



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: June 13, 2023

Subject: Franklin et. al. Zoning Petition

Recommendation: The Planning Board does NOT RECOMMEND adoption.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

On May 16, 2023, the Planning Board (the “Board”) held a public hearing to discuss the Charles Franklin et. al. Zoning Petition (the “Petition”). Charles Franklin presented the Petition at the hearing. Staff from the City’s Community Development Department (CDD) also attended the hearing and answered questions from the Board. Following a presentation by the Petitioners, Board members posed a number of questions to the Petitioners and City staff, and discussed the merits of the Petition. **Following deliberation, the Board voted to recommend that the City Council not adopt the Petition, with seven members voting in favor.**

The following is a summary of the main comments made by Board members:

- Board members sincerely appreciated the tremendous effort that the Petitioner took to thoroughly review and recommend changes to many aspects and areas of the Zoning Ordinance.
- A consensus of Board members agreed that housing affordability is a central issue in Cambridge, and one that deserves urgency in addressing. To that end, many Board members supported policies and zoning changes that would result in an increased production of housing throughout the City.
- However, Board members were unsure as to whether the proposed zoning changes would actually have the effect of reducing housing costs. Board members expressed concern that the proposed changes could have the opposite effect, resulting in the creation of more high end units, as the development potential of the parcels would also be increased. There was also some doubt expressed about whether the dimensional standards proposed were the “right ones”, and Board members expressed support for studying the proposed standards in greater detail to understand if they would complement the existing, prevailing development pattern in many parts of the City.
- Many Board members felt that the Petition was too broad-brush to be particularly effective. Board members agreed that an overhaul of the City’s zoning should be

accompanied by detailed study and a more robust public involvement process than what exists in a public hearing process as part of a zoning petition.

- Envision Cambridge established a planning framework that recommended that specific neighborhoods and districts in the City undergo individual planning studies, with zoning recommendations that would be tailored to the unique conditions and needs of that area. Planning Board members supported this approach and noted that many of the areas proposed to be changed by the Petition were already undergoing further study and zoning changes.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary T. Flynn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "F".

Mary Flynn, Chair.