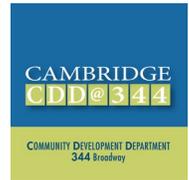




ALEWIFE ZONING COMMUNITY MEETING

MEETING NOTES



Wednesday, May 10, 2023

6 – 8:30pm

Hybrid meeting

Attendance

Working Group Members:

Suhas Kodali, Mike Nakagawa, Ann Stewart, Ann Tennis, Kelvin Moses, Diana Marsh, Lizzie Feigenbaum, John Chun, Chris Chandor, Jane Carbone, Joe Poirier, Joe Sultan

City of Cambridge Staff:

Melissa Peters, Erik Thorkildsen, Drew Kane, Daniel Messplay

Meeting Overview:

This meeting was an opportunity for the Alewife Zoning Working Group to ask questions and provide comments on the draft zoning for Alewife.

Presentation:

Melissa Peters presented a schedule and agenda to discuss final zoning text, and its path to adoption.

Discussion/Questions by working group after presentation:

Mike Nakagawa

- Question - Doesn't feel like industrial should be considered a "neighborhood use", as designated in the zoning draft.
- Disappointed that light industrial (LI) is less of priority than in the 2019 Alewife District Plan
- It doesn't have to be a neighborhood use, but it should still be incentivized.
- Light industrial jobs pay much more than other "blue collar jobs".
- Feels like we are "allowing" light industrial but not "incentivizing it".
- Why can't there be a requirement for LI similar to how we have inclusionary housing?
- LI won't be built if it's only "allowed".
 - *Daniel Messplay (DM) - Never heard from the working group that they wanted a set aside for LI uses.*
 - *DM – having a minimum set aside for LI seems more like a requirement than an incentive.*
 - *Melissa Peters (MP) - do you think LI should be more incentivized than "neighborhood uses"? We can provide a greater FAR bonus.*
- 3% neighborhood use requirement seems low.
 - *DM - The 3% neighborhood use requirement is not insignificant - need to consider that of all the GSF in the district we are talking about streetfronts and small retail footprints. It's more space than it sounds like.*

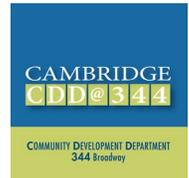
Suhas Kodali

- Seems like LI should be pulled out of neighborhood uses. Give it its own category and a greater bonus than "neighborhood uses".



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Kelvin Moses

- It's helpful to concentrate "neighborhood uses" in certain areas rather than distributing them everywhere.

Suhas Kodali

- Make sure that we're not over incentivizing LI so we don't end up with a bunch of space that isn't occupied.

Lizzie Feigenbaum

- Need LI jobs to have a diverse community of workers.

Question #2 - \$20sf for transportation infrastructure - how is that money managed?

- MP - contributions will be set aside in separate fund and managed by City Finance Department
- Ann Stewart - why is Terminal Road not listed as an option for PUD infrastructure?
 - *MP – Terminal Road is one of the three priority items identified by the working group. Compared to the bridge and commuter rail, Terminal Road is less capital intensive and therefore, we did not think warranted the FAR bonus.*

Kelvin Moses

- Clarification on where the bridge lands. The map is off. Need to look at bridge language and possibly fix the map. There is a chance the bridge lands across the railroad tracks but still within the AOD-Q boundary because of where the boundary line is drawn.

HRI

- Is the 3.0 FAR actually allow you to go to 12 stories?
 - *DM - Our hope is that enough levers will be pulled, for example open space requirements, that would allow for 12 stories due to available bonuses as well as other dimensional requirements (e.g., open space, setbacks)..*
 - *MP - We could also adjust the FAR higher if there is a concern about not hitting the permissible heights.*

Chris Chandor

- Need to bump up the FAR if you want residential buildings. This current FAR requirement will not achieve those buildings.

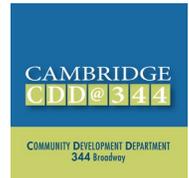
Mike Nakagawa

- Still feels that buildings are too tall, and buildings should not be allowed to be taller than mature trees. Also concerned that buildings will overshadow the trees and not allow them to grow.



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HRI

- How are curb cuts treated between zoning and city council approval. Confused about this process.

Question about making build-to zone wider and the rules around elevated walkways.

- DM - *Climate Resilient Zoning requirements kick in when it comes to placing elevated walkways or ramps/steps in front of buildings. It does not conflict with build-to zone limitations or counted against gross floor area or required setback. Want to make sure the zoning provides flexibility to allow someone to meet flood resilience standards without being in violation of the build-to zone requirements.*

Question on design standard about building façade length

- MP – *200' façade length was a recommendation from Alewife District Plan. We think it's important to keep to break up the scale of buildings. There can be smaller breaks in the façade that will still allow for landscaping or seating.*

Ann Stewart

- Can you put something in zoning about tree caliper requirements?
 - DM – *We want to avoid putting in tree planting standards since DPW has such strong requirements to begin with. Would rather have them dictate the best approach.*

Comment about changing ground story from 20 feet to 18 feet.

- Working group members are fine with decreasing ground floor height to 18 feet.

Comment on Zoning height map is inconsistent with what was shown at the last working group meeting.

MP - City will correct zoning map accordingly.

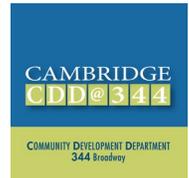
Kelvin Moses

- As we thought about the bridge and some of the land that the MBTA controls today that would help create connectivity, we don't know how that may be conveyed.
- We'd like to be able to include that in our open space requirements if we convey land to the MBTA for example.
 - Met with MBTA last week. MBTA won't be very quick with this. There is so much to execute on. Can there be flexibility on the timeline? Can we modify the requirement so that the bridge must commence at the phase rather than substantially completed?
- There is an expectation that the bridge gets done. We should be a little more practical and realistic. There are so many other infrastructure pieces including streets and open space that we are also trying to address.



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Suhas Kodali

- Is there anything that could be included that could speed up the bridge process based on conversations with the MBTA?

Anne Stewart

- What about conducting an annual review to see if construction/planning has progressed? Don't see this is the zoning draft.
- Are we only talking about the Quad? Are any of the shopping center parties involved in these conversations?
 - *Melissa Peters - At the last meeting we decided to defer the shopping center to another process down the road. This zoning is for the Quad only.*
 - *Daniel Messplay - We could do a better job of providing updates to the public on large development projects. One thing we could consider is some sort of advisory committee for larger PUD's with neighborhood uses and open space – something similar was part of the Volpe special permit.*

Anthony Galluccio

- The PUD process is way more involved with the community and check-ins than one-off development projects, which has been the experience in Alewife.

Lizzie Feigenbaum

- Concerned the open space requirement of 5% for special permit is too low.
 - *Daniel Messplay - need to clarify this - The overall open space requirement is still 20%. It is 5% of the total lot area that must be publicly beneficial. To be clearer, we could tie it to the 20% open space requirement and say that 25% of the required open space must be publicly beneficial.*
 - *For a PUD, 20% of the Development Parcel must be open space and it must all be public open space.*

Diana Marsh

- Can we have dimensions for public space rather than percentages so the space is large enough to be meaningful. which can be more meaningful.
- Is there something in the zoning that says where the open space needs to go?
 - *MP – the vision plan identifies specific areas for open space, including the 3-acre linear park. In addition to the open space percentage requirements, there are design standards including no side and front yard setbacks that push the open space to rear in contiguous nature.*

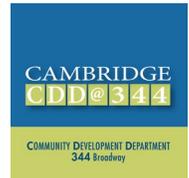
Joe Sultan

- It is very tough to add open space to the lot if we want more residential development.
- Doesn't think LI is well-suited here. It can go to cheaper land. We need more residential and commercial uses if we want to keep people here.



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Melissa Peters

- Seems there are three major changes that we've discussed.
 - Clarify open space requirement.
 - LI - greater incentives for LI uses and separate it from "neighborhood uses."
 - Require PUDs to establish advisory committees for Alewife Quad
 - Residential FAR needs to go higher to allow for residential development.

Joe Sultan

- Need to start at a FAR of 5 to get residential built.
- Streets need to be more realistic. Right now, they're too wide and will cut into developable area.
- Feels like Rafferty Park should be the boundary of the buffer zone otherwise he'll just build three story commercial buildings.
- We are losing so many people because of the cost of living here and the lack of housing.

Diana Marsh

- Are the street sections going to show more than this?
 - *Melissa Peters - this is not the full street section illustration. Just needed for zoning to set build-to zones.*

Chris Chandor

- Will the \$20 contribution to the transportation infrastructure supplant the current requirement? Currently there is a mitigation measure that requires a payment.

Public Comment

Susan Holland

- What was the decision about having a fire department or increasing those resources in the area?
- Has there been any consideration about traffic calming on Concord Ave?

Johanna Schneider (lab developer)

- Hoping that their project that started under prior zoning will be able to continue under the rules of current permit and not new zoning.

John Chun

- Still concerned about maximum height allowed under the PUD. Thinks the Finch building is a model height.

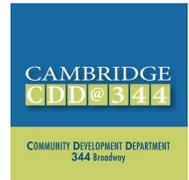
Lee Farris

- Would like to have a group that makes sure the intention and vision of this group is followed by developers.



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- Feels like changing the bridge metric leaves things too open. What about another benchmark that can be used? There needs to be a way to make sure the bridge comes at a reasonable time.
- What are the current % of LI or neighborhood uses in the neighborhood? Should know the increase from now to what is being proposed.
- Likes the discussion on publicly usable space and open space.

John Spinelli

- Represents Spinelli properties. Concerned that there are not a lot of incentives to change the conditions of their properties. Still not possible to build residential with the proposed FAR, street design, and open space requirements.
- Single property owners can't build the way someone with a PUD permit can build.