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# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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To: Planning Board  
From: Central Square Advisory Committee  
Date: October 4, 2023  
Re: **655 Massachusetts Avenue**

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

**SANDRA CLARKE**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Administration

## Overview

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the "Committee") met on Wednesday, October 4, 2023 to discuss a pending special permit application by Beantown Donuts LLC (the "Applicant") at 655 Massachusetts Avenue. The meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of Section 20.50 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in advance of the applicant's request for a special permit from the Planning Board (PB). Committee members present were Joel Alstein, Saffana Anwar, Christopher Fort, Melissa Greene, Esther Hanig, and Robert Winters. After discussion, the Committee decided to forward a report to the Planning Board with a positive recommendation, with 6 members present voting in favor.

## Proposal Description

The Applicant proposes to operate a Fast Order/Quick-Service Food Establishment in the space formerly occupied by Starbucks at 655 Massachusetts Avenue, consisting of approximately 1259 square feet. While Fast Order/Quick-Service Food Establishments are allowed as of-right by the Zoning Ordinance, the Applicant is a Formula Business and therefore needs a special permit from the Planning Board. Minor exterior modifications are shown and new signage is proposed. No changes to the pre-existing use or building dimensions are proposed. Planning Board Special Permits within the Central Square Overlay District require review by the Central Square Advisory Committee (CSAC).

## Recommendations

No public comments were received by CSAC. The Committee voted to forward a report to the Planning Board with a positive recommendation. CSAC members were supportive of the proposed retail use and raised no major concerns. The proposal to CSAC included additional square footage of signage with an orange background, as well as illuminated window signs. There was some disagreement among members, with some liking the prominent use of orange and others not liking it. The committee came to consensus on recommending a more subdued black signage band with orange window signage. Despite these minor aesthetic disagreements, the Committee was enthusiastic for an active retail use on this prominent corner.

Respectfully submitted for the Committee,

**Mason Wells**  
Community Development Department