

Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust

January 3, 2017

To the Honorable, the City Council:

The Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust enthusiastically supports the proposed amendments to the Inclusionary Housing provisions which are now before the Ordinance Committee. The recommendations from the Inclusionary Housing Study, as endorsed by the Affordable Housing Trust and City Council's Housing Committee, form the basis for the proposed zoning amendments. The Planning Board has discussed and has voted to recommend the adoption of these changes. We strongly urge the City Council to 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 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 will improve mixed income communities created 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 our ability to serve lower income households in the rental program as these households 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.
- apply Inclusionary Housing provisions to buildings that are vacant for more than two years;
- establish that the City shall reevaluate the Inclusionary Housing provisions after 5 years.

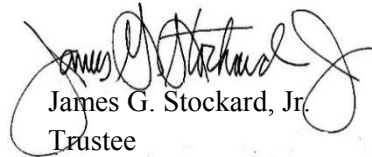
In total, the proposed changes will greatly strengthen the Inclusionary Housing provisions and will be of great benefit to our community.

We appreciate your support for and consideration of the proposed Inclusionary Housing amendments, and urge you to move them expeditiously toward adoption. The enactment of these changes will greatly assist in carrying out our shared goal of creating new affordable housing opportunities in the city. We look forward to working with you as you consider these changes, and to discussing other measures to help address the need for affordable housing in our community.

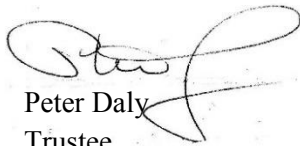
Respectfully submitted for the Affordable Housing Trust,



Florrie Darwin
Trustee



James G. Stockard, Jr.
Trustee



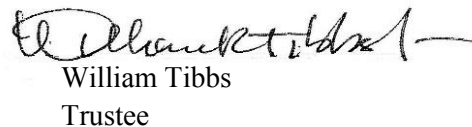
Peter Daly
Trustee



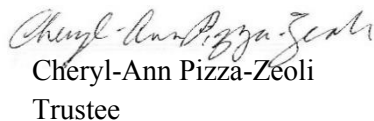
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