something that would be allowed, but perhaps someone could look at that."

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):
They were not just using old

non-conforming --

CHARLES STUDEN: Well, that I don't know. That might be the case.

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): If you can give us the address, we can --

CHARLES STUDEN: I'll call you. I'll get the number.

HUGH RUSSELL: This is, I guess, a commentary by tradition this Board has felt strongly about this issue and so that's why Liza every time that comes up, we discuss it and I'm convinced this is an exception to our general rule.

LIZA PADEN: I think this can be left to the Board of Zoning Appeal without any comment.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: It's almost like no front yard at all, you just go...

LIZA PADEN: To be further back than

the ten-foot setback on a 38-foot deep lot is the depth -- I mean, he's either going to be in the front yard or the backyard setback because it's 38 feet, minus ten, he's got 28. It's -- the car has to be very short.

And the last case on that agenda, which is 1923 Mass Ave, that's the --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: You had to bring it up.

LIZA PADEN: You've already reviewed that, that was actually on the agenda, and that was the case where they're relocating the existing antennas and moving one to the railing and moving it on the chimney, so I already have your comments.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Good.

CHARLES STUDEN: I have a question on another case. 9773,

50 Church Street, I don't understand the description, "to construct a roof with floor above"?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning):

Yeah, this is a proposal to essentially roof over the atrium in the middle of the building and they tried to claim that it was simply a covering over the atrium and it didn't create gross floor area, but it has been the determination of Inspectional Services with extensive consultation about what they were proposing to do does create additional gross floor area on a building already exceeding it.

It's not that they're going to walk on the upper level, but it's for acoustical and other reasons they want to enclose the atrium, so they need a variance for additional --

CHARLES STUDEN: And the waiver of required parking is because of the additional square footage?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): That could be. I wasn't aware of that.

CHARLES STUDEN: Just curious just because I know the building.

Thank you.

HUGH RUSSELL: This is the atrium where the restaurant has been?

LES BARBER (Director of Zoning): Yeah, yes. Uh-huh.

STEVEN WINTER: 9772, what is 950 Cambridge Street?

LIZA PADEN: 954 Cambridge Street is in the vicinity of Inman Square, it's between Inman Street and Prospect Street. It's the south side of Cambridge Street.

There has been some retail on the

ground floor and so what they're proposing to do is to convert that to -- I don't think he has any pictures.

There are no pictures -- but it has been used -- there's a liquor store and a laundromat on the first floor.

(Pause.)

I'm trying to think what else you might know.

It's near the car repair place, East Cambridge Savings Bank.

HUGH RUSSELL: So, it's across the street from all the restaurants.

LIZA PADEN: Yes.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay.

STEVEN WINTER: Next to the pizza parlor.

LIZA PADEN: Oh, wait a minute. I misspoke. I've got the wrong case.

This is at the corner of Windsor

Street, and that's another one that's coming along.

This is the one that's down at the corner of Windsor Street down by the Roosevelt Towers and there's a glass place on the corner and next to it is a three-family home, and right now in the ground floor it has an insurance agent who is consolidating their business with another insurance company, so that's this particular one.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Liza, a few sessions ago a gentleman and a young woman came and talked to us about some antennas and we got about halfway through and it was late and they came -- they were going to come back. Did they come back?

LIZA PADEN: Yes, I believe it was the one you were not here for.

HUGH RUSSELL: (*Joking*) So it was a

big striped antenna sticking up above the roof.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Lucky I wasn't here.

H. THEODORE COHEN: It says "Tom" on it.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Talking about Tom on it, you ought to take a look on Holyoke, the windmills, they're really very small, and they're not, by my eyes, offensive at all when you compare them to the antenna that are just to the left of it, those things that we approve all the time, those are atrocious, but these windmills are quite amusing.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Are we done?

CHARLES STUDEN: Yes.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We're adjourned.

*(Whereupon the evening's proceedings
were adjourned by agreement at 9:30 p.m.)*

CERTIFICATE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
NORFOLK, ss.

I, Jill Kourafas, a Certified Shorthand Reporter, the undersigned Notary Public, certify that:

I am not related to any of the parties in this matter by blood or marriage and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of these matters.

I further certify that the proceedings hereinbefore set forth is a true and accurate transcription of my stenographic notes to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 25th day of April 2009.

Jill Kourafas
Certified Shorthand Reporter No. 149308
Notary Public
My Commission Expires
February 26, 2010

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