

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD

IN RE: GENERAL HEARING

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS:

William Tibbs, Chairman  
Pamela Winters, Vice-Chairman  
Thomas Anninger, Board Member  
Hugh Russell, Board Member  
Patricia Singer, Board Member  
Steven Winter, Board Member  
Charles Studen, Board Member  
H. Theodore Cohen, Board Member

ALSO PRESENT:

Roger Boothe, Director of Urban Design  
Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager  
Susan Glazer, Deputy Director  
Liza Paden  
Les Barber, Director of Zoning  
Stuart Dash  
Laurence Pierce

-held at-

City Hall Annex  
Second Floor Meeting Room  
344 Broadway, McCusker Building  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Tuesday, January 6, 2009  
7:30 p. m.

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WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We're opening the meeting. And the first item that we have to deal with is in Executive Session to deal with some pending legislation -- litigation -- I'm sorry -- and we need a vote to do that, so can I get a motion?

STEVEN WINTER: So moved.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay.  
Seconded?

All right. All those in favor?  
(All hands shown.)

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We'll spend hopefully about 15 or 20 minutes to discuss this and we'll be back.

(Planning Board convenes into  
Executive Session.)

(Public Hearing Begins at 7:50 p.m.)

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We have concluded our Executive Session, and we're now in regular session.

Welcome to the January 6th meeting of the Cambridge Planning Board.

We have one item on the -- one public hearing tonight, and I will go over the details about that after Beth Rubenstein has given us our usual update.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Happy New Year, everybody.

At this point in the meeting we would like to anticipate the schedule going forward.

The Board will meet again on January 20th, and then we'll meet in February -- on February 3rd and 10th.

On February 3rd is our annual Town Gown presentation, and on that evening we will hear again from Lesley University, Harvard, and MIT, and -- I'm sorry, I made a

mi stake. It's February 3rd and February 17th.

And other than that, earlier this evening the Ordinance Committee held hearings on the Memorial Drive Overlay, and actually the proposal for the Planning Board for a revised zoning recommendation on Memorial Drive was very well received, and the amendment was forwarded to the whole Council by the Ordinance Committee, and that was great. And there was also a follow-up Ordinance Committee meeting on the Alexandria rezoning and there will be further discussion for that. That is still a work-in-progress. So I'll keep the Board up to date on those meetings. And I believe that's it.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: As I said, we have a public hearing tonight, it's a petition from Lesley University to amend the zoning map and the ordinance to create the Lesley Porter Square Overlay District.

And just so that you know, this is a zoning petition. The Planning Board advises the City Council relative to zoning matters, but we do not make the decision. The City Council actually makes the final decision.

And in terms of the public hearing, we do have some sign-up sheets over in the window, if you would like to speak, and if you haven't been able to, or didn't get to that sign-up sheet, I will ask before we close the public hearing for public comment if anyone else wants to speak, so you have that opportunity.

The process is that the proponents submit or does a presentation on their petition, and then after that, the Planning Board will ask any clarifying questions we might have, and then we open it for public comment.

And during that -- during the public comment, we would like you to stick to three

minutes, and Pam Winters will be our clock keeper and remind you if you're going over the time.

And when you come up to speak for the public portion of this, please come up to the podium where the mic is so the recorder can hear and see you, and they request that you give your name and your address and spell your last name, too.

So unless I missed something, I guess we can get started with the presentation from Lesley.

MARYLOU BATT: Thank you.

Good evening. My name is Marylou Batt, that's B-A-T-T, and I'm the Vice President for Administration at Lesley University, and we are very pleased to be here this evening.

As a number of you know, three years ago, we bought the church next to what was then Porter Exchange, now called University

Hall, with no sense of exactly what we were going to do with it.

And over the past three years have worked very hard to sort of figure out what would be the most appropriate thing, and at this point, we are very excited about the proposal that we have to move the art school, the Art Institute of Boston, from Kenmore Square to Porter Square.

With me this evening is Mark McKenna, Bill Doncaster, the Director of Community Affairs, Dennis Carlone, Jim Rafferty, Jason Forney, and Simeon Bruner, the architect, for the project. And George Smith as well over here.

And also here are a number of people from the working group that we have been working with very hard and a number of community people as well, and we're very pleased at all of the assistance that we've really had in terms of trying to develop a

plan that we think will best serve both Lesley and the neighborhood and the Porter Commercial District. We're very excited about this and we hope that you will share our enthusiasm as well.

I think many of you know that we have had a number of proposals and spent a fair amount of time talking with the Agassiz Baldwin Neighborhood Council, the Porter Square Neighborhood Association, had three public meetings that were well attended, some of you were in attendance at some of the meetings, and some of you -- one of you was in attendance at all three of the meetings, as I recall, as well as, obviously, the Lesley Neighborhood Working Group.

And this group has been particularly helpful. It has been in existence for two years. The members were appointed by the City Manager and with Community Development staff and Beth, I think we've had a very good

exchange about where we're going and made changes to our planning process that has really improved by this process.

What you will see here is a proposal for an overlay district because one of the issues that we've heard from the community was this question of "Tell us what you're going to do with all of your property."

When we come before you for the Town Gown presentation, we do now have a campus planned that's been approved by our trustees and we're excited about that.

I think a number of you know we've also entered into a partnership with the Episcopal Divinity School and are in the process now of jointly sharing their facility as well.

So, we really look at Lesley as having three very specific campuses, the Porter Campus, the Traditional Quad Campus and Brattle Campus and we're looking at

various placements there.

So, we're very excited about this, and I don't want to take too much time in sort of the opening piece because I want to turn it over to Jim who will talk about the mechanics, and Dennis, who will talk further about the planning aspects, and then to Simeon -- I'm sorry -- then to Stan who is going to talk about the Art School a little bit, and then to Simeon who will talk about the actual project to give you some background on it.

With that, I will turn it over to Jim. Thank you very much.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Good evening. As we say in Cambridge, bon ami. James Rafferty on behalf of Lesley University.

What I'm passing out and wanted to share with the Board is some -- in addition to the text that was filed, the original petition, there had been a series of ongoing

meetings with the working group that Ms. Batt described that was appointed by the City Manager and contained in the red language is some additional language that we have been working on. And I would hesitate to say that there's a complete consensus at this point about that language, but that language reflects areas where we have been asked to enhance the petition, and it deals primarily with a few specific topics, particularly the introduction of an open space requirement at the three sites that are involved here, and also the possible treatment of a future parking facility or parking structure.

Without getting too far ahead of Mr. Carlone, who will take you through the planning rationale behind the petition, in its simplest form what the petition seeks to do is to extend the Business C Zoning District about a block below from the corner of Roseland Street to encompass the Prospect

Street church site, and then to -- then take all of those properties in the Business C District owned by Lesley and create this overlay district.

The concept in the overlay district, meaning that we could -- Lesley was asked to begin to envision what life might be like if the surface parking lots on the westerly side of Mass Avenue on the corner of Mount Vernon Street were to be developed some day, and similarly, would there be an opportunity to change the character of the rear of University Hall from the -- its origins as a surface parking lot for Sears Roebuck and perhaps think about a building that might actually contribute to a campus-like setting back there.

And as we thought about that, we've had discussions about what qualities or characteristics that space should have.

I should make very clear to you that

both of those locations, the area behind University Hall, as well as the surface lots, are many, many years in the future. There are no designs or plans for that. But as part of the dialogue with the neighborhood over the past many months, it was suggested that this exercise needs to encompass what those possibilities might be as well.

Initially, it was more focused on the AIB location, and it was that discussion that led to the suggestion that perhaps an overlay district, a land-use mechanism that's in place in many other areas of the City, might be effective here, and Dennis will take you through all of the particulars of that.

We have -- as I noted, we have been meeting with the working group. There has been one meeting with the Ordinance Committee, and at that time, we made it very clear that we were still working on language. And I think it's fair to say

tonight that we see that as an ongoing exercise. There are a few months left in the life of this petition. It's in its early stages. I think it expires at some point in mid-March.

Our hope is that we would be able to continue to work with the working group on the language -- additional language you see here tonight, and some updated information around traffic, a legitimate concern about traffic, and particularly, parking, and how it would be managed.

But what's really happening here is the opportunity that Lesley has achieved is occurring as a result of two significant moves; first and foremost, of course, the acquisition of the church site, and secondly, the acquisition of the Episcopal Divinity School properties, which is going to allow for the relocations of certain functions that are currently in the University Hall Building

to the EDS site. It's one of the graduate schools that will be going there. That's going to free up some parking opportunities in the University Hall parking lot.

So, you will see tonight, and I learn from the presentation by Mr. Bruner and his colleague, that the AIB building itself that's proposed to take place on the Prospect Street church site doesn't contain any additional parking. But the expectation is that some day parking could be relocated into a structure and create opportunities both on those westerly lots along Mass Ave as well as the area behind the building.

The other thing worth noting is that the church itself is currently the subject of a landmark proceeding at the Historical Commission, so the proposal you will see tonight actually involves some changes to the church, a relocation of the structure on the lot, a modification, a lowering of the

church, and hopefully, actually a removal of a portion of the church that wasn't original. This is a three-legged stool. There's jurisdictional issues with the Historical Commission, obviously with yourself and the City Council around the ultimate zoning.

So Lesley actually engaged in a period of initial design study with their design team and the neighbors, but has, for the most part, taken a bit of a hiatus on that. And now, to move through the zoning site, this is currently a Residence B location, somewhat of an anomaly on Mass Avenue to have Residence B within 400 feet of a transit station, the largest commercial corridor in the City.

So, the uses that are proposed here are not permitted. As you know, only single- and two-family houses are even permitted on Residence B.

So, very little can be done here without the adoption of some type of a zoning amendment, and that's what's led to many years now of conversation about trying to achieve zoning that's appropriate for the site and also responsive to the issues that have emerged as a result of much neighborhood communications.

So, having said all that now, I know you are all familiar with Mr. Carlone, and he has been a valuable addition to the team, both in terms of his planning perspective, he's a neighbor of the site, he lives in the Neighborhood 9 Area and he has a long association with Lesley, and his contribution has been extremely helpful, and he is largely the architect of the language and the map changes that we're proposing here.

Thank you.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE &  
ASSOCIATES): Thank you. Pleasure to be

presenting tonight.

What we're going to do in my presentation is go through the analysis drawings, the urban design drawings, which hopefully will lead to a pretty clear understanding of our proposal. It's very simple, as you probably already know.

I'm sorry to be I'm blocking you there.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: No.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): We were going to give a little longer presentation, but we're cutting it shorter. And now we're done.

(Laughter.)

No; now we're starting.

From a zoning point of view, there are a few things that we are seeking, and the first one is to extend the Business C District 160 feet, approximately 160 feet south on one side of Mass Avenue, and I'll

show you that in a drawing form shortly.

We also want to allow the Art Institute to be built on the existing church site. As you know, with the Residential B zoning, you can't build an art institute, as Jim alluded to, you can only build housing.

We asked to set the floor area ratio at 2.5 in the overlay, and we'll make a case for that as well that I think will make sense.

And, finally, to allow the transfer of development rights. A number of the neighbors have asked us to not develop the properties west of Mass Avenue at a 2.5, but at a lower 2.0, which we've agreed to, and we're transferring the difference over to the Art Institute. But we're going to go through that step-by-step and I think it will flow pretty well.

As Marylou mentioned there's three campuses, and the Art Institute, it's been an

integral plan for Lesley ever since Lesley and the Art Institute became one to bring the Art Institute to Cambridge.

And having worked in East Cambridge at the Lechmere Canal, or the Kendall Square area, I would have loved to have a use like the Art Institute come to those areas because of the qualities that will come with that.

So, at the Border Campus at the top, we're served by the Kendall Line -- I'm sorry, the Red Line, and we also have the Suburban Railroad Station there. It actually has larger capacity than Kendall Square Subway or Harvard Square Subway because of the two lines. So the capacity is clearly there.

Lesley unites the three campuses with a shuttle, and this will be a much shorter shuttle route shortly once the AIB moves over to Cambridge. And the actual

distance between the two campuses is about 20 minutes by foot, between the three, campuses, the new Brattle, Quad and then Porter. And you can see the walking distance, the quarter mile -- half mile walking distances.

The whole philosophy of Lesley is, it's pretty exciting, in the sense that the president has a mandate to make Lesley -- Mass Avenue part of Lesley's campus in the sense that it is part of the student union, if you will. He even advertises, discusses with future parents the notion of Lesley being in neighborhoods and not being isolated on a campus.

So, there seems to be a very nice match with the philosophy and with the existing circumstances.

This is the existing conditions. The blue line that you see is to show approximately that route. It comes from

south of Mass Avenue at the Quad, Brattle, and then up goes through the parking lot in the back, but what this also shows you is that -- and Jim alluded to it -- here is the T station, it's approximately 550 feet from the T station to the proposed Art Institute site right there. And then we listed all the square footages just to give you an introduction.

University Hall, as you know, has two floors of retail with academic above, 230,000 square feet, sort've a quiet building on -- at 815 Somerville Avenue is where there is academic and administration, under 30,000 square feet.

Lesley also owns a house, or more like a small apartment building, a former house, that non-Lesley people rent. Of course, there's the church itself, 15,000 square feet, and then there are three parking lots that total up to 272 spaces.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Excuse me?

DENNIS CARLONE: Yes.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Could you just be clear as to what you mean when you refer to the "westerly"?

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): Thank you, Bill, that makes sense.

North is straight up.

These are the westerly parking lots that came with the acquisition of the old Sears building. They use that for parking as you recall.

So, if you add up the spaces, this is a 12,000 square foot lot, 13,000, if you add that up with what's behind University Hall, that adds up to the 272 spaces. And everybody, or just about everybody in this room, would like to get rid of the on-grade parking, Lesley, non-Lesley, neighbors, and that is our long-term goal.

This is the existing zoning. As I mentioned a little earlier, the proposed Art Institute site right there is in a Residential B. The use itself was grandfathered and the church was moved in the 1800s.

Residential B has the lowest floor area ratio and allowed height in the code, and, yet, it's on Mass Avenue.

In fact, it is -- this low density occurs only one other place on the whole length of Mass Avenue, and that is when it borders Arlington. Everywhere else there's a higher density and sometimes it's just higher density housing and not commercial, but it's a mixture.

As to the yellow, it, of course, represents housing going all around, but there's some dense areas and a darker yellow, which is a little hard to read on this screen.

Of course, this is a lower density commercial area. And then, of course, the Residential B, which is the heart of Porter Square.

(Pause.)

Did I say "residential"? Sorry. Business B -- Business C, I'm sorry.

Business C allows building heights up to 55 feet, and for commercial properties allows a 1.25 FAR at the T station location and close to that.

I won't -- we have history maps. I will just give you the summary of that. The zoning history, all four, '24, 1943, '72 and '82 predate the arrival of the Red Line station.

The zoning density for the residential -- for the Business C is 30 percent of what it was in 1981. It was a 4.0, which I think most of us would agree, would be too much, but it has been down-zoned

twice since the Red Line has opened up, basically. And from a smart growth point of view, there's some question there.

The zoning height also, and now in Residential B, believe it or not, was 85 feet high in 1972 -- actually 1981. And we're, again, saying that that's not appropriate, we're not asking for that. You will see that we're asking with the Residential C to have a maximum of a 55-foot height.

This is the current zoning as you know it. There it is; Jim's right, it's Residential C.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Business C.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): Did it again. I'm sorry. Business C.

Thank you, Jim.

And the proposed Art Institute site (indicating). And around the Art Institute site, of course, on one side there's the

Business C of University Hall on the property, and across the street there is the Business C of Oxford Court and then, of course, there's these buildings, none of which meet the Residential B mandate of use or density. And all we're questioning is that on Mass Avenue, that close to a T station, perhaps a reasonable change makes a lot of sense.

So, what we're proposing, quite simply, is take the Business C District and, as I said earlier, extending it, this Business C District here, and extending it 160 feet south to just cover the Art Institute site, the land that Lesley owns.

And what this does is, as I said earlier, it allows the Art Institute use on the site, but even further than that, it acknowledges that this site is part of the Porter Square Center and use.

The proposed Lesley Porter Overlay basically connects all the properties that I alluded to earlier. It is a funny thing, but you can see that it includes those areas that are in Cambridge.

When the neighbors approached us, and -- some of the neighbors approached us and asked us to look at the overall site, not just the Art Institute site, which made a lot of sense, and we suggested at that time that an overlay be looked into, and that's why you see definition of an overlay. It was just to explain what that meant.

So, as Jim said earlier, we wanted to respond to the neighborhood request, and it's been a very good exercise, I think all around, for Lesley as well, but the sites that we're not talking about tonight, that is, the parking lots west of Mass Avenue, and the large parking lot behind University Hall, that really is a 20-year-out perspective.

There's been no discussion on that.

What we have asked this for is to set this at a 2.5 FAR, and at a 2.5, the reason we could ask for that number, we can build the Art Institute, we can put a building -- which we'll show you the outline of in a moment -- approximately three stories behind University Hall, which the neighbors have asked, including open space, and to maintain only a maximum of 40-foot high buildings, which is basically a three-story office building, at the smaller parking lot sites. It would allow the transfer of development rights, and we agree with the neighbors that we would limit the FAR to 2, at the two sites that are closest to housing on that side.

Also, at the neighborhood request, we'll restrict dorm -- we will not allow dormitory use on the two Mass Avenue parcels west of Mass Avenue.

The neighbors on Mount Vernon Street have asked us to do that, and Lesley -- assuming we can get the whole overlay approved, Lesley has agreed to that.

The neighbors have also asked us and, of course, as you know, Lesley does this now, University Hall, to encourage retail and arts on the first floor, make them more of a dynamic mix and we -- and that's been Lesley's approach all along, and we have agreed and we'll show you a drawing of that outline in a moment.

We know that we are changing the existing zonings where -- or we hope to change to a Business C, but we will maintain all transitional setbacks and height limitations that occur, that is, within 50 feet, we cannot go up higher than 35 feet along that residential low-density edge which we will maintain.

This, again, is more for the

neighbors. Of course, anything we do, even if we get the zoning exactly as we have proposed, will require a special permit and will come before you.

This is the potential development drawing. We felt a little uncomfortable doing this because we weren't even sure of some of the uses, like in the back lot. But if I can, I'll just walk through it pretty quickly.

I've already mentioned the western -- well, the Art Institute of Boston is this location, and that's an earlier outline of the building. It's actually a little more of a variety on this back facade now. Simeon's going to go into that in detail, but it integrates a number of the issues.

Neighbors have asked for some open space, and what we've proposed is that there would be a meeting place in front of the Art

Institute. We've proposed where it's facing south along Roseland Street, it's very appropriate to have a park or a meeting place right at the end of Frost Street, and there are setbacks along Frost Street which incorporate benches here and that goes right through the site.

So, what this does is, it addresses the neighbors wish for open space in a way that works with Lesley and doesn't defeat trying to maintain an accurate frontage down here. Simeon will go into those uses in a moment.

They've asked for retail to maintain it and we are proposing retail in the two Mass Avenue buildings, a gallery and a public-accessible art library in the Art Institute, of course, maintaining University Hall.

They've asked to have a building plan that could allow neighbors to walk

through and around to Porter Square. So, instead of walking through a large parking lot, they had asked us for ways to get through the back, and we said that we would do that in the form of a -- more of an urban form, which is, frankly, with streets, sidewalks, and open space, so we've also talked about that there would be a cut-through through whatever this building is.

This building -- there are a number of uses. A portion of it might -- if we're going to develop any of this, parking has to be built back here.

What you see in front of you is a diagram which shows the road going into the parking either below grade or on the first level and below grade. The neighbors would prefer that it all be below grade. I think we probably all do if we could do that.

Let me see if there's anything else.

Excuse me for a second.

(Pause.)

That pretty much covers what you see in front of you.

And the height of these buildings, as I said, this is a three-story building, a three-story building. These are not big buildings. This is under 30,000 square feet.

In the back, with the 2.5 FAR and the transfer of development rights, we could build approximately 80,000 square feet, and we're seeing that as probably a three-story building. This would be a three-story sort've buffer building, and this might go up to four, but the idea is to make the street work as well as we can.

And, finally, the neighbors, as I said earlier, have asked us to further the retail presence on Mass Avenue, and this is what you see. This rose color is where we

think the retail will likely be. It's approximately 45 feet deep in both of these locations here.

This is the existing University Hall, and you can see the extensive amount of active ground for use there.

And then at the Art Institute, Sim will talk about the gallery and the library as well.

So, what we see are the community benefits, and there are a number of them, and one is the Art Institute in Porter Square, the ground floor retail and arts along Mass Avenue, more predictable development that we've written some criteria and we talked with the neighbors about characteristics of the buildings that you've seen, very important to remove the on-grade parking lots, which everybody wants, and to encourage a much better smart growth approach in Porter Square.

Lesley is very comfortable being in Porter Square, and they want very much to make Porter Square better.

So, just in summary, the Zoning Petition, again, is to extend the Business C Line on Roseland Street down approximately 160 feet on one side of Mass Avenue to allow the Art Institute to actually happen at this location, to set the overall FAR at 2.50, and as I mentioned earlier, that's less than it certainly was 25 years ago before the T station, and to allow a transfer of development rights.

We tried to do this in a very urban Cambridge-way, as far as building forms in the notion of open space, and we hope you agree with that.

Thank you very much.

Stan Trecker will be the next speaker. He's the Dean of the Art Institute.

STAN TRECKER: Good evening. My

name is Stan Trecker. I'm the Dean of the Art Institute of Boston. I'm happy to be here tonight.

I must say I feel like I have the most fun part of the presentation here tonight and the most exciting part because I can talk about the arts and talk about what it means to bring an art school to Cambridge, Porter Square.

This project is about far more than a new building. It's really about the arrival of an entire community of faculty, artists, students, visiting artists who come to Porter Square and add new strength to Cambridge's cultural resources.

We are currently located, as Marylou said in the beginning, in Kenmore Square in Boston. We have been there for about 40 years. We are an institution that is 100 years old. We'll celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2012. And I've got to say it

would be a wonderful coincidence if we were at Porter Square at that point.

We expect to join an existing community of artists in Cambridge and arts organizations in Cambridge, and hope that by doing so, we'll be creating a new and dynamic environment for the arts in Porter Square.

For example, even though the relocation is certainly a few years away, we have already been in discussions with the Cambridge Arts Council and its Director Jason Weeks and working with him to set up an advisory group of artists and citizens from Cambridge and members the AIB community to explore ways in which all of us could work together to collaborate to create new programs in the arts for Cambridge and Cambridge's citizens.

Likewise, we have met with the North Cambridge Artists Association to explore

those same kind of opportunities with those -- that group of artists, and we have met with the art director, the new art director for Cambridge's Public School Systems to talk about ways in which our faculty and our students and our programs can enhance the art curriculum of the City of Cambridge in their school system.

With that in mind, I would like to show you just a few quick images that reflect AIB programs and the potential for the future relocation of AIB to Porter Square.

This, for instance, is a photo of painting instructor in one of our undergraduate courses.

AIB has two missions, and it's very important that I make this point: We are not just an educational institution that teaches future artists and designers who expect to go out into careers in those fields. We also present a year-round schedule of cultural

programs that are open to the public, exhibitions in several galleries, visiting artists, lectures by artists from around the world actually. I'll give you an example in a minute of some of those performances, gallery talks, et cetera.

We were founded in 1912, we offer a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, we have about a little over 500 undergraduate students and a little under 100 master students.

We also collaborate with other parts of the university to offer dual degree in art education and in expressive therapies. You can see our majors there.

I must say, too, that as something that many people are not aware of, that Lesley has this long, long distinguished career in education, it's well-known for its educational programs, but at this point in time, and it has been building up over several years, some 30 percent of all

Lesley's students are taking courses in the arts. So that the arts are kind of a hidden gem at Lesley that's just beginning to blossom.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the impact that art organizations and colleges of arts can have on a community, on a neighborhood.

This is an example of that. This is in Baltimore, Maryland, Institute College of Art built a new building and it revitalized the entire neighborhood there. It was a bold design. As you can see, this was a grand opening ceremony when they invited the neighbors to come in and be part of celebrations.

Similarly, this gives you a reflection of art students in the streets of Providence, Rhode Island, where Rhode Island School of Design is located, and you can see here an evening where there's an

exhibition opening in a gallery, and you can see the street activity taking place.

Again, getting back to AIB, in particular, this is another art class that we offer now in Cambridge.

These are students working in a computer lab on courses related to digital technologies; an exhibition opening in our main gallery in Kenmore Square right now; another exhibition opening in one of the student galleries; an installation piece that was commissioned to be created for our galleries.

Years ago, a few years ago, we invited the artist, Chuck Close, to both exhibit his work at AIB and to give a public lecture. It was an outstanding event for the college. It's indicative of the kind of artists that we try to bring to the Cambridge and Boston area.

We have in our master program a

series of talks twice a year called Art Talks and they include artists from around the world.

This is an artist, Lupe Vichova, who's an illustrator/designer, she had an exhibition in our space in September and October and gave a public talk.

This is an artist from -- a film artist from Austria who was teaching in our Master of Fine Arts Program and gave a public talk about her work.

Many of our students and faculty participate in community art-based projects. This happened to be a music-and-art making endeavor in the Cambridge area. That's one of our student's painting there.

Students also get involved with faculty in murals. We have done murals in schools, we have done murals in community organizations, in health centers, and these are efforts where we work with the

community to try to create a more interesting, lively, creative atmosphere for those institutions.

And we also do a very well-known, at this point, and many years in operation, high school program, a school -- a program for high school students on Saturdays during the academic year, and then in the summer, a very intensive month-long professional program for kids interested in the arts.

It's very rigorous, five days a week in the summertime, and this is one of those classes.

This is another student getting instruction in that program.

I must say that Cambridge Rindge and Latin students are already attending these courses in Boston. They have done so for years. We look forward to moving here and we can include more of them.

And, finally, a closing note, some

of the people in our audience actually were able to take advantage of this, but recently in November we featured the artist Ubin from China, one of the most prominent artists in China, contemporary artist in China, and he gave a lecture at the church, at the site of the future -- hopefully, future home of AIB.

It was a sold-out audience -- "sold out" is the wrong word because it was free and open to the public. But it was a capacity crowd, a phenomenal lecture.

He was, I must say, in my experience, one of the most interesting artists I have come across and enjoyed by all.

That is a picture of the lecture taking place in the lecture hall.

And that's my presentation. I hope you enjoyed it.

Thank you. And I now turn it to over to Simeon and Jason.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE &  
ASSOCIATES): Thank you, Dean Trecker.

SIMEON BRUNER (BRUNER/COTT &  
ASSOCIATES): Hi. I'm Simeon Bruner from  
Bruner/Cott. I'm the architect for the  
project, and I would like talk to you a  
little bit about the building insofar as we  
know it because it's really a bit of a  
backwards and forwards. We really need to  
understand what the building needs to be  
before you get to the zoning of that. So we  
really need to know what zoning allows before  
we can do the building.

What we really have is a massing  
scheme which talks about the issues and  
really points in the direction we want to go  
insofar as we know that.

Now, we are the northern piece of  
the -- piece of the Lesley campus, we are the  
side bounded by Mass Ave and Roseland, as we  
talked about, we are the site of the existing

church next to University Hall and the vacant lot next to it.

We've just -- our first thing we did was to work with Lesley to try to understand what Lesley's goals were for the project, and there are a number them: A suitable design, good neighbor, the emerging arts in Porter Square and so forth, which is interesting, interesting to us, we do a lot of work with college universities, and I think Lesley was unique in setting forth their goals before we started. They wanted to rebuild space, kind of integrate that space into the neighborhood.

Similarly, we met with the neighborhood to try to understand what the neighborhood community objectives might be, to be part of Mass Ave, don't canonize, respect the venture qualities, and respect the former church, the historic church.

So, we began to understand what the needs of the -- of Lesley University would be for a new art school, and to that end, we just finished about a year-and-a-half study, we'd done a comprehensive program of the space, about a hundred and roughly 15,000 square feet of need of which about 15,000 can be accommodated in existing University Hall. About 100,000 needs to be on the site. And these spaces range from the general spaces, auditoriums, classes, and seminars rooms all the way to the very specific studio spaces, which are really more private, more educational, and there's a range from public to private, from larger to smaller in here.

And all that space really does have to be accommodated on this site.

Well, how do you begin to think about that site?

Well, the first thing you think

about is the historic church. This church was moved from Harvard Square in 1867 when they jacked it up, added a floor underneath it to get more space, and they, later in 1872, added a rear to it.

The problem was, of course, that it changed the way the church was on the street. Well, we really have a tri-partite approach to this, frankly.

And the first piece is to retain the existing church, and frankly, move it back to its historic perspective, to create an arts common around which the new buildings will be built, and then some public area on Roseland Street, which is really the main entrance to the university -- to the facility.

How are we going to do that?

Well, our intent would be to take the church, the original piece of the church, and to create a new foundation on the same

site for the church, two stories down, and to simply move the church to that new foundation.

What does that do for us?

Well, it frees up the remaining site, and it also brings the church down to the ground in the same perspective as it was originally. It re-creates the relationship between the church and the ground, and also gives us a way to deal with the site that makes more sense because now we can put two new floors underground next to the church and build a new building in the shadow of Porter Exchange, and therefore, we put the more articulated, more exciting, more historic building in with the community buildings and we put the newer building, the blocker building, if you will, next to Porter Exchange, and really concentrate the students where they belong and preserve the church around a transparent courtyard, the arts

courtyard.

So, in working through this with the neighborhood, what we say is, "Look, public access, public access." The church becomes a library. We really can leave the church pretty much as it is if we keep it for a library space, which means not only preserve the outside, but the inside as well, which is very exciting to us. So there was a lot of work being done with the church becoming condos and things before, well, this one will stay pretty much as it is exterior/interior.

We created a new transparent space between them, and then a public gallery on the ground floor and the public entrance for the arts complex into the building.

And where it comes to -- as we begin to push and pull, looking at the current zoning objectives, there's a three-story building on the rear, a five-story building

on Roseland, some setbacks to respect the current zoning, and then an open space between the -- or a translucent covered open space between the existing church and the new place -- building.

We sit about half of our square footage below grade. We have a real advantage here in that the university can live with a whole bunch of space used for like photography, for graphic design, for illustration. So almost half of our space can go below grade, and we bring a -- we lower the Arts Quad, or the Arts Court, down one story to bring light into the lower floors and create a very exciting public private space, which is also the entrance to the university facility, and this is set against the Oxford Court and the other side of Mass Ave. So, looking right at Mass Ave., you get the sense of scale there.

So what that building would look

like would be the relocated church, the three-story rear building, and then a five-story new building with a glass arts tower in between.

But it's very important when we work with Mass Ave and the open space, the public open space be on Mass Ave supporting the public entrances to the building, to the main entrance to the building and the entrance to the church itself.

In the church would be the arts library, we'd move the arts -- leaving the church pretty much intact and the interior similar to the way RISD did to a bank. And we can talk about banks and churches, but that's another discussion. I think I would rather be in a church these days.

Gallery space, of course. And some gallery space at -- existing space at Lesley right now, or some gallery space we just finished at Mass Mocha, the new Sol Wick

Gallery, which opened about two months ago, we designed those.

The Arts Quad, the Arts Common, looking in from the sidewalk and the arts -- the artist's rendering, I have not designed it, but showing you the open space, the church, the main entrance into the university facility, and the ultimate that we would try to achieve there, and similar glass-covered monumental spaces elsewhere. And, of course, teaching spaces for teaching art within the space.

So we have essentially a building that was really two new wings, plus a glass-covered space and then the restored church.

Now, what would that look like from the street?

Well, the new building would be here, the church would be moved down and forward, there would be a covered area for a

bus stop on the street, and interestingly enough, the church would actually be more prominent on the street than it was historically.

What would it look like from the south of Mass. Avenue?

Again, the church in its new relationship to the street, its oldest relationship, I suppose, to the street and the new proposed building. And, by the way, in block form. We're not suggesting a glass building. Quite the contrary. It needs to be a more solid building. It's simply the volume with which we're going to work to design a new building.

And this is the existing church jacked up on its additional one story.

So, again, looking across the street, the relationship between the church and the new building. And, again, we've worked hard to understand the proportions of

the church and how the proportions of the new building might relate to the proportions of the church and how the new building might relate to the existing Porter Exchange.

And here is the outline of the existing church on its pedestal currently in relation to the new building.

So the job that remains for us, assuming we get the go-ahead, is to understand what does this exactly mean to work with the Historic Commission to find a way to attach a glass structure in an appropriate way to an existing historic building has opened up some dialogue there, and find a way to build a new building that relates to the proportion of the existing church and the other buildings on Mass Ave and serves the appropriate function, provide a public space and other space on there.

We have been talking with the community groups and working groups about

the issues there, about what those spaces should be, a place to sit, engage with passersby and the functions on the open space and how they relate to the existing building and to the new building we've proposed. And some of the things should be public art in some form or scale that's appropriate, sitting places, and places that are comfortable to be in, shelter, allow bus stops, and actually encourage a visitor to enjoy.

What's interesting to me is that the scale of this building is essentially two corridors. This is a rather narrow building and we've achieved it by, again, putting much of the massing underground, by having public space in the glass and then working our way backwards into the part of the university (inaudible).

So that's really where our job is, once you hopefully recommend us, is to

understand how this really works, not from a (inaudible) perspective, but more from a scale perspective design.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Do we have any clarifying questions for the Planning Board?

I think, Pam, you had one.

PAMELA WINTERS: I do. I have a question for Dennis.

I was wondering if you could show me where the boundary line currently is for the Res B going down Mass Ave, just the existing zoning for Res B.

So going down Mass Ave roughly to here?

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): Yes.

PAMELA WINTERS: Okay. So, a few blocks beyond the church?

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): There it is right there. We'll

go to the bigger one.

So Newport Road is the road between what appears to be townhouses, which is more of an apartment building, and it's these lots right there where, for some reason, what you would normally expect for zoning on Mass Avenue is not there. It's been that way for a long time.

Does that answer the question?

PAMELA WINTERS: Yes, it does.

Thank you very much.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I have a somewhat related question: Do you know what the existing FAR is for the current -- and I guess I wanna get a sense of how much capacity is there on the site as it's now.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): Well, just as a reference point, the University Hall, the former Sears building, is approximately a 2.0 FAR, which is for the whole parking lot as well.

The church structure is a little over --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: No. I was only concerned about the business. I just want to get --

JAMES RAFFERTY: There's a current Business C zoning district for FAR for the commercial is 1.25.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: No; I wanted to know what the existing is.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Gross --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yeah. I mean, we don't have to answer it now if you don't have a quick answer for me.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): No, we can tell you that.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I just want to know what the existing FAR is on the property in terms of the -- and it really is the size of the original building and --

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE &

ASSOCIATES): Well, again, this is a 2.0 FAR.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Existing?

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE &

ASSOCIATES): Existing.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE &

ASSOCIATES): And that would be the best analysis.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Well, yeah, everything else has no --

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE &

ASSOCIATES): If you're asking what that is, it's --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I'm not.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE &

ASSOCIATES): Then I'm not going to tell you.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

Yes; Patricia?

PATRICIA SINGER: The new overlay

drawings show a line crossing over Somerville Avenue and over the MBTA lines; could you tell me if you have air rights?

JAMES RAFFERTY: That's a good question.

No, we don't have air rights, and what we have read -- what our intent was, was that it was -- it would treat the railroad public way as a street, so that it just allows -- gives us a way to -- I'm just getting the boards out in case we need it -- a way to connect all of Lesley's properties.

And if, indeed, we have done that in an incorrect way, we're happy to reconsider how those properties are connected.

PATRICIA SINGER: Thank you.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): You're referring to this area over the railroad tracks, and what we just tried to do, as I said, was just, as succinctly as possible, connect 815 back, and

if we need to modify that, we'll certainly modify it.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Could I follow up on that question?

In the eastern corner, is there a reason why the boundary, the overlay doesn't seem to follow the lot line?

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): This is the City line.

JAMES RAFFERTY: The municipal line.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay, fine.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): We agree, it looks strange. It looks incorrect. That's the only reason.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Okay.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: And I guess I have a question that's really for staff, I guess, maybe Les, and that is, that in anticipation of what I perceived might be issues that may come up with some of the public's questions, can you just explain

the overlay mechanism and how it works particularly relative to base zoning because I think that's a critical piece of this, what's allowable in base zoning, and what does the overlay allow you to do in order to -- and it does need to be specific to these details, it's just the concept.

LES BARBER: In this case, it gets fairly complicated because we have a base district and we have the Mass Ave overlay district, which basically are applying to your normal commercial and housing kinds of uses, and then on top of those two layers would be this third layer, which is more specific to institutional uses, which grant additional floor area for that and allow transfer of development rights and other privileges.

Many of the base district BCU requirements are continuing to apply in this

case. Many of the Mass Ave overlay district design requirements continue to apply unless they're specifically exempted in the Lesley Porter Overlay District.

So, it's very possible that all of the provisions of the two lower layers continue to apply and this would be a third layer on top of all of that.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

I think we're ready to start the public comment portion of the hearing; however, I do want to -- before we start, a lot of people have signed up to speak, and I just want to make sure we're very clear that we currently have a zoning proposal before us, and in order to illustrate what that zoning potential could be, we also have some project-related things, but we typically don't deal with the project-related things at the zoning piece.

The project things we have here, and

I think you tried to say that in terms of your block drawings, was that it's illustrative of the potential that can be there, and the whole purpose of that is to help us understand the zoning implications, but this is not -- I just want to say that this is not the forum to talk about specifics of the projects, except for how the zoning will allow -- the things that the zoning will allow. It's a little complicated, but we do find that in the past whenever we do a zoning petition and the proponents present a project as an illustration, people really focus on the project and say, "Well, why do we have trees here, and why don't you have ..." you know, we really have to kinda understand and stick to the fact that we're talking about the zoning. The purpose of the project illustrations is to talk about the zoning implications and the zoning potential but -- I just want to say that.

So, with that in mind, we'll start the public hearing process. I just want to remind folks to come up to the podium and speak.

We would like you to speak for about three minutes, and we'll give you a heads up when your time is getting tight.

Please give your name and your address and spell your last name.

The first person I have who has requested to speak is KD Mernin.

Also, it's probably, since there are a lot of folks, it's probably easier for me to let you know who the next person is so if you can, you can kind've gear yourself up if you're physically able.

KD MERNIN: Who is next?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. And the next person will be Emma Lang.

KD MERNIN: Again, my name is KD Mernin, and it's two letters, K-D.

I'm here both as a resident of North Cambridge, 14 Rice Street, and as the chair of NOCA, North Cambridge Arts.

Obviously, I'm here supporting this very, very strongly. We have a very strong arts group here in North Cambridge that is growing, and our group of about 75 now is very much in support of this use coming to the Porter Square area.

It's -- if you look across the country when you see arts -- artists groups moving into areas, it does something just because they're artists groups, there's a little bit more creativity in what we'll do and what we'll tolerate, and we tend to get people to join us. There's a lot more people who join us. We revitalize areas.

If you go further up north of Mass Ave of Porter Square, you're starting to see a lot of empty storefronts further up, and we were getting more and more and more,

and that's my area where I am.

I'm hoping that something as vital as this will help us to expand the retail use, and I really am talking about retail that is up, going up further, and I hope that we don't get bogged -- a project of this scope does not get bogged down or held up by parochial sort've concerns, like parking and traffic.

While those things are important, you live in a city, we all live in a city. We all need to be a bit more open to what that means, and that's pretty much what I wanted to say.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Emma, and the next person is looks like Peter Kinder.

EMMA LANG: As usual, I'm the youngest.

My name is Emma Lang, L-A-N-G, I live 1457 Park Road, Northwest in Washington,

D.C. but that's not why I'm here. I have enough issues down there. I'm a resident of Frost Terrace, one Frost Terrace for 22 years, I graduated from Rindge and Latin in 2003 and I served for three of those years as a student representative to the School Committee, a very noisy student representative.

I'm here to be noisy again because this project risks turning our neighborhood into a campus. Now, most of us, I think, in this room lived on campuses, they're great, you know, when you're 19 years old and there are students rushing around, it's really exciting, but if you change the zoning here, you will make my house, the house that I grew up and the house that as soon as I'm out of graduate school and can find a job, I want to move back into, sitting in the middle of a college campus, and there will be no -- the thing about Agassiz Baldwin is that it's a

neighborhood that has always been a neighborhood like a neighbors' neighborhood.

When we were little, we could walk all around, there was no worry about anything, you know, the students were at one end, but we felt safe in our little neighborhood. And we all played in the church yard. And we understand that Lesley is encroaching into our neighborhood, and this isn't about that, it's about taking up so much space, which is what the zoning will do, that we lose the feeling that we're a neighborhood, we'll be the Quad. We'll become dorms for locals, you know. Where we live in this space, but it's really their space. It's our space, but it's sort've borrowed, and I'm begging you -- I mean, I am not going to pretend I came up here just for this, I was dragged up for Christmas, but I am begging you that -- I am so glad that I could be here because when I first heard that

Lesley bought the church, I was a senior in college, and I burst into tears because I don't want our neighborhood to disappear into this space that, as they keep describing, is gonna -- they say Mass Ave is going to be their campus; Mass Ave is my street. Like, what about the power of us as locals to try and stand up and make something that is reasonable and make it so that the universities don't take over more of lives.

When we were in high school, we used to count the number of Rindge students that we would see on the street, on the Harvard and Porter end of Mass Ave, and we were lucky if we found two other than ourselves because the universities have begun to dominate the Agassiz Baldwin and that corridor so much that local kids can't afford a cup of coffee anymore, that you don't want to walk around because it's not your space anymore.

This is about making it so that my house isn't overrun by this large structure and I'm just begging you because you can't take this away from our city.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Peter, and the next person is Peter Lang.

PETER KINDER: My name is Peter Kinder. Can we get -- we should have the map here, so we're not talking about distractions.

SIMEON BRUNER: What map would you like?

PETER KINDER: The zoning map of Mass Ave.

Thank you.

Hi. Peter Kinder, K-I-N-D-E-R. I live at 7 Arlington Street, Apartment 32. It's also known as Oxford Courts.

Oxford Courts is the principal abutter to the so-called parking lots and the

church. There are 105 units of housing in this -- in Oxford Courts.

What I want to talk to you about is this process. The process here when the discussion is referred to "the neighbors this," "the neighbors that," many of the neighbors, including the vast majority of people in our building, first realized the progress that had been made by Lesley in late October and that was by word-of-mouth. We received a notice from Mrs. Jury (phonetic) on -- in mid-November about the pendency of the Zoning Petition. We, as abutters, have not been consulted until then.

We are abutters. We have rights to the peaceful enjoyment of our property.

We have a dog in this fight.

I'm not here to talk about the merits of this proposal. This may be a very good proposal, but in terms of process, this is not ready for prime time. This is not

ready for a zoning change.

You, tonight, have heard Mr. Barber talk about the three levels of layers, I believe is the word he used, of zoning. But no one has presented to you what that -- those three layers look like in this context. You don't have the data. You haven't gotten the presentation.

We don't know what that the effects are going to be on our building.

You're going to hear from our residents about concerns that they have with regard to structural problems, but I want to call your attention to the deficiencies of process here.

This is not ready, and I respectfully ask you to reject this petition and to send this back for discussions with the abutters about the very real concerns that we have about the effects of the zoning on our properties.

So with that, thank you very much.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Peter Lang is next. I'd like to -- we have lots of Peters. Then Peter Cardelino.

PETER LANG: My name is Peter Lang, L-A-N-G, I live at One Frost Terrace, which is a direct abutter, and I would like to speak against the proposal for the zoning overlay.

First, I would like to support what my passionate daughter said and I would also like to support what KD said, which is that I am not speaking against moving the Art Institute of Boston to the Porter Square area. I think it would be great. I think it would be vital, I think it would be terrific.

What I am speaking to is that in 1982, I believe, the last zoning change that went through, went through in a very

dispassionate time. People were concerned about the development, there was nobody at that moment who had a dog in the fight, and we sat back and proposals were made, which did include the current zoning proposal which we're talking about changing, and the reason why that proposal passed was because it did a couple things: It gave real open space. What has been called a vacant lot, it's not a vacant lot. It's a church yard, it's a playground, and it's used for those purposes. It preserved that. It preserved the variable cityscape and also prevented the canonization of Mass Ave, and again, with apologies, the building may be two car lengths wide, but it's five stories tall. So that's what people came up with dispassionately.

I think that Lesley bought the property, and that's terrific, but there's the aphorism, that "your poor planning is not my emergency." And they bought it, it's

zoned, and then this is how they're going to build on it.

I think that a little -- if this is what they wanted to build on it, then this is a process that should have happened in their deliberations before, and they have options.

There are the options across Mass Ave on the westerly side, there are options in the parking lot of the Sears, and there's options of working within the zoning that we currently have, which I have to say was dispassionately arrived at.

I would like to state a couple other things personally, and I am not opposed to having an institution next door, I've lived in my house for 30 years. I had the privilege of waking up to church bells when the church was functioning at 7:00 a.m. on every Sunday morning during those years, and I had the additional privilege of listening to kids starting to scream in the daycare

center lot, you know, at 7:30, 8:00 in the morning. That's not what this is. This is not about not having an institution there.

There are parts of the proposal which I don't object to at all, I think they're quite beautiful and brilliant, like moving the church down is terrific. I think having a new building in there, but I think that -- I think that the designs are really quite nice, but -- and the idea of community access. All of these things are wonderful, but all of these things can be achieved within the current zoning framework.

PAMELA WINTERS: If you could wind down your comments, please?

PETER LANG: Yep.

The last thing is, as my daughter, I put my trust in you guys because you are guardians for whatever we've got -- whatever we have.

We have a working group which we participate in, unfortunately, the working group met at hours where working people could not attend it, so some of us were excluded from that.

And the other thing is, I have a little bit distrust for Lesley. I think, you know, they're certainly going to look after their own self-interest.

When they were getting new tenants in the Sears building, they talked about we're going to have a coffee shop and we're going to have a sandwich shop; we ended up with a bank and a bar.

I think they wanted a coffee shop, I think they wanted a sandwich shop, but they got their own interest, they needed to get the rent, and so we have a bank, where we have many, and bars, where we have many.

Thank you.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The next person is Peter Cardelli chio. I hope I got your name right.

And after that is Adrian Bishko.

PETER CARDELLI CHIO: My name is Peter Cardelli chio, that's C-A-R-D-E-L-L-I-C-H-I-O. I live at 7 Arlington Street, Unit 44, and I'm on the Board of Trustees at Oxford Courts. And I believe I speak for the Board with my comments.

I would like the Planning Board to consider the issue of the utility infrastructure in terms of the street zoning proposal.

We're quite concerned that the infrastructure that's currently in place hasn't been adequately studied or considered with regard to this rezoning.

We recently had a lot of work done on the septic and water -- storm water systems around our building. Just recently

on Arlington Street, I remember asking, so we could accelerate some of the City work on Arlington Street because the septic and storm water drains on Arlington Street are crumbling, and the City's comments was they wouldn't be able to get to that until 2013.

So, when I hear that the AIB would be in place by 2012, it worries me a bit.

Now, in terms of just focusing a bit more on what is happening on Mass Ave, and I know this not as an expert, but just from being on the Board and being out there and kicking the dirt occasionally, as I understand the septic and storm water systems, they are approximately 150 years old, they're made of brick, they are subject to occasional problems of bricks falling, occasional cave-ins that obstruct flows. The City has cambered this line, they've recorded grease build-ups, sand traps, some holes and

leakages, and I know there's been a report of standing water in the septic and storm water system in front of the church. I'm not sure if that's because of the sinking sewer ties, or whatever, but that's what's happening.

So, my question, for one, is the current infrastructure adequate to support what we have in this neighborhood?

Our own evidence at Oxford Courts is whenever we have storm water -- heavy storm water or heavy rains, we experience several times a year backups into the Oxford Courts buildings.

Recently, we've had three transformers fail in the street. I'm not sure if that's indicative of a problem with the electrical infrastructure capacity or partially also related to water issues because I know part of these were submerged under water and there's been buildup of oil and all the rest from leakages around the

system.

So, there are other concerns, but my main point here is -- oh, I want to add one more thing about this: In 2013, if the City does, in fact, improve Arlington Street at that time, as I understand it, quite a bit of the storm water and sewerage are now coming down Arlington Street is being lost into the ground because the system is crumbling. So when that system is repaired in 2013 and starts to flow into the main pipes on Mass Ave, there will be increased capacity needed to handle that water as well.

So, I would like to just make sure that this problem is studied carefully, that the Planning Board and Lesley have looked at the infrastructure considerations and that we make sure we have an infrastructure that can support the existing buildings in the neighborhood as well the potential build-out that's being considered by Lesley.

Thank you.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Adrian, and the next person is Susan Brand.

ADRIAN BISHKO: Hi. My name is Adrian Bishko, B-I-S-H-K-O, and I live at 5 Arlington Street, No. 36.

I would like to say, in general, I'm very much in favor of the AIB move to Porter Square; however, I am very concerned about parking.

When Lesley had an open floor with the community, I believe, in late October, parking was a major issue. It was also a major issue in the survey that the Agassiz neighborhood sent out. I believe we got a 127 replies. So, it's clearly something that the neighborhood is very concerned about.

The area around Porter Square is very congested, as you know. And certainly with AIB with its new gallery space will be

attracting many folks to Porter Square which is, after all, what it's supposed to do, is going to be a problem.

Now, I know that Lesley has a very big commitment to people using public transportation and I commend that, but for those students living off campus, as a Cambridge resident, they have every right and privilege to park wherever they want.

And just on a personal note, when I used to live off Mellen Street and park on Mellen Street for 20 years, when Lesley had evening classes, it was virtually impossible to find parking spaces in the nearby streets.

So I just think this whole issue of parking and traffic really needs to be studied and addressed before this goes forward.

Thank you.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Susan?

And the next person is Gisela Ashley.

SUSAN BRAND: Good evening. My name is Susan Brand. I live at 7 Arlington Street, Apartment 22. I have been there for about 12 years now.

I want to concur in the comments that my upstairs neighborhood, Peter Kinder, made. I think it's premature for the Board to be ruling on this petition at this time. I think that it is a complicated petition with the overlay districts that are also in play in this location. I think it's -- there's probably been more information presented tonight than previously at the Ordinance Committee hearing, which I attended, but I think it's still unclear what the impact of these changes will be.

I think another point is in response to what Mr. Tibbs said in asking us to limit

our comments to the zoning changes, rather than the project itself, I think that it's the project that's really generating what public support there is for this.

I personally think if it were done right that the AIB could be a tremendous addition to the neighborhood.

And I think that's really -- you sort've got this issue, you've got the zoning that is sort've being proposed for the AIB, but it's -- it could present worse things other than the AIB. So I think it's sort've of a challenging process that you have here to consider.

So, in terms of the project itself, I also agree that it's a very, very congested area. I think that needs to be looked at very carefully where further development is being proposed, where the FAR is going to be increased providing for more development on that site than presently there.

Traffic, as I'm sure you all know, is very problematic in that area, so ...

Thank you.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Gisela?

And the next person is Sarah Farrington.

SARAH FARRINGTON: I'm not speaking.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: The next person is Greg, I think it's Dicoivtsky.

GISELA ASHLEY: My name is Gisela Ashley.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay, I'm sorry.

GISELA ASHLEY: That's okay. The last name is Ashley, though, not the first.

I live on 7 Arlington Street, Oxford Courts, and I also agree with my neighbors, Susan Brand and Peter Kinder, that it is premature.

I have lived in the neighborhood for

30 years on Hillside and Upton Road in two separate houses, and more recently at Oxford Courts for 14 years. And I would like to address the issue of open space. I think of it as -- Avon Hill is a residential neighborhood. It's clear I have chosen to live in and very close to an urban neighborhood, which I like. I certainly love the idea of the Art Institute being part of this area, however, I think it's really premature.

I thought the renderings were beautiful, however, I don't think they realistically represent the open space. I think the area is -- with the westerly parking lots, I think they are an eyesore, however, I think the open space relative to the actual buildings that are being proposed makes the population density tremendous, and certainly, when you have a college campus, I think the fun part of being in college is

having open spaces, in the springtime, where you can get together and study, certainly art students would want open spaces to gather and meet.

And so, when I look at -- when I saw the renderings, I thought they were very beautiful, however, if in terms of 530 students at the Art Institute, it's not winter all of the time here in Cambridge, and so where would they be in the springtime?

And so I'm concerned about that and I think it's just really premature because the 105 residents haven't really been involved in this process at all.

And so I think that the process hasn't been followed.

Thank you.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Greg is next, and the person after this is -- it's hard for me to read. I think

i t' s Fiedler on Newport Road.

MS. FIEDLER: I'm not speaking.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Then there would be -- what about -- is it John Hanraty? I think you have a question mark as to whether or not you're speaking.

JOHN HANRATY: I'm not speaking.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: It looks like the next person will be Stephen Desmond, is that right, 61 Frost Street?

STEPHEN DIAMOND: It's Di amond.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Di amond, okay, yeah, the handwriting is a little hard to read.

GREG DICOVITSKY: Good evening. My name is Greg Dicovitsky, i t' s D-as in David-I -C-O-V-as in Victor-I -T-as in Tom-S-K-Y.

I'm with Transit Realty Associates. I'm here on behalf of the MBTA.

We are not taking any position on

this at this point in time. We have noticed a couple of discrepancies that we would like to have addressed before any action is taken on this.

They specifically relate to the inclusion of the MBTA property in the zoning district without prior consultation with the MBTA. That's something that I think that Lesley and the MBTA can address satisfactory between them given time.

The zoning district, as it's currently defined, shows a gap between the MBTA station itself and the property bound and the district boundary which would have to be addressed as part of that district.

The second point that I would like to raise that -- again, I'm confident that we can work it out with Lesley -- is the fact that in the Special Permit section of what I've read this evening, there is a provision that says -- I think it's 2.1 -- that the

Special Permit provisions of this particular ordinance would override those of the prior zoning. That's problematic for us in that -- in particular, two of the special zoning criteria -- Special Permit criteria are specifically designated as addressing Lesley's best interests and ignore the MBTA's best interests, so I think we need to address that as well.

Again, I don't see these as fatal flaws that will pose conflict, but I think we have to work them out.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Stephen Diamond?

And the next person who has asked to speak, it looks like Gordon Moore.

STEPHEN DIAMOND: Hi. My name is Stephen Diamond. I live at 61 Frost Street and I have to say I have been working with the Lesley group and on the Lesley working committee for quite a few years, actually

three years. So, unlike some other people who have spoken before, I have had quite a lot of contact with the planning on this.

And what I want to point out to you is that we spent quite a lot of the early time speaking about the design on the two parcels, the church and the playground next to it, those two sites, the building design.

And my conclusion, and the conclusion of a lot of people in our area, the Agassiz area, was that there's a very large program and it's completely filling that site. There's too much program for the site.

So we asked, and Lesley worked very well with us, and the architects worked with us, to expand their thinking, to think about the area around the site. And now this zoning proposal is addressing how can we -- once we've -- if we do accept the program on the site, how can we make up for this large

building and the fact that it has very little, although very nicely designed open space, very little left on that site?

So what the neighborhood -- I, in some way, represent people in the neighborhood, I chair the meetings of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, and we've had lots of discussion on this, and what we need in our area is open space because we, the Agassiz neighborhood, happens to have less public green space than any other neighborhood in the City.

So, what we need is -- we have to get something back for using up all of this space for the AIB, which we generally support. We look forward to having an active Mass Avenue. We think it will support the shops and businesses on Mass Avenue, and it will make us -- those of us who like living in an urban area, it will make it a nice -- a better urban area for us.

On the other hand, you can't -- we still -- we need more open space and we think we should get back by using some of those adjacent parcels, the ones across the street and particularly, the very large parking lot behind what is now called University Hall, used to be Sears to me.

The proposal now allows building back there and while some building back there maybe acceptable, I certainly wouldn't like to see that to be a parking lot.

So, what I would like to suggest to you is that we need wording -- and I don't know how to do this -- the zoning proposal, the zoning plan, has to contain wording that in the future we'll get us open space in return for losing maybe not usable open space, but at least light and air. Even a parking lot gives you a light and air, certainly to the abutters, because it's very --

PAMELA WINTERS: Wind down your comments, sir.

STEPHEN DIAMOND: Yes, I'll finish.

PAMELA WINTERS: Thank you.

STEPHEN DIAMOND: So that we have to have -- we have to have a return of that light and air, and we also have to have protection for our parking needs.

We have an enormous parking problem in our area, and although we're close to the T, and I recognize it, and I want people to use the T, it can't be done during a big event. There will be extra people. We need to have parking for this new facility, and we certainly may not allow -- the wording must not allow the parking to be reduced beyond what's there now.

One last final point is that this parking should be underground. In order to make space available for people to use, you've got to get that parking down under the

ground.

Thank you very much for your  
attention.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

I guess the next person is Senta  
Burton.

GORDON MOORE: I'm sorry?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: No, no,  
you're next. The next person behind you, I'm  
sorry.

GORDON MOORE: My name is Gordon  
Moore, M-O-O-R-E, and I live 9 Rutland Street  
in Cambridge.

I have nothing to add to what's  
already been said, so I'm not going to say  
it, and the only reason I'm up here is that I  
brought along a copy of the survey that was  
done in the neighborhood, and I don't know  
whether the Planning Board has that. That's  
why I'm here.

PAMELA WINTERS: Yes, we do.

GORDON MOORE: You do have it?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes, we do.

GORDON MOORE: Let me just point out then -- I'm glad that you do have it -- just a couple of things: One is to say that the interest in what is probably the largest survey response we have had from Neighborhood 9 in Agassiz doesn't show an overwhelming interest in the AIB as an addition or the library as an addition to the neighborhood, so you've heard different opinions tonight, but the survey responses had it fairly down near the bottom of the list of things that they -- that the neighborhood expressed interest in getting out of the changes that we're considering.

What was highest was parking relief, traffic, and open space right up near the top of the survey, and I think you've heard enough about that from individual members of

the people who have presented tonight.

Thank you very much.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

SENTA BURTON: My name is Senta Burton, B-U-R-T-O-N.

PAMELA WINTERS: Could you spell your first name?

SENTA BURTON: Senta, S-E-N-T-A, of 303 Beacon, just a short walk from Porter Square, and I've followed the project with interest. It affects my walk to transportation and also -- and I'm a working artist, so I'm eager to see a prominent arts community in the neighborhood.

As I looked at the plans, I feel that the zoning proposals really make sense for the neighborhood surrounding Porter Square. I feel that the scope and vision of the project really can only be accommodated by from going to the C plan, and so I've looked at the Bruner/Cott work and feel like

they're remarkable in that they -- in the context of their specific work and have enjoyed seeing the response of Lesley and the architects to the committee, and I feel that they have art here, so I look forward to the interaction continuing.

Thanks.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

That was the last person who was at least on the sign-up sheet that said they wanted to speak.

Is there anyone else in the room that would like to speak, come up and give your name and address.

FRED MEYER: My name is Fred Meyer, M-E-Y-E-R, no S. I've lived in the Agassiz neighborhood since 1959. And I'm a member of the Agassiz Working Group appointed by the City Manager.

Here are some questions that I think you might want to consider as you review the

zoning language: First, is it reasonable to allow no parking requirement as part of the building? That's obviously a key question.

At first, I thought that Lesley would not be able to persuade the neighborhood on that, but they are developing parking plans to park the people who live in the existing -- excuse me -- who work in the existing Porter Exchange building. Those functions have been transferred to the Brattle Campus, so these vacant parking spaces behind the old Sears building which may indeed be sufficient to cover the programs of the new Art Institute. But that's something you need to study, and I think the burden is on the university to prove that, but my suspicion is that it can.

The second question is: Is there enough open space for this great increase in zoning, and again, I think the burden is on the university to show a design that will

meet these needs.

There's a natural inclination in a neighborhood when there's a vacant lot to feel that the neighborhood owns the air and space of that vacant lot, but even under the existing zoning, a two-family house could be built there, and so there's a certain tradeoff that you need to consider.

Is the amount of usable open space open to the public, which Lesley is promising there will be park areas at the end of Frost Street, and there will be open access areas in front of the new building, is that smaller amount of usable open space fair compensation for the loss of visual open space, at least until a two-family house would be built under existing zoning.

Again, I think that may be a reasonable tradeoff, but you're the ones who judge that.

The third issue is one I haven't

heard anyone else address to tonight, but it's dear to my heart. I was responsible for getting the sign on the old Sears building kept instead of covered it over by Peter Wasserman, that is a historic building. I apologize, I meant to look up the date of it and I forget, but my guess is, it's the 1920s. It's approximately as old as the Art Institute itself, and that's an Art Deco building, and we don't have the view of it up there, but if you look at the front of that building, you will notice that it steps down as it approaches Roseland Street.

The proposed zoning language and the proposed design does not have any step down, so I suggest that you might want to consider review by the Historical Commission as part of the language. The Historical Commission will support and review contemporary buildings. It doesn't have to be a copy of the old-style, but at least you get

consideration of, is it fitting in with the setting appropriately.

I think all of these issues can be dealt with satisfactorily and I'm optimistic about them.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Is there anyone else?

JEAN DIAZ: (Raising hand.)

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes, come up.

JEAN DIAZ: Hello. My name is Jean Diaz, D-I-A-Z, I live at 102 Chilton Street, and that's in the Fresh Pond area right off of Concord Avenue. And while I don't live in the Agassiz area, I am an artist and I am also an educator and an employee of Lesley. I teach the arts in education.

I live near Fresh Pond and I lived on Harvard Street, and my grandchildren and my children live on Chestnut Street. So while I'm not an abutter and I don't

I live in the Agassiz neighborhood, I am a community member and I am a neighbor of everyone here.

And I wanted to speak as a neighbor of Cambridge as someone who walks all over this area from Harvard Street to Chestnut Street and out to Chilton Street. This is my neighborhood and I consider it part of my neighborhood.

I appreciate the process here of the people who live in the immediate area and their concerns, I appreciate their concerns about the utilities and about the parking, about the buildings, about all of the issues that can, I believe, be resolved in this process.

But what else I want to speak to you about is as an artist. A society's greatest achievements are always reflected in the arts.

For me, as a community member of

Cambridge, to think that there would be an art institute, a place that generates ideas and generates creative products and creative activities right in the heart of Cambridge is something to look forward to.

I think that Lesley's consideration of the placement near the major transportation arteries of the T, both the commuter rail and Red Line is probably the best solution that could ever happen in terms of how to access this opportunity for the arts to come in a major way to contribute to the neighborhood of Cambridge.

And I think from the opportunities we've had so far that have been offered through the Art Institute of Boston of major international artists' presentations here, we can see that it's a draw for not just us as neighbors in this area, but also for people around the Boston area and around the region. So, I strongly support your consideration of

this project.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Is there anyone else?

(No response.)

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: The proponents have indicated there may be some changes to the petition, and so I guess that leaves us with the issue of do we leave the public hearing open or the public comment portion of the public hearing open or do we close it.

I guess we have two options, we could leave it open and just leave it open; the other option would be to close it, but give us the opportunity to open it to ask for a public comment along the way with people interested.

I'm interested in how the Board -- what their thinking is about this.

Does the Board have a strong opinion? Go ahead, Hugh.

HUGH RUSSELL: Since this is an advisory opinion, I think that there's more reason to leave it open because I'm not trying to reach a decision about, you know, a final decision. Just simply trying to collect advice and pass it on. So, I would say that we could leave it open and that it would serve the public purpose.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes, go ahead.

H. THEODORE COHEN: I would concur with that thinking, too.

I think until we have something that's -- that the proponent considers to be final on what they propose is going to go to the City Council that we're going to have to pass upon it and make our recommendation and I think there may be things that we would like to have the public comment upon before we do make our final decision, and I would support the idea of keeping it open.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay. It looks like my fellow Board members agree. So, we'll keep the public comment portion open. People are still encouraged to give us written comments, if you want, and until we meet and make our decision and pass on our advisory opinion to the City Council, we will accept written comments, too.

Should we take a short break before we do our deliberation? Let's keep it fairly short, though, say about no more than ten minutes.

CHARLES STUDEN: Five minutes.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Five would be okay, too.

(Short Recess Taken.)

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We're ready to resume the hearing. If people could go back to their seats.

Do we have any Planning Board comments questions?

Charles?

CHARLES STUDEN: I think -- I'd like to just start out by saying that I really appreciate what I've heard tonight, the presentation was very, very clear. Thank you very much.

And also, I'm very excited about what I'm seeing here and the potential of what you're laying out before us and the City Council. Not that there aren't going to be questions, obviously there are, and I think the public has been very clear in what some of those are having to do with traffic and parking and some of the open space issues.

But what I would like to speak to is what I think fundamentally is very appealing about this, and that is, first, the extension of the Business C Zoning District to Frost Terrace in order to allow the church site to

be developed in the way that you're proposing as an integral part of the existing Lesley ownership. I think that makes a great deal of sense.

And the other thing that I like is that I think that the 2.5 FAR is very appropriate given the fact that the existing FAR on the site right now is 2, you're not asking for a much greater floor area ratio, and that the height limit that you're looking for also appears to be one that is very reasonable.

The other thing that I like is that churches, like this church, very often have very, very unhappy futures, and I think it's very lucky that Lesley University has purchased this church and is proposing to do what they're doing with it by moving it closer to the street and creating a building site -- putting two levels of building underground and trying to create a complex

of buildings that recognizes that historic structure, so that also that your -- and I hope you can follow through with this -- but also keeping the interior of the building as it is. Not having to interfloor or do a lot of other things that some other developer might have to do that you're not proposing to do.

I also -- because I want to speak specifically to the zoning because that's what is before us, I also think it is appropriate to have a lower height limit, 45 feet, on the two sites opposite on the other side of Massachusetts Avenue as well as a slightly lower floor ratio.

But -- so, those are my general comments. Again, I do really like what I'm seeing here.

Thank you.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Anyone else? Hugh?

HUGH RUSSELL: I don't really have any conclusion about this, but I want to share -- I looked through my zoning history maps that go back to 1924, and the -- in 1924 Porter Square was zoned a business district that was equivalent to Business B, our highest dense business. It was the same as Harvard Square. And the residential area was zoned something that's more or less equivalent to Residence C-1, and that zoning persisted until the 1960s, so for about 40 years. And that was a time in the City where the City economics went down the tube, industry left the City, and the Planning Board and City Council in the early '60s selected residential areas and up-zoned them. So a significant portion of the Agassiz neighborhood, I think going beyond Garfield Street, was up-zoned to Residence C-2.

And in the late '60s and early '70s, developers started acquiring parcels and

assembling parcels, and when that became known, they moved to rezone, came back, the residential area was zoned back down to C-1, and then subsequently in the '80s was zoned to Residence B. That was the time when the Business C District was created with a floor area ratio and a (inaudible) ratio in the Business C District that's been dropping since it was created.

So what do we put on in this history? I think it's a very clear history of a desire since 1970s, which is now a long time, to preserve the character of the residential area and to try to preserve the retail and commercial character on Mass Avenue.

The church property itself is a -- somewhat of an anomaly; it's not residential, it's certainly not business. I think the reason it was included in the Residence B District was because it had always been

the -- the line has always been Rosel and Street, and to preserve the church, giving it a zoning in the City that did not make it desirable to redevelop it, was a logical thing to do.

So now we have before us a proposal for a major change to that one parcel and also to permit a change to the parking lot behind the Sears building, which as it stands, doesn't have any zoning potential for a nonresidential use.

So we have to decide, Well, is this a good thing? And I think that Fred Meyer, who sort've was playing kinda clean-up position in the speakers, you know, really posed some extremely important questions about, If you do this, is there enough open space left? And is the parking gonna work?

And as I'm looking at -- so I think those are important questions. And I think the answer to the parking is, we need to know

more about that. Whether we need to know it in the zoning or need to do it in the Special Permit process, I'm not certain. I think it might be more appropriate to handle it under the Special permit process where there's a specific proposal on the table that you can actually study. Where you have ideas about what you might want to do in 20 years, you can't have a very good study on that.

And clearly there's the character of the church yard as a chunk of green, you know, the largest chunk of green on Mass Avenue, once you clear the common, probably until you hit the Alewife Brook. Even though it's not very large, it's still the largest chunk, and that's not gonna be replicated unless -- under this proposal.

You could decide it was so important that a -- that you would require in the zoning that a space of that size be preserved somewhat on fronting Mass Avenue. I think

that would talk about how the properties on the west side get used. Maybe that can be done through a transfer of development rights.

Personally, I think building the parking lot densely with, you know, pedestrian streets going through the lot on desirable lines makes a lot of sense to me. It's an urban campus notion, those are exciting places to be, and so I think that's not a bad idea. And I think it's better than having a big surface parking lot there.

Apparently, it's not feasible to develop the MBTA air rights because of the expense of developing them. We've seen a private developer and then Lesley look at that seriously and come to that conclusion. That might change some time in the future, but I don't think we can bank on it.

Isn't that a phrase; I guess we shouldn't use anymore, right?

There's one other thought I'm trying to tease out.

(Pause.)

Oh, yes.

The study that Bruner/Cott did for the school is extremely instructive because I believe they're working with an FAR of 2.5. And I would guess over half the FAR is below grade, and what that says to me is, is that it's the heights and setbacks that are the important development controls, and the FAR, in some ways, are of less importance here, and the heights and setbacks that are in place and not being proposed to be changed, except for the extension of the Business C District, and -- but with the transition requirements that's not much of an extension.

So, I think we need to look very carefully at the heights and the setbacks to make sure -- because those are really going to be what controls the bulk of the buildings

above grade. And if a user -- if Lesley, can use space below grade, for academic purposes, I don't see any particular harm in going to that full 2.5 FAR.

I think the idea of bringing the Art Institute of Boston to Porter Square has many benefits for the community, and so I would think we ought to try to search out ways to make this work, make it possible, and I think we may not be at that point yet, with some of the open questions, but I think it's a very important task, really one of enormous beneficial impact on the City.

The question is: Can the negative impacts be mitigated, eliminated, or handled? Because there's also that potential.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Pam? But before you go, I would like to acknowledge City Councilor Henrietta Davis. I didn't see you back there.

PAMELA WINTERS: Well, Hugh answered

my question that I was going to ask of Les about the history of Res B and answered it very well, so I won't go into that.

And I, too, am very excited about AIB coming to this area, and have very positive feelings about the proposed Zoning Overlay District.

I live a few blocks away from here and I'm also a painter, and I'm very excited about AIB coming to the area.

We do need to listen to the public's comments, though, and concerns about -- particularly about parking and open spaces and other issues and we will do that as we go along in the process.

So thank you very much.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Tom?

THOMAS ANNINGER: I will just add my voice to what others have been saying.

I walked to the site this afternoon.

I walked the perimeter of the

proposed zoning site, and I was able to do it in ten, 15 minutes. So it's really not a huge site. But you realize quickly that it's a critical one, and it sort've goes to how I feel about Porter Square, which is that I don't think Porter Square has ever fully realized the potential that the T has given it.

We have now on the north side a shopping center which has some strong retail, but which at the same time is one of the most unpleasant parking areas I've ever been into, and I, therefore, do not use it because it makes me so uncomfortable, it's so tight and I happen to like my car, and it's not an area that you wanna put yourself at risk at, so I give that a mixed review at best.

And then we have the residential neighborhood and in between is this site right in the middle, and the idea that this proposal will give an opportunity to give

that -- this special site a potential for renewal I think is great hope for the Porter Square area, and the two things that it will do is, of course, what everybody has said, is bring this wonderful Art Institute into town, which, I think, we can only -- I didn't hear anybody, no matter what we heard, say anything negative about that. That's an easy one.

But, second, I feel it does deal with these parking lots, not only the Sears Lot, which is really quite a big ugly triangle, but also those two parking lots across the way which have to be dealt with.

I don't agree with people who call parking lots open space. They are not. You can't use them, you can't walk across them. Yes, there is sky there, but I think a lot of other things can be done with them.

I think the issues that have been raised are good ones. Parking has to be

addressed. Open space has to be done carefully.

The only other issue that I thought, which was the third one of Fred Meyer's, which I noticed when you put up the massing for the new AIB building, I think it will be very important how that building relates to the Sears building. I agree with that.

And I don't know if zoning has to deal with that. I think typically we would deal with that in the Special Permit process, and I think that's where it belongs, but I have to admit the massing looked a little bit like an unfriendly jarring juxtaposition at this point, and I think we can do better. But I am sure that when the time comes, you will do better because it is a very beautiful start, and an exciting one.

So, at this point I will just say I'm favorably disposed, very favorably, and I look forward to the next round when we start

to address some of the issues that have been raised.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Steve?

STEVEN WINTER: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to echo the comments that I've heard and I concur with these comments.

I think there's an opportunity to do something very, very positive, very, very wonderful for Cambridge.

Also, no one said we don't really want this arts piece. The vision now tells us we're in very good hands, I think. I'm not concerned about that, I'm not concerned about the character of the institution. I think we're just fine there.

I think there's a loose end, which is we haven't defined the term "arts district"; we say want to establish one, but we didn't really know what it is, and there's no definition in our zoning, that I know of,

unless Les tells me that there is.

So I think before we say, yes, this is what we want, we need to make sure we define better. Enhancing the retail uses on the ground floor, this is what we want to do in the urban environment; encourage retention of the historic buildings; the floor area ratio of 2.5 makes good sense to me given that there's a range in other overlay districts of 1.75 to 4.0. So, I think we're in good spot with that.

I agree with Hugh about the setbacks and the heights that that's where we have to pay attention.

One of the gentlemen mentioned the parking and loading requirements. Do we really want to waive parking requirements and waive loading requirements? In fact, a lot of that is making a decision in a Special Permit that a particular building doesn't really require a loading dock that meets

certain industry standards. And I think that the Board has a history of making good decisions with those things.

I also understand completely waiving parking requirements by Special Permit, that's scary.

But I would like to say that this Board has met those challenges very well in Harvard Square and other places.

I heard a lot of "This is not resolved," and "I'm concerned" and "I don't understand this" and "I'm not sure where this is going," and this tells me that there's part of the public process that hasn't been done. It's not complete.

I don't know what the current state of agreement is between the university and the Agassiz Neighborhood Council and the Porter Square Neighborhood Association and the Lesley Working Group. We've heard some comments from folks who represents some parts

of those, but I don't know where all that is. And I think we need to know where that is.

And the -- I think the point that I want to close with is that, there's a chance to do something truly spectacular here in the middle of Cambridge, and we need to be very careful, and we need to move very slowly and we need to make the right decisions. But I think we're moving in the right way by creating this overlay.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Ted?

H. THEODORE COHEN: Well, I concur with most everything that's been said before. I particularly agree with what Tom said is that Porter Square has really not yet lived up to its potential.

I moved to North Cambridge almost 30 years ago, and -- before the subway was there, and I have been waiting for it to really be what it can be. And I think

bringing the Art Institute there and it expanding the presence of students and retail and Art Institute facilities that will go with it, will be a wonderful thing.

I also agree with Charles that this is a lot that can perfectly reasonably be turned into a Business C, it makes perfect sense to do it.

I also think that this is an area that there are places where larger buildings and taller buildings are appropriate, and I think next to the Sears building is certainly one place where it makes sense to have a larger building. And so I think conceptually the whole idea makes sense.

I do agree that certainly the parking is a major issue that needs to be addressed, and we have the never-ending debate about, you know, provide for cars versus whether you should require people to use the T and use public transportation. So,

it's, again, an issue that we'll have to address.

Open space is, again, issue that we need to address. But I think sometimes we have to trade off, you know, open space, you know, whether it's real or not, and I agree, I don't think that parking lots are open space. I don't necessarily -- I think the immediate abutters like the fact that the church had open space, but it's not necessarily open space that belongs to all of us in the City.

And so, I think that is a factor that we have to weigh in, but on the whole, I think the concept of bringing the Art Institute there and expanding the school and bringing more life and vibrancy to the area is really a wonderful thing. And that part of our job is to help the City plan. So whatever had been zoned historically at this point in time where the City is and where the

This and where the public transportation is, and the fact that this City is what it is in large measure because of the universities and colleges that are there, but I think, you know, we have to help the City plan for 2009, 2013, and the next 50, 100 years for the future of the City and the future of this area.

So I, too, am very excited about the proposal, you know, and I want to work with the proponents and work with City Council to get it to the appropriate zoning.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Patricia?

PATRICIA SINGER: I have listened to all of this, and am very much taken up with the sweep of the excitement of creating something wonderful in Porter Square.

And yet, I feel compelled to take a step back and wonder about what our charge is. Our charge is to look at this as a zoning proposal. And I, for one, do not at

this point understand how the interaction of the three districts would work together. And so I feel that I have to really temper my opinion right now, and would request that I get some more demonstration to understand how that would work together.

In particular, I'm concerned about the transfer of development rights and how that would work against open space and density and intrusion on neighbors.

This is our main commercial corridor, and, yet, I would hope that in keeping with what Ted said we have enough vision towards the future that we're also able along with the Historic Commission to try to preserve some aesthetics.

So, since we're talking about a lot of things, I throw that into the mix.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Actually, I agree with you. One of the suggestions I had that I think might help

us is if Les did one of his wonderful matrixes that actually show us the Mass Ave overlay and the proposed overlay with all of the various zone -- the key zoning pieces that they are, heights, setbacks, use, parking, open space, and some transitional areas.

I think I want -- I agree with you whole heartily, Patricia, that the whole issue here is -- and this is zoning, so -- and literally they way it won't happen, but Lesley could just decide they want to sell all this property to someone else, and this will be the kind of thing that we need to understand in terms of its face, even though obviously with the kind of institutional use you're suggesting, there probably will be limits to that.

But one concern I also have is: Is the existing transitional strategy sufficient, I guess, and so -- and I think

the overlay will begin to address that.

And one thing we need to think about is that relative to the closeness and the scale of this project to the residential neighbors is the existing strategy okay, and would you suggest something else to make that easier? I'm not saying it is or isn't. I just think that's a question that we need to better understand.

And I think that the other thing is this idea of the transfer of development rights, I think one thing that has helped us in the past is if we kinda just draw maximum potential development zoning envelopes.

So, if you're saying that on this side of Mass Ave, it's going to be low and that development right can be transferred, you can give us some what-if scenarios as to where will we put it, not necessarily in terms of buildings, but in terms of just masses similar to what you did on the site

for the three story and five story.

I think that was one thing I saw. I think you reacted very positively to the neighborhood desire for you to look at it as a whole, but we still focus in on the project with (inaudible) at that one site, so I think the zoning envelopes will probably see the whole site and what the potential is relative to the strategy about what we're stating about open space or not.

And, again, I am favorably disposed, but like a lot of our -- the public here as well the board members, we just want to get a better understanding what the implications and intentions of the zoning is. I think that would help.

And, obviously, I assume you will sort out the issues that the MBTA -- with the MBTA in terms of how those things work, and I just want to also remind the public that once -- assuming that we can get to some

point where we have zoning that's satisfactory to us to make a recommendation to the City Council and the City Council approves it, there is a Special Permit process with the project that comes back and there's public hearings, so that's where you will get an opportunity to really deal with a lot of the detailed issues.

However, we want to make sure that the zoning actually reflects the intentions and implications that are proper for the kind of projects on this site as well as the other Lesley sites, the parking lot behind the areas across the street, so . . .

Yes, Hugh?

HUGH RUSSELL: There's been several comments about the scale of the height of the building on the church site vis-a-vis the University Hall across the street, I'm virtually certain that Peter Wasserman shaved the end of that building down about 20 or

25 years ago when he changed the use from Sears in order to meet the transition requirements to the zoning across the street.

I believe that building was originally of uniform height and was -- actually, a story was taken off or maybe two stories, I'm not sure, you get 35 feet.

JAMES RAFFERTY: We think that's an addition; Wasserman added that to the original Sears building. That wasn't there. But you're right, I think its height was set -- that wasn't part of the original Sears, that was the addition that Wasserman did, the conversion.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: He added it on the left side.

HUGH RUSSELL: And I'm talking about the right side.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Dennis thinks he did it on the Roseland Street edge.

HUGH RUSSELL: I don't think so. I mean, I went to Sears every weekend for like three years at about 8:00 Saturday night to go to their plumbing and heating department in the basement.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: On the right by the tires.

HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah, there were tires in the back.

LES BARBER: Hugh, you are absolutely right, though, whether it was newly-built or shaved off, it was altered to meet the transition requirement from the residential to the commercial district.

HUGH RUSSELL: Frankly, I don't think it would be a good idea if it was one-story taller to put that height back just to either restore the building or to match the height across the street. I think it's a fine height the way it is.

The reason I think it was shaved is

because I had a conversation with Peter Wasserman, must have been 25 or 30 years ago, about this subject when -- so it could've been that he was wanted to build a full-height addition above the higher store, which I think was not full height.

DENNIS CARLONE (CARLONE & ASSOCIATES): There was some demolition that had to happen structurally that might have been there, and that's why when they rebuilt it, they were starting from scratch.

HUGH RUSSELL: Anyway, the mind is an amazing thing. It has those little memories, but I just wanted to contribute that.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I think unless anybody else has anything to say I think we -- you heard some things we asked for at least and you potentially have heard a lot of the issues that we're concerned about and you obviously are --

MARYLOU BATT: It's the beginning of the process.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes, yes, it is, it's the beginning of the process. So we look forward to your return.

MARYLOU BATT: Thank you very much.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We do have another -- we do have other business, so if people could clear the room as quietly and quickly as you could, we appreciate it.

(Short Recess Taken.)

GENERAL BUSINESS

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We're ready whenever whoever is going to introduce this to us.

LES BARBER: This is a proposal to add an external outside deck to the Rialto Restaurant in the area of transition between the lower plaza and the upper plaza in Charles Square, and Charles Square is a Planning Board Special Permit. It actually was the first one I dealt with when I arrived at the City.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Boy, do you date yourself.

LES BARBER: So we thought this is probably simply a site plan change and appropriate for the Board to review the change in the site plan and the design. But it's clearly up to the Board to determine what they think the status of this petition

is. If you think it's a minor amendment, we can treat it that way, or were you to think it were a major amendment, then that would require a Special Permit hearing, so...

But, in any case, at a minimum, it's certainly a review of a change in the site plan by adding this new facility.

So the architects -- is that what you are?

MARYANN THOMPSON: We're the architects and Jody Adams is the chief.

LES BARBER: They're here to explain a little bit more of what they want to do and give you a sense of the proposal.

MARYANN THOMPSON: And you all got the paperwork? I'm Maryann Thompson, by the way.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes, even though I must admit I'm a little confused as to what the difference in --

MARYANN THOMPSON: So this is the

existing conditions photograph.

LES BARBER: If you want to use the microphone. You need to . . .

MARYANN THOMPSON: I'm Maryann Thompson from Maryann Thompson Architects.

So the existing condition photographs -- I'm going to bring it closer -- as we can see, there's a series of stairs. This is the level of the restaurant right here. Those windows go down to the floor level of the restaurant.

THOMAS ANNINGER: This is the bar area?

MARYANN THOMPSON: This is the bar area.

We're going to introduce a door right here. What we'd like to do is introduce a door here and then come out to the deck that's right with this patio area here and will come straight across. It sticks out a little bit beyond the Square, so

you get a view into Harvard Square.

STEVEN WINTER: That's a mahogany --

MARYANN THOMPSON: Yeah, it's mahogany -- well, yeah, it's a mahogany deck -- it's gonna look like mahogany. It's a normal railing height, it looks like. It's the floor level but it steps down because the stairs are going down.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So if you're standing, would you be over the top, at the top but not at the bar?

MARYANN THOMPSON: Yeah, if you're standing, you're about this tall.

So it's a deck that's at level with the restaurant and with the top patio area, kinda like where Henrietta's Table spills out, it's level with that area, and because there are stairs, it -- it looks like a stepping down the stairs, but, in fact, it's level with the restaurant. It has a wood-slatted railing that would have a

one-inch gap between the slats and a deck surface that would be wood. We're thinking Trex because it's a recyclable material, and then it's going to have -- the idea is to have an awning that comes over the top, which you can see here (indicating).

And because the deck is wider, where it joins the Henrietta's Table area, where it's wider, because it's wider there, the awning slopes. So the awning will be that shape, so it's all a single pitch and it will be longer here.

So it has a nice little dynamic form which is kind've a floating form. So the idea is that you can have dining outdoors, but in the rain.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Kind've a three-dimensional representation would really have helped me a lot as opposed to just -- that is a real hard one to get us a sense of what the feel of the place will be more than

it is the details of what you're doing.

Just -- but what's the feel as you walk through there with the awning and with the deck, with the new fence there. I guess I'm perfectly -- to be honest, I have a hard enough time dealing with it. I don't know if you all have the same concerns.

MARYANN THOMPSON: I could use some words to describe the feeling that we're trying to get. You're right, we should have had the 3D.

We're trying to bring a natural material into that courtyard because the courtyard is very barren, and I think the deck will help enliven the space of the City in that courtyard. Unfortunately, that courtyard has kinda too much -- it's too open.

I think the wood-slat railing will actually really be quite nice and human, add a human element to that brick landscape.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I guess this is the question I'm asking you, Roger, would the wood material fit there?

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN: It fits there.

HUGH RUSSELL: I disagree. I think this is a very bad design. It's inappropriate. And I think it needs to be changed.

The idea of putting a deck there and having eating there, I think, is fine. But right now, you're experience of walking up the steps, you walk up, there are big windows that start being four feet above you and then come down to nothing, you can see into the restaurant and the spaces and it's going to change to a nine-foot height wooden wall, which you can't see through and you can't see the people who are sitting down with the height of the wall this high. So you're not going to be see any life there at all.

You're going to see this new wood-slat wall that, to me, I think would be a real mistake and, yes it's -- I mean, you say it's out of character with the space, I agree, it's out of character with the space and you should be putting something in there that is not out of character of this building because this is a fine building, it's of a modernist era, and I think it deserves more respect.

MARYANN THOMPSON: We were thinking along the lines of another Rialto where you have brick and wood combined. I mean, I think if you would rather see -- if the Board here would rather see a cable rail or something like that to see through, that would be fine. I don't think that would hurt the design. We could still keep the wood skirt where the steps come down. It's about a four-foot drop about that. I think the wood will add a human element kinda like Alto's dorm at MIT which is brick and wood.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I think because of the layout, the way it grades down, I think they're right to try to keep the platform at the same level as the restaurant so that you don't have walk down. That makes a huge difference.

You really want to be on the same level as everybody else for the people who serve there, for the people who walk there, and so on. And once you come to that conclusion, and you accept the fact that it grades down, you really are cornered into having some sort of a wall.

Maybe that wall -- maybe the materials of that wall are something to address, but you're not objecting to the fact that there is a wall.

HUGH RUSSELL: I'm objecting to -- I think -- I think I'm objecting to a wall that is four feet higher than what people see.

THOMAS ANNINGER: What --

HUGH RUSSELL: That the wall is eight or nine feet tall and people --

MARYANN THOMPSON: It's only from -- from the lower level when you're coming up, you're right, it's a -- it's a -- you know, I think it will be very sculptural. I think -- I mean, I think it will be very beautiful.

But if you want to open it up, I think also a cable rail would be fine which would be a see-through stainless steel railing.

HUGH RUSSELL: I really think -- essentially I just see the activity there, and when the time of year that it's not occupied, you see through it to the hotel, I think the attachment of the awning to the hotel is problematic and needs to be shown in three dimensions and -- I mean, it's not a warm-and-fuzzy area, and so that I think it can be -- it needs to be added to it.

But I think we have to try to work

within the general framework that the architects work with.

MARYANN THOMPSON: There is an existing awning around --

HUGH RUSSELL: Upstairs.

MARYANN THOMPSON: No, around the courtyard.

HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah.

MARYANN THOMPSON: You see it here (indicating).

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I think, for me, I just need to see that context. I think you've really zoned us in a little bit too tight to what you're doing, and I need -- you experience this whole thing as your awning and walking through it, so I just need to understand your details relative to the --

MARYANN THOMPSON: We can do a sketch.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yeah, I like

a sketch-up model would be ideal because it's three-dimensional and you can see it and you can talk about your stuff.

I guess my question to the Board is, IS this something we want to deal with or something we want staff to work on with them?

THOMAS ANNINGER: I think that's a good question. I think, in general, I'm very positively inclined to having activity in what is now somewhat a barren space, as you said. AND I think it's a plus -- anything that's a plus for the restaurants and the area, I think it can speak for everybody, is fine with us.

I don't see any reason why we need to noodle over this a whole lot, but maybe Hugh feels differently on that.

I would be comfortable in letting this take its course with Roger and the staff, having heard, perhaps some of the

comment.

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN DESIGN: I think I understand what Hugh is saying. I haven't thought of it that way. I think we could work on it.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: We could do a compromise and say, do that, and then just bring it back and show him.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: I think that's a good idea.

H. THEODORE COHEN: I would really prefer bringing it back because I agree wholeheartedly with Hugh. I thought it looked very odd given the existing building, and perhaps, I could be convinced to the contrary, you know, with a model or pictures or something else.

But I think something open that let's you see the rest of the building. Just looking at this, you got the whole building built in glass and brick and suddenly there's

this wall. It doesn't seem to fit with anything.

MARYANN THOMPSON: Jody would like to have a late spring opening. So, if -- it would be great for us -- and I understand if you can't do it -- but if you could give us contingent approval upon one more opening like a --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: No.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: I think this could be done pretty quickly, though. You could meet with staff, work out the drawings, and you could try and bring it back to the next meeting or two. This doesn't have to take a long time.

HUGH RUSSELL: Commensurate to the Secretary of Interior of Standards for Historic Preservation is a way of thinking about what you're doing and the standards actually worked quite well with modernist buildings. I'm not sure where that would

Lead you.

There's one particular piece that's quite important, which is that changes should be looked on as removable, and so the idea of using wood here, I think, is very consistent of that notion that you could come back in ten years when the situation had changed and remove this and maybe do something else or maybe restore it.

One other concern I have is that this blocks the view of the entrance to Henrietta's Table and to the hotel as you come up that space. It's always the way I approached it, and so I think more openness would help preserve that feeling.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Just to debate it a little bit more, I would understand, on the other hand, if you said to us that there's a lot of wind out there, and you would prefer to block some of the wind using some of these barriers to help that, I would understand

that argument.

I would also understand that if you put a table at the edge of -- you say a nine-foot drop; is it really that high?

MARYANN THOMPSON: No, no, no, no. From the top of the railing; it's a four-foot drop.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Oh, from the top of the railing, all right. I wouldn't want to --

MARYANN THOMPSON: It's seven feet because the top of the railing is --

THOMAS ANNINGER: Well, seven feet is high enough that I could see somebody being uneasy and I would think that you would need to at least give some sense of security to somebody at a table sitting at the edge of a seven-foot wall.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: With a drink in hand.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I can understand

that, and therefore, I think that needs to be taken into balance. You have a problem yet to solve, but I think it's --

MARYANN THOMPSON: We can work with the staff?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Yes.

MARYANN THOMPSON: Are there any other boards that we will need to go in front of because we would like to get signed up for those.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Les is the expert.

LES BARBER: I'm not the expert, but obviously the License Commission is where --

HUGH RUSSELL: Why wouldn't the Historic Commission -- is this outside the Harvard Square district?

LES BARBER: I don't believe it's in the district.

MARYANN THOMPSON: Okay, thank you.

LIZA PADEN: Li za Paden. Just wanted to be official.

On the Board of Zoning Appeals cases one of the applications you will see for -- on the agenda is for 40 Landsdowne Street which is for a sign variance, and given the comments that usually come from the Planning Board members about the sign variances, I called the architect who represents the applicant and suggested that he may want to put together a package of materials that shows what an as-of-right sign installation would look like, and --

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN:

Hallelujah. I think this is the first one we've seen.

LIZA PADEN: Five years, Bill. You know, it's bound to happen.

So he is here to represent what the as-of-right would look like and to explain to you why he feels that the variance in this

particular situation on this building would be appropriate.

It's Mr. Harris.

Thanks.

BILL HARRIS: Hi. My name is Bill Harris with Signer Harris Architects representing actually Millennium Pharmaceuticals, which is the sole tenant and occupant in this building at 40 Landsdowne, they also occupy the adjacent building right across Landsdowne Street, 35, and I'm not sure exactly what is in your package, but part of our zoning application includes a plan that shows the relationship of the two buildings, the 40 Landsdowne here and 35 next to it. They have a significant presence on the street.

And as Liza said, what we've done is to put together this rendering that shows as we would propose the design the as-of-right.

There are two signs in question.

The first one, which is Sheet 1 of 4, is what we're proposing at the lower canopy level, and that's the proposed design; and Sheet 2 of 4 is the as-of-right design.

So you can see that from -- at least from a design -- my design perspective, Sheet 2 of 4, is out of scale with the building certainly for the size of the building and also given the fact that the sign and the location is set back from the sidewalk some distance as it angles back.

HUGH RUSSELL: Your 13 square foot limitation is because it's seen as a projecting sign; is that correct?

BILL HARRIS: Exactly. If, for example --

HUGH RUSSELL: And so if I can just continue to speak --

BILL HARRIS: Yeah.

HUGH RUSSELL: -- I feel somewhat attached to that provision because I was the

one who came up with the 15 square feet. The point is, this was changed several decades ago, and it was based on the notion that these were signs that projected over the public way, such as if you were walking down a sidewalk, a store would have the sign sticking out. And 13 square feet is either a four-foot circle or a 42-inch square.

And it was the Board's feeling that in a dense urban situation where there were, you know, one of these every storefront that this was an appropriate scale.

Clearly, this is not what's happening on this building, other than when you write an ordinance, sometimes there are unintended consequences.

So, I don't believe the intention for the 13 square feet has anything to do with this building, and I would agree that the proposed sign is really quite modest and very much in scale with it.

THOMAS ANNINGER: It seen seems too modest.

(Laughter.)

BILL HARRIS: Thank you.

HUGH RUSSELL: So I think we should explain to the -- some of the history and the rationale behind that requirement to the Zoning Board so that they can feel comfortable in granting a variance if we agree that a variance would be appropriate. I think there's a real logic behind it that can explain it.

Anyway, I think the vanity sign on top is perfectly appropriate for a major employer in the City, and we have been talking on this Board for 20 years about legalizing such signs but have been unable to come up with any kind of a formula that makes sense, so it's handled by variance on a case-by-case basis.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So if the

other Board members are in agreement --

THOMAS ANNINGER: I think we should recommend it.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So, we will recommend it and give the rationale that Liza will give that to the --

BILL HARRIS: Terrific. Thank you all very much.

STEVEN WINTER: Now, I need some help from my colleagues, the Chipotle Mexican Grill, it seems like the last time they came before the Board for their Harvard Square piece, they encountered a lot of difficulty and I just wonder if -- is there anything about this that's unusual enough that we couldn't say, We think this is a great idea; we think this is a good plan?

LIZA PADEN: I think that the use and the design of the building that they've looked at -- that they're putting together is going to work.

It uses -- replacing what's the Ground Round, so that's where we're talking about. It's a new building, but the -- uses the same area, and the building went through a design consultation procedure because of the size of the project and they took in a number of comments.

STEVEN WINTER: From the staff?

LIZA PADEN: From the staff and from -- we invited members of the public, especially people who have been vocal in the neighborhood, and it's being reviewed for traffic and parking, but also from the point of view to maintain the pedestrian character that's being developed along the parkway itself, so ...

THOMAS ANNINGER: I had a different reaction, honestly.

LIZA PADEN: Okay. So I think that it's going to add an active use to that location.

STEVEN WINTER: Barring comments that we're going to hear then, my suggestion would be that the staff -- if the staff could put some of those highlights down and say, These are parts of the project we like.

I felt like the last time Chipotle came before this Board, we spent a long time, brought them back and forth, and I would like to create a good climate for businesses to come before the Board and make them feel welcome.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I'm very disappointed with what Chipotle did in Harvard Square.

I think we went out on a little bit of a limb against a lot of opposition to improve what was very close to fast food, if not fast food, and for me, what did it, in large part, what has convinced me was that they would have a nice terrace outside and it would be another outdoor space animating the

area.

They have totally failed, as I see it.

It's a very narrow platform that has some rather uncomfortable tables on it and doesn't at all fit with the design that they presented to us.

So, I'm not sure I -- I'm not sure what the reason for that is, either they couldn't get the permit from -- I think -- is it the Department of Public Works, or they just didn't do what they said they were going to do, but something didn't work in Harvard Square, and therefore, I wonder whether they're going to have the same problem there or we can't trust them, but, to me, I see the two as related, and I'm, therefore, somewhat skeptical of anything they say about an outdoor space.

LES BARBER: Tom, they did, I ate in the season, put in a removable platform

which extended that deck for the outdoor seating.

I think they probably had trouble getting or took the time to get permission to extend in the public way. I think they built what they could build on the private platform.

So that in the end, they do have an add-on which allows the patio or terrace that they had illustrated to you in the process.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: So it's removable, so in the winter, they take it down and --

LES BARBER: They took it out now, but it was there -- I don't think it ever got used, but it was there temporarily.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: But you don't know what their intention is, to just put it back, or --

LES BARBER: I assume they would put it back in the spring. It was a

custom-built.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Did that extension work as a --

LES BARBER: I never saw it with chairs on it.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Well --

LIZA PADEN: It was very, very late in the season. They were up against the deadline. They were pushing it weather-wise to be able to use the outdoor space.

Whether or not that's the reason why they didn't actually have customers sitting out there, I don't know, but I know that it took a very long time to go through the process.

There was a lot of back and forth with Chipotle at the beginning because they contended they were not fast-order food, they didn't get a clear rating from ISD. By the time they got the clear rate from the ISD, then they went to the Special Permit process.

And then once the permit was granted, then they were into it.

Now, I can contact Chipotle about exactly what they're going to do in Harvard Square or -- I don't know if you want to tie it to this Special Permit at this location.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I see no harm in that, but maybe others see it differently.

I think we have a little bit of leverage here. I want to get in Harvard Square what we thought we were going to get.

LIZA PADEN: Okay.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: That could be as simple as just making sure that if they are -- if they had this add-on solution, that they're going to continue to do that. I mean, it may not a big deal, and that way they'll know that if they were thinking of not putting it back, then the Board would

have some concern about that.

LIZA PADEN: Okay.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I must admit I, too -- I don't think I feel quite as strongly about it as you do about, but I -- what's there now is -- actually, I went in there on purpose to get a sense of what the place was like and what the feel was, and I, too, just wasn't impressed based on what was talked about here, and I think that entry little patio helps to make it just not as nice as it could be.

So I think the idea of them being able to put that extension on, if they have one, is at least try it for a season, to see how it works with the real good weather.

PATRICIA SINGER: Is that whole building going to become Chipotle?

LIZA PADEN: No.

PATRICIA SINGER: Thank you.

HUGH RUSSELL: I think the

interesting part of the Ground Round building is that it's a very prominent site, it has been redeveloped in accordance with the overlay district.

And so the -- that's gonna be open space between it and the street, the parking's in back, you know, so that -- and I haven't seen the design -- but you can just see from the steelwork and the fact that it has been reviewed, because I asked the question of the people who did the review, were they satisfied with the -- that the building has done what it can for the goals of the overlay district and they love it.

LIZA PADEN: I think that when they came in for their design review and during the discussions, it became clear that their plans for the building in the front and the rehab of the building in the back and dealing with the parking lot, really do address

the guidelines that are in the overlay district. And they will take out one the curb cuts, for example, that's on the parkway, and clean up the traffic pattern and reduce the amount of cut-through traffic for the two parking lots. And I think that they have -- were very serious when they went through the guidelines.

ROGER BOOTHE, DIRECTOR OF URBAN

DESIGN: That parking lot was bereft of trees and now it will be quite pleasant as a parking lot.

HUGH RUSSELL: And so this use at that location and of a building that is contributing to the character that we want to see seems to be me to be very appropriate. You know, it's ...

THOMAS ANNINGER: Is it covered, by the way? Is there an awning or something?

LIZA PADEN: At the Alewife site?

THOMAS ANNINGER: I'm sorry. Maybe

I misunderstood what you were just talking about.

At the Alewife site?

LIZA PADEN: The outdoor seating does not have a cover, no. It's seasonal.

THOMAS ANNINGER: The southern side of the building or the --

LIZA PADEN: I'm not really good at directions.

HUGH RUSSELL: It's on the southeastern side of the building. Right there (indicating).

LIZA PADEN: It's like -- it's here (indicating). So it is.

THOMAS ANNINGER: It's on the sunny side.

HUGH RUSSELL: It will get afternoon sun; afternoon shade.

LIZA PADEN: There's only one tenant in the building.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I mean, I

agree with you, that if it seems okay, that's it, but I really do agree with Tom that in light of the fact this they came to the Board and presented something that I would like to make sure is -- at least talk to them about their Harvard Square intentions because basically it's a trust issue. When you come to the Board and say you're going to do something, we just want to make sure you do it. And so, at least they're aware of the fact and that they're tied together in that way and that we can certainly understand what they're doing with that temporary thing there.

It may turn out that they may say, "Oh, we have every intention to putting it out in the spring."

THOMAS ANNINGER: Even the extension may not be what we saw. I have a feeling it was something less.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Well, what

we saw was very minimal. I remember that at the time, and I remember looking at that and saying, This is very minimal.

THOMAS ANNINGER: It was feasible, whereas what we have now is not.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Anyway, that's my sense is that we just want to make sure they do whatever they can to improve the situation and they keep to the intention of what they were doing because I was actually very positive about the concept of what they were trying to do and I was believing them relative to their ideas about fast food and what it was and what it looked like, and I was a little disappointed -- even on the inside, actually, I was a little disappointed, too. It didn't have the feel, in my mind, that I had from what they were giving me, the imaginary, the pictures and the Somerville stuff, it just -- it didn't have the same feel. I remember going in and

saying, "Oh well."

THOMAS ANNINGER: Do you think it's appropriate to suggest that they -- at Alewife put in some sort've a sun cover, some sort of an awning.

LIZA PADEN: Well, the building has been designed -- the facade of the building does not include an awning over the seating area.

I think there's a feature in the front of the building and there's a sign area on the building, but I don't -- I mean, I don't think it's inappropriate, but I don't know -- how much would -- I mean, what would it do for you?

THOMAS ANNINGER: What it would do? I don't think tables work when they're in the burning sun of June to August.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: They have umbrellas.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Umbrellas will do

it.

HUGH RUSSELL: My summer camp, the preferred sitting area is out on the pool deck and every table on the pool deck has a mast in the middle with the awning, and that's what makes them usable. And I think they can do it with furniture.

THOMAS ANNINGER: An umbrella can work. You can say that's an important part of the design to us.

LIZA PADEN: Okay. The outdoor seating is contingent on the umbrellas? Well, I want to be clear.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: You don't have to quite say it that way. Say it's important to us.

LIZA PADEN: Umbrellas are important.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I think we have raised the question of whether they do what they say they were going to do.

LIZA PADEN: Well, what I'm not clear on is whether or not the Planning Board is making comments on the particular BZA, Special Permit application, or if the comments will include the questions about the Harvard Square case well.

STEVEN WINTER: Two different things.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: They're two different things. But I think you should call them --

LIZA PADEN: I will call about the Harvard Square case, but it is not part of the recommendation on the Alewife case.

LES BARBER: They may not even be the same franchise.

LIZA PADEN: They are.

LES BARBER: Oh, they're, okay.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Somehow I do think what Bill said about trust is not a bad point.

LIZA PADEN: No, I'm not disagreeing with that.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Because the connection --

THOMAS ANNINGER: Because we have run into that problem before.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes, we have, which is why I think you could talk to them and say, The Board was concerned enough about that they were thinking about --

THOMAS ANNINGER: I think it's entirely separate.

LIZA PADEN: I'll convince him.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I could see it finding its way into what you're saying.

PATRICIA SINGER: Tactfully, please.

LIZA PADEN: Now it's a stretch.

HUGH RUSSELL: You would say something like given the history of this applicant in Harvard Square, you would caution the Zoning Board to make sure the

condi ti ons are extremel y cl ear.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yes.

THOMAS ANNINGER: That's not bad. A good start.

LIZA PADEN: Any other cases on the agenda for the 8th, please?

THOMAS ANNINGER: Say that again?

LIZA PADEN: January 8th agenda, any other cases that anybody wants to look at?

THOMAS ANNINGER: Anything else you would like to bring out to us?

LIZA PADEN: No.

THOMAS ANNINGER: We have a few more minutes.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: Do you want to take up the chair tonight or do you want to wait until everybody is here?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: The two people who are here indicated that they didn't feel they needed to be here. But that's -- I just want to say in terms of the

chair, I'm perfectly willing to set down -- we have had this unwritten rule about -- not rule, but we had the tradition of -- well, I started on the Board when -- how long did Paul Detrick been on the Board, about 20 years or something? I think literally --

HUGH RUSSELL: I think he'd only been chair for eight or ten years.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Okay.

HUGH RUSSELL: Because Arthur Paris preceded him as chair for a long period of time.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: There was a history on the Board when I came on that chair is being chairs forever and I think when Tom came on, we actually changed and we had a revolving chair and I really believe strongly in the revolving approach to that, and so, definitely say two years max and I just wanted to say that I'm perfectly willing to step down if somebody else wants to step

up to the plate whether or not it's not appropriate for --

THOMAS ANNINGER: This is only one year for you.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Yeah, I know. So that's -- it depends how people feel.

STEVEN WINTER: It seems like an odd discussion with not all the Board here. Maybe I'm wrong.

HUGH RUSSELL: It's not a contentious subject.

STEVEN WINTER: Correct. If you can convince me, that's fine. I'm not intractable.

H. THEODORE COHEN: Well, can I speak?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Sure.

H. THEODORE COHEN: You know, I think Bill has been a fine chair, and one year is probably not long enough for somebody

to really, you know, start and learn and continue and really flourish in the position and I would think that it would be perfectly appropriate for Bill to continue to be the chair at least for another year.

If you want to talk about rotating at some point, that's fine, too, but I think one year is an awfully short period of time for a chair, and I would certainly feel that -- and I would be happy to move and recommend that Bill continue his chair for another year.

One of the people who is not here, Charles, before the meeting started when he indicated he was leaving, he indicated that he was sorry he wouldn't be here, but, in his opinion, Bill should remain chair. Certainly, that's the way he would vote on it. I know nothing about Pam's position on it.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I don't

know how appropriate it is, but I did ask Pam, since she is vice chair, if she's willing to step up to the plate, and it was a resounding "No, not at this time."

We also have to vote for vice chair and she said she would be perfectly willing to continue with vice chair. But, again, I think it, you know, she or me to say that is a little awkward.

BETH RUBENSTEIN: But she expressed her willingness to continue as vice chair?

HUGH RUSSELL: I think if it came down to this end of the table, I think you guys have to think about when you're going to step up to the plate and do that job a year from now because it's something you might want to think about. You could do that. I've have never done it.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: I'm aware of that.

THOMAS ANNINGER: Because I spent a

few years in the Zoning Board.

HUGH RUSSELL: I was chair for years on the Zoning Board, but I haven't done it here because I much prefer to be the critical eye looking at the cases and you can't do that when you're chair. You have a different responsibility. And the Board has never lacked good chairs, and so, that's what I've done. If somebody insisted that I do it, I'd prefer not to. But I encourage you three down there to acknowledge you have been on the Board for a while and you're really are up to speed. Think about when you're going to take the next step.

THOMAS ANNINGER: I interpret what Ted said is a motion to nominate in the existing chair and vice chair to continue for one more year and I would like to second that motion.

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Any discussion? All those in favor? Unanimous.

I abstained.

LIZA PADEN: Is that it?

WILLIAM TIBBS, CHAIRMAN: Thank you  
for your seat.

(Whereupon the proceedings were  
adjourned at 11:23 p. m.)

CERTIFICATE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
NORFOLK, ss.

I, Jill Kourafas, a Certified Shorthand Reporter, the undersigned Notary Public, certify that:

I am not related to any of the parties in this matter by blood or marriage and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of these matters.

I further certify that the proceedings hereinbefore set forth is a true and accurate transcription of my stenographic notes to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of January 2009.

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Jill Kourafas  
Certified Shorthand Reporter No. 149308  
Notary Public

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