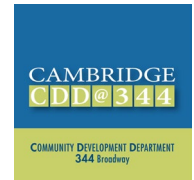


# ALEWIFE ZONING WORKING GROUP

## MEETING NOTES



Wednesday, September 14, 2022

6 – 8:30pm

In-person and Virtual Meeting

### Attendance

#### Working Group Members:

Lizzie Feigunbaum, Jennifer Gilbert, Eric Grunebaum, Suhas Kodali, Mike Nakagawa, Ann Stewart, Ann Tennis), Jane Carbone, Chris Chandor, Kelvin Moses, Diana Marsh, Joe Sultan, Joe Poirier, Doug Brown, John Chun

#### City of Cambridge Staff:

Iram Farooq, Melissa Peters, Jeff Roberts, Daniel Messplay, Erik Thorkildsen, Drew Kane

### Meeting Overview

The Alewife Zoning Working Group convened for their third working group meeting.

The purpose and objectives of the meeting were as follows:

#### Purpose

- Presentations from property owners/developers on plans and goals for their land holdings and how it relates to planning in the area.

#### Objectives

- To provide a platform for the Working Group and the public audience to ask questions of the developers and large landowners.

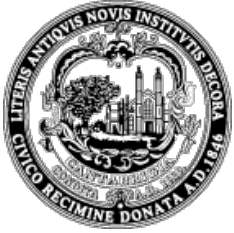
### Presentation

Melissa Peters provided a brief overview of what we heard from the Working Group at the last meeting. Then presentations and discussions were conducted by four property owners and developers in Alewife.

- West Cambridge Science Park
- Boylston Properties
- The Davis Companies
- Healthpeak

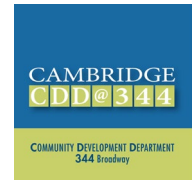
#### West Cambridge Science Park - Joe Sultan (JS)

- JS provided background of ownership.
- Currently owns six buildings.
- Currently under construction is a 17K SF R&D facility that will be ready in a year.
- If the city wants to do residential development, JS believes they can do it.
- They need additional height and density to make residential work. Commercial rents are much higher so there needs to be more permissible density than is currently permitted to make residential development "pencil out".
- Feels there needs to be quite a bit of upzoning to make residential work.
- Need "significant height and density"



## ALEWIFE ZONING WORKING GROUP

### MEETING NOTES



**Wednesday, September 14, 2022**

**6 – 8:30pm**

**In-person and Virtual Meeting**

#### The Davis Companies - Chris Chandor (CC)

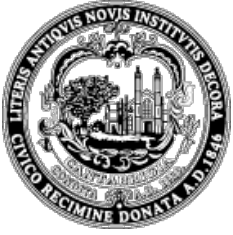
- CC provided overview of properties and status of developments
- 15 Wilson Road/140 Fawcett – As presented to the Planning Board in June, 2022
  - Multi-use path incorporated into development
  - Recently moved entrance to underground garage into the building
  - Building complies with zoning recommendations except for parking.
  - All parking remains below-grade
  - 4-story life science building
  - Green roof around mechanicals
  - 1.3 acres of open space

#### Boylston Properties - Andrew Copolotti (AC) and Johanna Schneider (JS)

- Had discussions with Spinelli family, originally, to redevelop the property as lab/life-science
- Boylston can pivot to do it as a residential development
- Now pursuing it as a multi-family residential instead of life science
- Need additional density and height to make the land value worth it
- Construction costs are getting higher, which leads to increased costs of units.
- Need to limit parking supply because of the cost of parking, in particular below grade parking.
- Additionally, at grade parking reduces amount of development they could otherwise build
- If below grade parking is not used, then there is no use for that space.
- Parking also drives up cost of units because the cost of parking is built into unit cost.
- Inclusionary units are paid for by market rate units.
- Moderating impacts of height - shadows, step down height as you get close to residential neighborhoods, measure height in stories
- Retail will have to be subsidized by market rate units. Will be difficult to succeed in Alewife area.

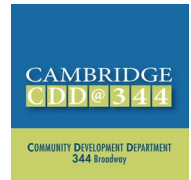
#### Healthpeak Properties – Kelvin Moses and David Manfredi

- Own 36-acres of real estate in the quad
- See possibility for housing, retail and commercial uses in the quad
- David Manfredi (DM) - presents on history of Alewife, Alewife swamp, artificial ponds, clay pits. Large ice manufacturing.
- Healthpeak is thinking as "planners" for the quad and not just their holdings.
- Six planning categories - Walkability, Connectivity, Open Space, The Bridge, Main Street, Housing
- Healthpeak can help with construction of future streets
- Right now streets are disconnected, but considering where Healthpeak's holdings are, they could remedy that.
- Healthpeak outlined where open space could be placed around the quad based on the location of their holdings
- The Bridge - location is on Fawcett at the "bend in Fawcett"
- Main Street area options overlap with some of Healthpeak's holdings



## ALEWIFE ZONING WORKING GROUP

### MEETING NOTES



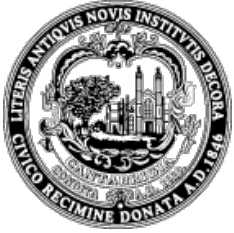
Wednesday, September 14, 2022

6 – 8:30pm

In-person and Virtual Meeting

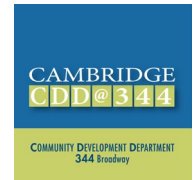
#### Discussion by Working Group

- Suhas Kodali (SK)
  - How tall do you need to go to make residential worth it?
    - Boylston - 10 to 11 stories to generate enough land value - approx. 200 units
    - Chris Chandor - It's either 5-6 stories or 11-12 stories. Also, groundwater is an issue. There will be a huge issue building underground parking here.
    - Joe Sultan - they are looking at different options for how they bring their land online for different uses. Very hard to do underground parking. Tenants are always asking for more parking and he's not sure if you can get residential in there without parking of some sort.
- Mike Nakagawa (MN)
  - Likes underground parking because it's also flood storage.
  - Taller buildings have thermal mass that add to the urban heat island in this area. They are above tree line.
  - Also, highly reflective surfaces on the buildings deflect heat to the public realm.
  - Wants us to think of green space, not as a destination, but as a resource that is close to residents.
- Doug Brown (DB)
  - What about structured above-ground parking?
  - Boylston - adds to height of building. Not a simple solution, especially for oddly shaped parcels.
- Eric Grunebaum (EG)
  - Wants to discuss/not lose sight about idea of a rail stop.
  - Need for developer contribution/collaboration to make a commuter rail stop happen.
  - Can you have additional lab SF to leverage enough funding to put towards infrastructure "trust"?
  - Chris Chandor - yes, but difficult to get above a six-story lab building.
  - EG - feels like additional density for labs, not at the expense of residential uses, could leverage the possibility of infrastructure investments that might not otherwise happen.
- Jennifer Gilbert (JG)
  - At the place where the bridge is proposed, how long is the walk from Fawcett Street to the Alewife T stop?
- Doug Brown (DB)
  - With a bridge, you have customers from Cambridgepark Drive that can support retail along Fawcett. A bridge supports people on both sides of the tracks.
  - Chris C - we need infrastructure to meet Envision-level vision, such as streets, district energy, the bridge, etc.
- Jennifer Gilbert (JG)
  - What is the general Healthpeak timeline for their properties? What is the phasing?



## ALEWIFE ZONING WORKING GROUP

### MEETING NOTES

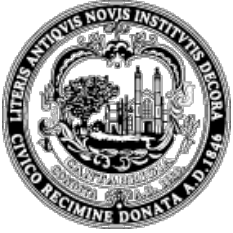


**Wednesday, September 14, 2022**

**6 – 8:30pm**

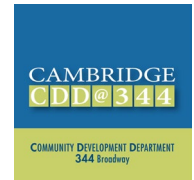
**In-person and Virtual Meeting**

- KM: Need to wait and see what comes of the zoning and the moratorium before they can start a phasing plan.
- Ann Stewart (AS)
  - Amused by the corkscrew bridge considering the CCF bridge took so long and was such a long span. Will the bridge be accessible considering things like weather in the winter?
  - Would like to see the meeting on the 29th be about details from these presentations.
  - Doesn't feel like one meeting a month is enough to discuss these issues.
- Joe Poirier (JP)
  - Doesn't think you can go to zero parking without infrastructure investment in bridge and additional buses on Concord Ave
- Mike Nakagawa (MN)
  - Doesn't want to see the loss of light industrial jobs because it provides job diversification and good paying jobs
  - Feels like there needs to be a larger planning process or master plan before we dive into zoning
- Diana Marsh (DM)
  - Have the streets been considered as a way to compensate for the challenges of below grade parking. Will also add to vibrancy of streets and sidewalks
  - Can we require buildings to provide sunshades and determine the type of materials to help reduce heating?
- Jane Carbone (JC)
  - As an affordable housing developer, they have way more challenges than a standard developer. Wants density, but also looks at the needs of the neighborhoods. Want to make sure we are building quality housing. Double-loaded corridors are not the only way to do housing. Limits creativity for unit sizes. Need to house families.
  - If density is going to be increased then the inclusionary piece should be increased, as well.
- John Chun (JCh)
  - Zero parking at this point seems to be unrealistic and idealistic given the T's reduction in services and Uber and Lyft are expensive alternatives. Also zero parking doesn't mean everyone will not have a car. That then spills over into the neighborhood
  - Need to have a traffic plan in place to determine how much you can develop in this area
- Doug Brown (DB)
  - The mandate also includes the shopping center. They are a large piece of the district. Do they have plans?
  - Boylston is proposing a land swap with city-owned land. Land swap might work for property owners to make connections that are necessary.
- Suhas Kodali (SK)
  - What do developers need from the city to make the "main street" happen? Healthpeak would need city to support the idea of where they are proposing it.
  - KM - height will help with supporting other uses



## ALEWIFE ZONING WORKING GROUP

### MEETING NOTES



Wednesday, September 14, 2022

6 – 8:30pm

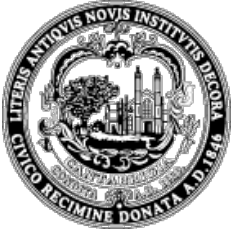
In-person and Virtual Meeting

- Eric Grunebaum
  - Would like to know what the City can/would invest in the area. We are only hearing what developers can invest.
- Joe Poirier (JP)
  - Need to have detailed conversation about transportation infrastructure to accommodate what additional height and density would bring.

#### Public Comment

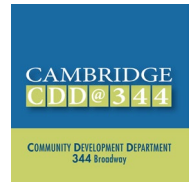
- Ann Sweeney
  - Have been asking for a master plan for years, but they still have not seen one.
- Councilor Carlone
  - Would like to provide input because the zoning will be coming to Council
  - Thought it was a useful meeting and learned a lot but would like to focus on Healthpeak since they have a big responsibility.
  - Topics to address
    - Bridge
      - MBTA will have to have a specific bridge if they build a commuter station that can connect to the station
      - Never thought about the bridge at that location. Is concerned about winter. Feels that there needs to be a "shuttle" bridge.
      - Timing of bridge is critical. Need to think hard about when it should be built. Feels that City needs to help.
    - Open Space
      - West Cambridge has a lot of open space, but it's tough for kids to get there.
      - Feels like there should be a central park. Knows that's tough with land ownership patterns, but it is necessary.
    - Retail
      - Most difficult use to pull off. Need to have it accessible to Concord. It'll be the piece that comes last
    - Residential
      - Residential numbers are critical. 3X more supportive of retail than commercial
    - Streets
      - You can't have superblocks to make a neighborhood
  - Needs to be a comprehensive plan for this area.
  - Tax Increment Financing should be explored
  - There will be community facilities needed such as schools, libraries, fire stations, etc.

Next Steps



## ALEWIFE ZONING WORKING GROUP

### MEETING NOTES



---

**Wednesday, September 14, 2022**

**6 – 8:30pm**

**In-person and Virtual Meeting**

---

- The next meeting is scheduled for September 29, 2022, at 6pm.
- It will discuss infrastructure, open space, resiliency planning, and community facilities