



# HOUSING COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Thursday, June 27, 2024

2:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**The Housing Committee will hold a public hearing to further discuss multi-family housing and hear updates from the Community Development Department.**

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Housing Committee was held on Thursday, June 27, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 2:00 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Siddiqui. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via zoom.

**At the request of the Co-Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

- Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote
- Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Wilson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

**Present – 5. Quorum established.**

The Co-Chair, Councillor Siddiqui offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to further discuss multi-family housing and hear updates from the Community Development Department. Present at the meeting was City Manager, Yi-An Huang, Acting City Solicitor, Megan Bayer, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD), Iram Farooq, Director of Zoning and Development, Jeff Roberts, Chris Cotter, Housing Director, and joined remotely was Senior Zoning Manager, Daniel Messplay. Also present at the meeting was Councillor Nolan. It was shared that there was a group of panelists also joining the meeting for discussion and included, Sara Barcan, Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Phil Terzis, Karl Seidman, Stuart Rothman, and Adam Siegel.

**Co-Chair Siddiqui opened Public Comment.**

Raffi Freeman, 64 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of support.

Carolyn Magid, 71 Reed Street, Cambridge, MA, offered suggestions related to zoning.

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, shared strong support for ending exclusionary zoning.

James Zall, 203 Pemberton Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of the Committee discussing changes in zoning and allowing more housing and equitably.

Cathleen Higgins, 345 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to ending exclusionary zoning.

Lee Farris, 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about community involvement when discussing zoning changes.

Sharmil Modi, 271 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of support for ending exclusionary zoning.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of concern relative to zoning changes.

Stephanie Guirand, 67 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA, raised concerns about the proposed city-wide zoning proposal.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding affordable housing in Cambridge.

Jana Odette, 176 Larch Road, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of concern but shared support for affordable housing.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were not in favor.

Patrick Barrett, 41 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions on ways to move forward with zoning changes and housing.

Dan Totten, 54 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of concerns to the proposed zoning changes.

**Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to close public comment.  
Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes – 5. Motion passed.**

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Azeem who offered opening remarks, sharing that he looks forward to the conversation.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Iram Farooq and the team from CDD who gave a presentation titled “Multifamily Housing Citywide”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered a review of the process update, key questions, overview of the inclusionary housing program, regional trends, and current economic conditions, feedback from market-rate inclusionary housing developers, and feedback from affordable housing developers. During the presentation from CDD, Karl Seidman offered their presentation to help tie into the information CDD was presenting to the Committee. Karl Seidman’s presentation was titled “Multifamily Zoning Analysis” and was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of the scope of analysis, methodology, scenario results, multifamily construction trends, regional multifamily construction starts, multifamily development trends and factors, multifamily construction starts by size, regional inclusionary requirements, current development context, improving multifamily feasibility, and additional considerations. During the presentation, Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Azeem, and Councillor Wilson for questions relative to inclusionary housing, vouchers, no fault eviction, and similarities to other communities regarding affordable units. Chris Cotter, Iram Farooq and Karl Seidman were all available to respond, clarify, and offer additional information to the questions and comments that were brought forward. As the CDD presentation continued, Daniel Messplay recognized additional panelists for comments and feedback, which included Adam Siegel, Phil Terzis, and Stuart Rothman.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who had a question regarding specifics around increases to the affordable housing overlay that would be helpful to maintain the advantages for affordable housing. Chris Cotter responded by sharing no specifics have been produced at this time, but with more discussion that data could be available later.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who stressed the importance of having a timeline to reach goals and to increase community involvement. The Vice Mayor asked for clarification on zoning conversations and if they are fitting into the timeline of creating multifamily housing. Iram Farooq responded by sharing that there has been conversations around height and density and permitting thresholds, and the City is continuing to look at that while trying to expand housing.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Wilson who asked what changes would make affordable housing more challenging. Chris Cotter responded by sharing that if the idea is providing more advantage to market rate housing, that could make using the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) more difficult, noting that there would be less advantages through the AHO which could make them less competitive.

Co-Chair Siddiqui provided closing remarks and shared that she would be working with Co-Chair Azeem on steps towards the discussions at future meetings regarding this topic.

**Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes – 5. Motion passed.**

**The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:00p.m.**

**Attachment A** – The City Clerk’s Office received ten written communications from the public.

**Clerk’s Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at: [https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/784?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/784?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication was received from Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, transmitting a presentation on Multifamily Housing Citywide.**

**A communication was received from Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, transmitting a presentation relative to a Multifamily Zoning Analysis from Karl. F Seidman Consulting Services.**

6/27/2024

# Attachment A

Erwin, Nicole

**From:** Carolyn Magid <cmagid@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2024 3:03 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Comments on Multifamily housing at Housing Committee today

Here are my comments. Thanks. Carolyn Magid (71 Reed St)

## Public Comment Housing Committee 6/27

I have 4 major aspirations for zoning that I want to share with the Committee:

1. That it will significantly help the no and low-income residents who are suffering the most in this housing crisis
2. That it will not cause harm to no or low-income residents
3. That as the zoning is developed, community stakeholders (especially low-income residents and their advocates) will be part of the stakeholder group the Housing Co-Chairs will consult.
4. That there will be community meetings to discuss this zoning, as there are with Central Square Zoning.

I am happy to see that CDD talked to affordable housing developers. The report indicates that they thought changes to zoning could "make affordable housing more challenging." Please pay attention to this. Any resulting zoning should assure that AHO construction has a competitive advantage. What the City needs most is more 100% affordable housing.

As far as I can tell, the other questions the CDD is answering (about making it easier to build multifamily housing in the private market) don't address my concerns about significantly helping low-income residents and not causing harm through displacement. Inclusionary units are only accessible to low-income residents with vouchers, and there are 6000 people who live or work in Cambridge waiting for vouchers now. I know zoning is not about vouchers, but unless there are vouchers to provide for deep affordability in inclusionary units, new inclusionary units won't help low-income people. Another question: will changing zoning lead to displacing low-income residents in the Port and Cambridgeport, possibly without even adding any affordability?

These are questions which should be answered, if not today, then before any decisions are made. I can't see in the timeline in today's presentation where more discussion of these topics in committee or with the community will happen before the zoning is written. I urge you to include low-income residents and advocates in any stakeholder group and to hold community meetings about this zoning before it is finalized, as is happening for Central Square Zoning.

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Margaret Ann Brady <margarb@bradydall.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2024 2:11 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Multi-Family Zoning Hearing 6/27

Dear City Councillors,

We're writing in support of the Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition's position on the proposal now before the Council, POR #62 asked "That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Community Development Department to work with the Co-Chairs of the Housing Committee and a group of stakeholders including affordable housing experts, developers and residents to develop a cohesive vision and draft zoning language." The City must make clear the process by which stakeholders can be a part of this group, and must make public the membership of this group

The Housing Committee should separate the consideration of changes to the base zoning and creation of an Inclusionary overlay. We believe they are at odds with each other in important ways and have separate goals and outcomes, and therefore should be considered separately. Don't pass the Inclusionary overlay without amendments that will help and won't harm low-income residents, including:

- establishing concrete anti-displacement guardrails
- creating a substantial – not nominal – program for deep affordability that subsidizes inclusionary units
- making changes to the Affordable Housing Overlay to ensure it allows at least the same height and density as an Inclusionary overlay
- supporting social housing by creating a social housing revolving fund that would fund mixed-income housing with a substantial affordable component
- Restrict down-conversions in the base zoning however possible

We appreciate the work that has gone into putting this proposal together and that Councillors have begun to be more intentional about affordability as we continue the conversation about multifamily zoning. We believe more must be done, both within the zoning and outside of it, to ensure that low-income residents are included, and also protected from the displacement that most acknowledge this proposal might cause. As written, this proposal will not significantly affect our affordability crisis – despite the welcome inclusionary units – but it likely will accelerate the redevelopment-driven displacement of vulnerable residents. While we aren't opposed to more density and support ending exclusionary zoning, what was drafted by CDD will fall short of making Cambridge more affordable to low and middle-income people. This is especially true given the reality that Inclusionary Housing is not accessible to anyone making less than 50% of AMI unless they have a Section 8 voucher. We believe that the Council must change the request for zoning to ensure that this proposal does not cause harm, and also must adopt meaningful additional measures to achieve the goal of affordability. Some of those measures will not be zoning. This must happen as one omnibus package; the zoning should not advance until there is meaningful action here.

•

We also have concerns that this zoning could negatively impact the Affordable Housing Overlay. It has been stated many times that a primary objective of the AHO is to make site acquisition easier, but if not amended, this zoning would dramatically reduce the AHO advantage and potentially inhibit that goal. In short, we support the goal of ending exclusionary zoning. Cambridge needs more supply, most particularly of affordable housing. But our Councillors must dig deeper to truly address the harms that have been caused by redlining and other exclusionary practices, to create a Cambridge that is affordable to all.

Margaret Ann Brady  
Robert Dall  
7 Porter Park  
Cambridge MA 02140

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2024 1:56 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Residents Alliance: Change multi-family zoning to increase affordable housing

6-27-24

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

I'm writing for the Cambridge Residents Alliance about the proposed multi-family zoning. (This letter is updated some from my 5-22-24 letter.)

This multifamily zoning proposal goes far beyond simply allowing multi-family buildings in every neighborhood, which is certainly needed.

Despite the inclusionary units, this proposal will not significantly improve our affordability crisis. Without changes, it likely will accelerate the redevelopment-driven displacement of vulnerable residents from naturally occurring (somewhat) affordable housing.

We ask that the Council change its request for zoning to ensure that this proposal does not cause harm, and must also adopt additional measures to achieve the goal of affordability. Some of those needed measures will not be zoning. This should happen as one omnibus package.

Therefore, we think the proposal should be amended:

1) It would be better to **create a multi-family overlay** rather than changing base zoning. That might enable adding limits on down-conversion (do not allow anyone who takes advantage of this zoning the ability to reduce the number of units that exist on the parcel), as well as limits on very large single- and two-family dwellings, perhaps with a total cap on square feet that varies by the number of bedrooms. I think the city's legal memo did not address whether a limit on downconversion in an overlay could be allowed.

2) **Dimensional standards should be changed less than proposed.** In order to discourage tear-downs in the denser parts of the city and the resulting displacement, the FAR in C-1 should not increase from the current .75. Because of the much lower density in the other areas, an FAR of 1 could encourage building there. I think the 1200/SF per unit sounds reasonable. As a longterm resident of C-1, I would suggest that **C-1 setbacks be used throughout the city**. This would help maintain space for trees and plantings, which are both a health and visual benefit.

3) **Limit displacement**, such as: not allowing a density bonus for redevelopment of tenant-occupied buildings, creating a right of return policy through the inclusionary units, strengthening the condo conversion ordinance similar to Boston's ordinance, and/or expanding legal assistance.

4) Because Inclusionary Housing only helps people with income ABOVE 50% AMI, we need to create a substantial **program for deep affordability** that subsidizes Inclusionary units down to 30% AMI, for example by city-funded vouchers.

5) Support social housing by creating a **social housing revolving loan fund** to create mixed-income housing with a substantial affordable component. Ensure that social housing is explicitly able to take advantage of density and height bonuses and is not inhibited by Inclusionary also getting a density bonus. Consider **creating a social housing overlay** with an enhanced height bonus compared to Inclusionary.

6) The primary objective of the AHO is to make site acquisition easier, but this zoning would dramatically reduce the AHO advantage and inhibit that goal. In today's presentation on p. 19, the affordable housing developers make that point and express concerns. We ask that you **ensure the AHO continues to have an advantage compared to market housing**. Currently the AHO allows four floors in the neighborhoods as of right, where the proposed zoning with Inclusionary would allow 6 floors as of right. (As a reminder, on corridors, the AHO allows 12 floors and 15 floors in the squares.)

**The allowed height and number of units should be related to the proportion of lower-income residents who benefit.** For example, the multi-family zoning might allow in the neighborhoods, as of right, 4 floors of Inclusionary housing, 5 floors of social housing, and 6 floors of 100% affordable housing.

7) The Council's 5/13/24 policy order said: *That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Community Development Department to work with the Co-Chairs of the Housing Committee and a group of stakeholders including affordable housing experts, developers and residents to develop a cohesive vision and draft zoning language.*

It appears from the CDD presentation today that housing developers were convened, but **residents including tenants were not convened. We strongly ask that this omission be remedied.**

8) I encourage CDD and the Housing Committee to **hold 2 or 3 town hall style discussions**, where members of the public can ask questions and discuss these proposals. This was done during the Envision planning process. Public comment at a hearing, while helpful, does not create the kind of dialogue and understanding needed for such significant zoning change.

9) It would be helpful if the Council again **asks CDD to provide estimates about the likely outcome of this changed zoning, especially with regard to low income people.** The Council already asked for that, but it was not included in the first or second CDD presentation.

10) After reviewing today's presentation, i would like to understand what is meant by "coordinated review" on p. 19. Who would do the review? I would also like to know if the city has talked with city staff in Somerville, where I see a large number of mid-size housing being built, usually at 4 stories, both in neighborhoods and on corridors.

Sincerely,

Lee Farris, President

Cambridge Residents Alliance: *Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge*

<https://www.cambridgeresidentsalliance.org/>

**Erwin, Nicole**

---

**From:** Sheli Wortis <sheliwortis@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 24, 2024 12:06 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Supporting Policy Order #89, June 24, 2024

To Cambridge City Council:

Reading Bill H.1239, S.744, which would establish a single payer health care system for Massachusetts, it looks like a huge money saver for the state and for the residents of Massachusetts.

I urge the Cambridge City Council to go on record in support of this Bill and pass Policy Order #89 unanimously.

Thank you!

Sheli Wortis  
106 Berkshire St. 02141

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Elizabeth Klerman <ebk110@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 12:20 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Cc:** Nancy Berliner; Joyce Singer; Jai Wilson; Shellburne Thurber; Melissa Burns; Margaret Compher; Lee Montgomery; Wendy Stone  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed zoning changes being reviewed by Housing Committee  
**Attachments:** Group signed Cambridge zoning letter 2024-06-21.pdf

Good day,

Please replace the Word Document with this PDF version. There is no change in the document; PDF documents are more difficult to change

Thank you

Elizabeth Klerman

On Sun, Jun 23, 2024 at 7:52 AM Elizabeth Klerman <[ebk110@gmail.com](mailto:ebk110@gmail.com)> wrote:

Good day,

Attached please find our letter to the Housing Committee as they discuss potential zoning changes.

Please confirm receipt of this email and that this letter is being distributed to the Housing Committee members before the next scheduled meeting on June 27,

Please let us know if you need more information.

Please respond to all.

Thank you for your work.

Best regards

To: Cambridge Housing Committee  
CityCouncil@cambridgema.gov  
[CityClerk@cambridgema.gov](mailto:CityClerk@cambridgema.gov)

Re: Proposed Cambridge Zoning change

Date: June 21, 2024

To whom it may concern

This letter conveys our protest to the proposed Cambridge Zoning change that would allow 6 story buildings without special requirements or zoning review.

(<https://cambridgema.iqm2.com/citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=4050&Inline=True>) – Packet Pg. 47

We agree that there is a housing crisis and that more housing is required in Cambridge and elsewhere. We agree with the plan's proposed changes in (i) changing use regulations about residential use type (e.g., single family vs multi-family) housing; (ii) changing minimum lot size to be 3000 SF; and (iii) require Total Open Space % for all uses and districts.

However, the residential character of some streets is why we – and probably others – moved to our homes in Cambridge. On our streets, and the surrounding ones not on Massachusetts Avenue, buildings are three stories or shorter. Adding one or more six story buildings would alter quality of life in the neighborhood, and definitely change the amount of sunlight available. Sunlight is vital for physical and mental health and for the health of green space. There is also greater air flow around lower buildings. This change would also alter on-street parking availability [which is already very tight in some neighborhoods]. Finally, it could enable developers to pay over-market-price to buy current homes, and replace them with 6-story buildings. This would likely further increase price of housing in Cambridge, which we all agree is not a desired outcome. We want to be clear: we support the construction of multifamily dwellings in the city, but we strongly believe those dwellings should be in keeping with the architectural and community character of the existing neighborhood. In other words, new buildings be subject to zoning review.

The Boston Globe article (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/05/15/business/housing-cambridge-six-story-buildings-zoning/>) mentions European cities in which there are 6 story buildings with commercial areas on the first floor. Those buildings, however, are in areas where the structures are predominantly – if not entirely – 6 stories high.

We would welcome six story buildings with or without commercial space on the first floor along streets that already have some commercial space (e.g., Massachusetts Ave, Prospect St), but not on streets that are solely residential. Many areas of Cambridge are full of 19<sup>th</sup> century 2-3 story wooden structures. **Residential streets with predominating 2-3 story buildings should have zoning review** (with opportunity for community involvement) **before 6 story buildings are built.** In addition, zoning changes should be made so that it is easier/more attractive for builders to build taller buildings along main corridor streets (e.g., Mass Ave, Huron Ave).

Thank you for considering this,

Sincerely

Nancy Berliner, 545 Franklin Street  
Melissa Burns, 500 Franklin Street  
Maggie Compher, 31 Kinnaird Street  
Elizabeth Klerman, 533 Franklin Street  
Lee Montgomery, 108 1/2 Kinnaird Street  
Steve Nadis, 500 Franklin Street  
Joyce Singer, 524 Franklin Street  
Wendy Stone, 610 Green Street  
Shellburne Thurber, 32 Hancock Street  
Jai Wilson, 36 Jai Street

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Kavish Gandhi <kmbgandhi@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 11:55 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Comment, Housing Committee, 6/27

Dear City Council,

I'm writing to express my comments in advance of the housing committee meeting on 6/27. As I have expressed before, I **support the end of exclusionary zoning**. The status quo is ultimately the enemy, and we cannot stall based on bad-faith opposition to this type of change rooted in a desire to keep our neighborhoods the same. I broadly support efforts to allow for more density and height in more areas of Cambridge, and this zoning will accomplish some affordability goals I support.

However, I think councilors need to recognize that this proposed upzoning will not meaningfully address the affordability crisis for those who are most vulnerable, and most cost-burdened under the current status quo. Further, it may have negative, unintended consequences by incentivizing further redevelopment-driven displacement in more buildings, including triple-deckers with naturally occurring affordable units.

Therefore, I urge councilors to adopt three additional measures as part of their discussion on the end of exclusionary zoning:

- Establish specific and concrete anti-displacement guardrails to prevent new zoning from causing substantial redevelopment-driven displacement. This could include limitations on redeveloping tenant-occupied buildings, creating a right of return policy through the inclusionary units, establishing required compensation for tenants displaced by redevelopment, strengthening the condo conversion ordinance, and/or expanding legal assistance. I have specific ideas for how these could be legally adopted, and would be happy to discuss further.
- Create a substantial program for deep affordability that subsidizes Inclusionary units so that more people can benefit from any inclusionary units that are created by this zoning. This could be done through a voucher program that subsidizes at least 50% of new inclusionary units to a deeply affordable level. In other words, open 50% of new Inclusionary units for all Cambridge residents below 50% AMI, and subsidize the rent up to contract rent via a "municipal voucher."
- Create a social housing revolving fund to create mixed-income housing with a substantial affordable component. Ensure that social housing is explicitly able to take advantage of density and height bonuses and is not inhibited by Inclusionary also getting a density bonus. Consider giving social housing an enhanced height bonus compared to Inclusionary. This could in particular be 6 stories for inclusionary, 7 for social housing.

All the best,  
Kavish

Kavish

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Wendy Stone <wstone11@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 11:50 AM  
**To:** Elizabeth Klerman  
**Cc:** City Council; City Clerk; Nancy Berliner; Joyce Singer; Jai Wilson; Shellburne Thurber; Melissa Burns; Margaret Compher; Lee Montgomery  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed zoning changes being reviewed by Housing Committee

Received. Thank you for shepherding this through

Wendy

On Sun, Jun 23, 2024 at 7:53 AM Elizabeth Klerman <[ebk110@gmail.com](mailto:ebk110@gmail.com)> wrote:

Good day,

Attached please find our letter to the Housing Committee as they discuss potential zoning changes. Please confirm receipt of this email and that this letter is being distributed to the Housing Committee members before the next scheduled meeting on June 27,

Please let us know if you need more information.

Please respond to all.

Thank you for your work.

Best regards

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Lee Montgomery <lee.montgomery976@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 9:53 AM  
**To:** Nancy Berliner  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Council; Elizabeth Klerman; Jai Wilson; Joyce Singer; Margaret Compher; Melissa Burns; Shellburne Thurber; Wendy Stone  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed zoning changes being reviewed by Housing Committee

Thanks Nancy. I received the letter and thank you for all this work!

Lee Montgomery

On Sun, Jun 23, 2024 at 9:04 AM Nancy Berliner <[nb.home@comcast.net](mailto:nb.home@comcast.net)> wrote:  
Received! And thank you for all your great work shepherding this forward, Beth.

Nancy

On 06/23/2024 7:52 AM EDT Elizabeth Klerman <[ebk110@gmail.com](mailto:ebk110@gmail.com)> wrote:

Good day,

Attached please find our letter to the Housing Committee as they discuss potential zoning changes.

Please confirm receipt of this email and that this letter is being distributed to the Housing Committee members before the next scheduled meeting on June 27,

Please let us know if you need more information.

Please respond to all.

Thank you for your work.

Best regards

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Nancy Berliner <nb.home@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 9:04 AM  
**To:** Elizabeth Klerman; City Council; City Clerk  
**Cc:** Joyce Singer; Jai Wilson; Shellburne Thurber; Melissa Burns; Margaret Compher; Lee Montgomery; Wendy Stone  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed zoning changes being reviewed by Housing Committee

Received! And thank you for all your great work shepherding this forward, Beth.

Nancy

On 06/23/2024 7:52 AM EDT Elizabeth Klerman <ebk110@gmail.com> wrote:

Good day,

Attached please find our letter to the Housing Committee as they discuss potential zoning changes.

Please confirm receipt of this email and that this letter is being distributed to the Housing Committee members before the next scheduled meeting on June 27,

Please let us know if you need more information.

Please respond to all.

Thank you for your work.

Best regards

## Erwin, Nicole

---

**From:** Elizabeth Klerman <ebk110@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 23, 2024 7:53 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Cc:** Nancy Berliner; Joyce Singer; Jai Wilson; Shellburne Thurber; Melissa Burns; Margaret Compher; Lee Montgomery; Wendy Stone  
**Subject:** Proposed zoning changes being reviewed by Housing Committee  
**Attachments:** Group signed Cambridge zoning letter 2024-06-21.docx

Good day,

Attached please find our letter to the Housing Committee as they discuss potential zoning changes. Please confirm receipt of this email and that this letter is being distributed to the Housing Committee members before the next scheduled meeting on June 27,

Please let us know if you need more information.

Please respond to all.

Thank you for your work.

Best regards

To: Cambridge Housing Committee  
CityCouncil@cambridgema.gov  
[CityClerk@cambridgema.gov](mailto:CityClerk@cambridgema.gov)

Re: Proposed Cambridge Zoning change

Date: June 21, 2024

To whom it may concern

This letter conveys our protest to the proposed Cambridge Zoning change that would allow 6 story buildings without special requirements or zoning review.

(<https://cambridgema.iqm2.com/citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=4050&Inline=True>) – Packet Pg. 47

We agree that there is a housing crisis and that more housing is required in Cambridge and elsewhere. We agree with the plan's proposed changes in (i) changing use regulations about residential use type (e.g., single family vs multi-family) housing; (ii) changing minimum lot size to be 3000 SF; and (iii) require Total Open Space % for all uses and districts.

However, the residential character of some streets is why we – and probably others – moved to our homes in Cambridge. On our streets, and the surrounding ones not on Massachusetts Avenue, buildings are three stories or shorter. Adding one or more six story buildings would alter quality of life in the neighborhood, and definitely change the amount of sunlight available. Sunlight is vital for physical and mental health and for the health of green space. There is also greater air flow around lower buildings. This change would also alter on-street parking availability [which is already very tight in some neighborhoods]. Finally, it could enable developers to pay over-market-price to buy current homes, and replace them with 6-story buildings. This would likely further increase price of housing in Cambridge, which we all agree is not a desired outcome. We want to be clear: we support the construction of multifamily dwellings in the city, but we strongly believe those dwellings should be in keeping with the architectural and community character of the existing neighborhood. In other words, new buildings be subject to zoning review.

The Boston Globe article (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/05/15/business/housing-cambridge-six-story-buildings-zoning/>) mentions European cities in which there are 6 story buildings with commercial areas on the first floor. Those buildings, however, are in areas where the structures are predominantly – if not entirely – 6 stories high.

We would welcome six story buildings with or without commercial space on the first floor along streets that already have some commercial space (e.g., Massachusetts Ave, Prospect St), but not on streets that are solely residential. Many areas of Cambridge are full of 19<sup>th</sup> century 2-3 story wooden structures. **Residential streets with predominating 2-3 story buildings should have zoning review** (with opportunity for community involvement) **before 6 story buildings are built.** In addition, zoning changes should be made so that it is easier/more attractive for builders to build taller buildings along main corridor streets (e.g., Mass Ave, Huron Ave).

Thank you for considering this,

Sincerely

Nancy Berliner, 545 Franklin Street  
Melissa Burns, 500 Franklin Street  
Maggie Compher, 31 Kinnaird Street  
Elizabeth Klerman, 533 Franklin Street  
Lee Montgomery, 108 1/2 Kinnaird Street  
Steve Nadis, 500 Franklin Street  
Joyce Singer, 524 Franklin Street  
Wendy Stone, 610 Green Street  
Shellburne Thurber, 32 Hancock Street  
Jai Wilson, 36 Jai Street