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## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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To: Board of Zoning Appeal

From: Central Square Advisory Committee

Date: March 22, 2022

Re: **Starlight Square, 84 Bishop Allen Drive (BZA 163746)**

**IRAM FAROOQ**  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

**SANDRA CLARKE**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Administration

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Deputy Director  
Chief of Planning

### Overview

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the "Committee") met on Monday, March 14, 2022 to discuss the Special Permit Application for Starlight Square at 84 Bishop Allen Drive (BZA case 163746).

Starlight Square has been operating as an Outdoor Entertainment and Recreation Facility, Outdoor Retail or Consumer Service Establishment not otherwise defined, and a Temporary Outdoor Retail or Consumer Service Use. Outdoor Entertainment and Recreation Facility in the Business B zone requires a Special Permit. Starlight Square has been operating under an executive order suspending zoning enforcement during the COVID-19 emergency.

The Committee decided to share a positive recommendation for granting the Special Permit with the Board of Zoning Appeal.

### Proposal Description

The Central Square Business Improvement District (BID) on behalf of the City of Cambridge is seeking a Special Permit to allow Starlight Square to continue operating as an Outdoor Entertainment and Recreation Facility, Outdoor Retail or Consumer Service Establishment not otherwise defined, and a Temporary Outdoor Retail or Consumer Service Use.

### Committee Comments

Michael Monestime, from the Board of Directors for the Central Square BID, presented the Starlight Square project, which has been in operation since August of 2020 and has been largely supported by the Cambridge community and the City of Cambridge. Future programming of events for Starlight Square will continue except for a reduction in evening programming and a reduction in speakers based on neighbors' requests.

Committee members expressed universal support for Starlight Square and emphatically endorsed the granting of the Special Permit being sought. They view Starlight Square as a locus of community activity and pride, a place for Cantabrigians to gather, and an opportunity for burgeoning entrepreneurs.

Committee members also voiced an interest in seeing more consistent programming throughout the day to curb periods of low or no activity. All the members think that the design of Starlight Square, including the scrim on the outside of the primary structure is attractive and engaging, and more visually appealing than a parking lot. The committee also emphasized their appreciation that a concept, such as Starlight, could be made into a reality and hopes to see it stay as a permanent “square within the Square.”

Respectfully submitted for the Committee,

*Sarah Scott*

**Sarah Scott**

Associate Zoning Planner

Community Development Department