

Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust

December 20, 2016

Cambridge Planning Board
344 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

The Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust enthusiastically supports the proposed amendments to the Inclusionary Housing provisions now being reviewed by the Planning Board. We are very pleased that recommendations from the Inclusionary Housing Study, as endorsed by the Affordable Housing Trust and City Council's Committee on Housing, form the basis for the proposed zoning amendments. We urge the Board to recommend that the City Council adopt these amendments so these important changes can begin to benefit our community.

With more than 960 inclusionary units completed or now being built, the Inclusionary Housing provisions have been one of the most effective ways to create new affordable units in recent years. Inclusionary housing units are now a critical piece of the City's affordable housing stock. Given the impact that inclusionary amendments will have on our meeting housing goals, we have appreciated the support and thoughtful discussion of changes to improve this important zoning tool. The thorough discussion of the study and recommendations made by the Housing Committee have resulted in a zoning petition which will be of great benefit to low, moderate- and middle-income residents and create mixed income communities in new residential buildings throughout the city.

We are very supportive of the Inclusionary Housing petition, and are pleased that the proposed changes will:

- increase the ratio of affordable housing in new market-rate housing to 15% of housing unit floor area for buildings permitted before June 30, 2017, and to 20% thereafter;
- change compliance to consider affordable housing by floor area to encourage larger units;
- increase the number of affordable three-bedroom units created for families and ensure that three-bedrooms units will be included in all new developments with more than 50,000 square feet of floor area;
- allow for middle-income residents to become eligible for homeownership opportunities;
- preserve in rental housing our ability to serve lower income households who face the most significant challenges in the market;

- make studio units more affordable by reducing the housing payment to 25% of income which will especially help lower-income single-person households;
- create through the “fractional unit” provision a system through which contributions would be made to the Affordable Housing Trust for floor area that cannot be accommodated in an affordable unit.

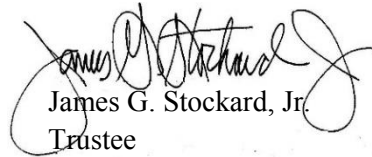
In total, the proposed changes will strengthen the Inclusionary Housing provisions and will be of great benefit to our community.

We appreciate your consideration of the proposed Inclusionary Housing amendments, and urge your support for their adoption. The enactment of these changes will greatly assist in carrying out our shared goal of creating new affordable housing opportunities in the city.

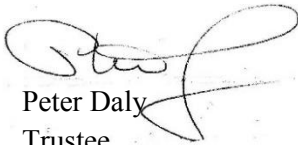
Sincerely,



Florrie Darwin
Trustee



James G. Stockard, Jr.
Trustee



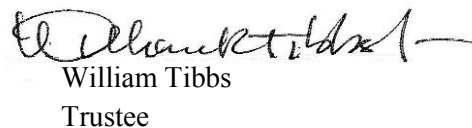
Peter Daly
Trustee



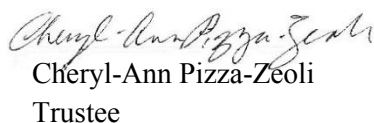
Susan Schlesinger
Trustee



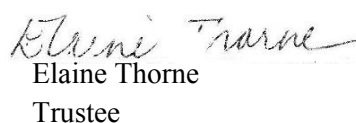
Gwendolen Noyes
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William Tibbs
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Elaine Thorne
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