



ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Monday, July 31, 2023

6:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Ordinance Committee will meet on July 31, 2023 from 6:00p.m. to 8:00p.m. to hold a public hearing on a City Council Zoning Petition relative to amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). It is anticipated that this meeting will be recessed and continued on August 3, 2023.

| Attendee Name | Present | Absent | Late | Arrived |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Burhan Azeem | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Dennis J. Carlone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Alanna Mallon | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Marc C. McGovern | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Patricia Nolan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| E. Denise Simmons | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Paul F. Toner | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Quinton Zondervan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Sumbul Siddiqui | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Ordinance Committee was held on Monday, July 31, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 6:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor McGovern. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, City Clerk LeBlanc called the roll.

- Councillor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
 - Councillor Carlone – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
 - Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent
 - Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
 - Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
 - Councillor Simmons – Absent
 - Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
 - Councillor Zondervan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
 - Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.**

The Chair, Councillor McGovern offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing on a City Council Zoning Petition relative to the amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). Councillor McGovern shared that today’s meeting was dedicated entirely to public comment and that the meeting will be recessed and continued

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Thursday, August 3, 2023. The Chair noted that Councillor Simmons was unable to attend today's meeting and had submitted comments to be read into the record (Attachment A).

The Chair, Councillor McGovern, opened the public comment. The following individuals were allowed up to three minutes to speak.

Esther Hanig, 136 Pine Street, Cambridge, MA, shared their strong support for the AHO and the people who will be impacted by affordable, safe, and secure housing.

Susan Cory, 114 Washington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about the AHO #2 and noted that affordable housing should be looked at on a site-specific basis.

George Scott, 45 Walden Street, Cambridge, MA, encouraged the Councillors to look beyond what the AHO provides and to broaden affordable housing.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that they would like to see more data and studies on the current AHO before making amendments.

Daniel Tenney, 14 Washington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed amendments to the AHO and that the process has not been transparent.

Federico Muchnik, 82 Richdale Avenue, Cambridge, MA, referenced a letter that was submitted to Cambridge Day from a City Councillor and asked that the vote on AHO be delayed until after the November election.

David Sullivan, 16 Notre Dame Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support to the proposed amendments to the AHO and shared that the AHO will help the fight against the housing crisis. P

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of the proposed amendments to the AHO, noting that the AHO will help promote more housing.

Cathleen Higgins, 345 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support of the proposed amendments to the AHO and urged the Council to vote yes on the amendments.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, offered comments opposed to the proposed amendments to the AHO and shared suggestions on how the City should increase affordable housing.

Suzanne Blier offered comments for a resident at 7 Wright Street Rice sharing that there should be a full analysis of the existing AHO before adopting the proposed amendments.

Susan Tuner, 182 Magazine Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for those who are in need of housing in Cambridge.

Robert Camacho, 24 Corporal Burns Road, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the latest revisions to the proposed amendments to the affordable housing overlay and shared that the proposal suffers from lack of planning.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that the proposal is being pushed and Councillors are not listening to concerns from residents.

David Halperin, 14 Valentine Street, Cambridge, MA, shared their strong support for the proposal and thanked the Councillors for bringing it forward, and noted housing delayed is housing denied.

Lee Farris shared thoughts from the Cambridge Residence Alliance, noting that they strongly support increasing affordable housing in Cambridge and are happy with the proposed AHO and would like the AHO to focus on family housing.

Tonia Hicks, 337 Pearl Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke on behalf of Cambridge Housing Coalition, and shared their strong support for AHO #2 and shared concerns and challenges that may occur due to the AHO not passing.

Michael Johnston, 362 Green Street, Cambridge, MA, Executive Director for the Cambridge Housing Authority, spoke in favor of the proposed amendments to the AHO and noted that the AHO is a tool that allows agencies to compete with private developers for land to develop affordable housing that will serve the people that are on the housing waitlist.

Rabbi Yoni spoke in strong support of the AHO amendments and shared concerns on how some properties are currently being managed with tenants.

Danica Mari, 23 Normandy Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared that the proposals will alter the City for many years and the proposal should be done with care and offered concerns and suggestions on how the City should adjust to the increase of residents and buildings in the City.

Matthew Schreiner, 26 Grozier Road, Cambridge, MA, Our Revolution Cambridge, spoke in support of the AHO amendments and offered suggestions on how the AHO can be successful.

Joan Pickett, 59 Ellery Street, Cambridge, MA, shared they would like to see the proposed AHO amendments put aside and start developing a strategy and plan for affordable housing and asked for more community input.

Joe McGuirk, 314 Columbia Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of the AHO amendments to allow more affordable housing in major corridors and squares to promote positive change to those who need housing.

James Williamson, 30 Churchill Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the proposed amendments to the AHO and shared it will double down on density for low-income people and shared concerns with the affordable housing trust.

Joshua Redstone, 1 Percy Place, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns, and suggestions to the proposed AHO on side setbacks on property in Cambridge that would become affordable housing.

Neil Miller, 102 Pearl Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of affordable housing in Cambridge and shared personal experiences with affordable housing.

Dan Eisner, 6 Bristol Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support to the proposed amendments to the AHO due to the shortage of homes and the increase of housing and rental prices.

Pattie Heyman, 66 Martin Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for affordable housing but noted they have some concerns about the proposed AHO.

Helen Walker, 43 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA, shared a letter that was written to them from a City Councillor regarding the AHO.

Eleni Macrakis, 280 Franklin Street, Cambridge, MA, offered their support for the AHO and noted the need for affordable housing in Cambridge remains desperate with lengthy waitlists.

Kavish Gandhi, 376 Windsor Street, Cambridge, MA, shared they were in favor of the proposed amendments to the AHO noting it will allow developers to compete for parcels around the city to build the necessary affordable housing.

Billie Jo Joy, 77 New Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that they were opposed to the amendments to the AHO sharing that developers and landlords will benefit the most.

Susan Frankie, 3 Houston Park, Cambridge, MA, noted that they were opposed to the proposed amendments to the AHO sharing that there should be only modest changes to the current AHO.

Lori Thomas, 111 Magazine Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the proposed amendments to the AHO.

Merry White, 6 Cypress Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that they strongly oppose the proposed amendments to the AHO noting that it could potentially create more problems in the City. Jason Korb, 831 Beacon Street, Newton Centre, MA, offered their support for the proposed amendments to the AHO.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were opposed to the proposed amendments to the AHO.

Susan Carter, 41 Holden Street, Cambridge, MA, urged the Council to vote against the proposed amendments and to listen to the feelings of Cambridge residents.

Evan MacKay, 64 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA, offered their support for the proposed amendments to the AHO and asked for Cambridge to build vibrant, safe communities where everyone can thrive.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who made a motion to close public comment.

City Clerk LeBlanc called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – No

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 1, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who made a motion to recess the meeting.

City Clerk LeBlanc called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 7, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Ordinance Committee went into recess at approximately 7:49 p.m.

On Thursday, August 3, 2023, at 3:00 p.m., the Cambridge City Council's Ordinance Committee reconvened the meeting that was recessed on July 31, 2023. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing

participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

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

Councillor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Carlone – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Vice Mayor Mallon – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan

Councillor Simmons – Absent*

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Zondervan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 8, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

***Councillor Simmons was marked present and remote at 3:23 p.m.**

The Chair, Councillor McGovern offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to continue the recessed meeting on July 31, 2023 relative to a City Council Zoning Petition to amend the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). The Chair, Councillor McGovern introduced Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD), who was joined by Daniel Messplay, Acting Director Zoning and Development and Chris Cotter, Housing Director. The City Solicitor, Nancy Glowa was present as well as the Deputy City Solicitor, Megan Bayer. Councillor McGovern shared that housing developers were present either remotely or in person to provide comments throughout the meeting, and included Sara Barcan, Executive Director for HRI, Mike Johnston, Executive Director for the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA), and Karl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director for Just-A-Start Corporation.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Zondervan and Councillor Azeem who gave a presentation titled “Affordable Housing Overlay Amendments: Presentation to the Ordinance Committee” which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation reviewed why the amendments were needed, an overview on upzoning, the AHO amendments process timeline, why corridors and squares were chosen, a summary of the proposed zoning changes, an overview of the open space amendment, and an overview of how long the Affordable Housing waitlist is. It was noted by Councillor Azeem that in the presentation, Agenda Packet page 21, titled AHO Squares, there was outdated information. Councillor Azeem noted the correct information while providing comments during the presentation.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who asked CDD if they could provide more information on the 1500 square feet related to open space. Daniel Messplay responded by sharing that it was a provision that CDD suggested adding into the amendments after previous discussions with some of the local affordable housing providers in the City and would only apply to small lots. Councillor Nolan shared concerns about the corridors that were listed in the proposed amendments and urged the Petitioners to consider using the major corridors that have been provided in the Envision Cambridge plan. Councillor Zondervan shared

that the idea behind using the proposed corridors was not to limit planning to only major corridors in order to provide opportunity for more development in the City and allow for more affordable housing. Iram Farooq was also available to offer comments on the proposed corridors, Envision Cambridge, and how the AHO could be used within the proposed corridors. Councillor McGovern recognized Karl Nagy-Koechlin who agreed with comments made by Iram Farooq and noted the importance of the long-term impact affordable housing will have when projects are developed correctly.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Carlone who shared that he agreed with comments made by Karl Nagy-Koechlin but also offered comments and concerns about the proposed amendments. He urged the City to start buying more land to lease to developers and provided examples of how leasing the land would help the City and the community the property is built in. Councillor Carlone referenced an article that was in a recent edition of Architectural Record, noting the benefits of timber construction. Councillor Carlone noted that he had mixed feelings about the proposed amendments to the AHO and shared that large buildings reduce the value of its neighbors. The Chair agreed with comments related to the City purchasing more land to lease.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Azeem who asked CDD if any AHO projects have been accomplished and started permitting without City funding and if the City funds every project that is presented to them. Iram Farooq and Chris Cotter noted that no project has been accomplished without City funding and that every AHO project has either received funding commitments or has requested funds from the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT), noting that when a developer approaches the City with a project it is important to look at what is needed, what is feasible, and how to better shape the request to go to the AHT. Councillor Azeem offered additional comments in favor of the proposed amendments to the AHO.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Simmons who shared that public comment from the previous meeting concerned her because of the arguments of those who are opposing the proposed amendments. Councillor Simmons offered comments in favor of the proposed amendments and affordable housing. She noted that by moving forward with the amendments, it would allow for more flexibility for the housing developers to build the housing that Cambridge needs.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Mayor Siddiqui who noted that after the policy is created, it does sometimes need amendments after reflection and that the reality of creating affordable housing is difficult. The Mayor shared that if the proposed amendments pass, it will be important to monitor and get updates as much as possible in order to continue to be able to provide the best possible solution to create affordable housing in the City.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who offered additional comments and questions and shared concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the AHO. Iram Farooq and her team, as well as the petitioners, were available to respond.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Azeem who shared that there have been multiple States that have adopted a social housing program, which would allow housing in

specific developments to be used towards 1/3 low income, 1/3 middle income, and 1/3 market rate. Councillor Azeem shared that a program like this is something he would look forward to discussing further in the future.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who shared that he supports more affordable housing but did have some concerns with the proposed amendments and the language around heights. He noted the proposed height limits may have a negative effect on those who own single-family homes in the City. The Chair offered comments in support of the height limits and shared examples of how they could benefit the City.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who shared that she is in favor of affordable housing and moving the petition forward but has concerns about how the Committee got to where they are currently, and the lack of community process. The Vice Mayor noted that there needs to be a better way to engage and inform residents of the City while also creating housing for not just those who need it today, but also those who will need it years from now.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who made a motion to forward the proposed amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay back to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation to pass to a second reading. (Attachment B, redline and clean version).

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – No

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 3. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Simmons, who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone -Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0. Meeting adjourned.

Attachment A – Written letter from Councillor Simmons to the Ordinance Committee
Attachment B – Proposed Amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (Red Line and Clean Version)

The City Clerk's Office received eighty-nine written communications for the July 31, 2023 meeting and two written communications for the August 3, 2023 meeting, Attachment C.

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 the July 31, 2023 meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/552?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=bc0b77cdb69d79c7ea0273c1f399727e

The video for the August 3, 2023 meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/554?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=a14d7172970294b4f758f400838dc6a5

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 23-31, regarding potential amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO).



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

E. Denise Simmons
City Councillor

Mayor
2008-2009
2016-2017

July 31, 2023

Chair Marc McGovern
Chair Quinton Zondervan
Cambridge Ordinance Committee

Re: Tonight's Ordinance Committee Hearing

Dear Chairs McGovern and Zondervan,

I am writing to you regarding the Ordinance Committee hearing scheduled for July 31, 2023, during which we shall be discussing the proposed amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay. Regrettably, due to a pre-existing scheduling conflict, I may not be able to attend the hearing, and while I shall make every effort to join remotely, I ask that this letter be read into the record to share my thoughts in the event that I am unable to attend.

Over the last two years, we have seen the positive impact the AHO has made on facilitating the development of new, 100% affordable housing units across our city. This achievement stands as a testament to our collective efforts to devise innovative approaches – from raising linkage fees, to doubling the rate of Inclusionary Zoning, to the creative utilization of city-owned parking lots – aimed at tackling the affordable housing crisis in our community. While the AHO is not a silver bullet, it is an important tool in helping us create this desperately-needed housing throughout our city.

Despite its success, we understand that the AHO has room for refinement and improvement. I firmly believe that the amendments under consideration can strengthen this legislation, enabling it to have an even greater impact on our affordable housing landscape. With the potential to instill new hope to the thousands of individuals on our affordable housing waiting lists, these amendments hold immense promise.

I am aware that there is a spectrum of opinions regarding the AHO amendments, some of which voice concerns and call for a halt to the process. I firmly believe that it is through open, transparent, and fact-based discussions that we can address these apprehensions and further our common goal. I remain dedicated to working with you and our colleagues in pushing this critical legislation forward in the coming months. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

City Councillor E. Denise Simmons

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
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Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Attachment B

Amend Article 2.000 as follows:

AHO Corridor – One or more Lots with frontage on one or more of the following streets: Albany Street, Alewife Brook Parkway, Bishop Allen Drive, Broadway, Cambridge Street, Concord Avenue, First Street, Fresh Pond Parkway, Massachusetts Avenue, Memorial Drive, Mount Auburn Street, Prospect Street, and Sidney Street.

AHO Square – One or more Lots located entirely within the confines of the Central Square Overlay District, Harvard Square Overlay District, Lesley Porter Overlay District, or the area bounded by the centerline of Elm Street to the west, the Somerville/Cambridge municipal boundary to the north, the centerline of Windsor Street to the east, and Cambridge Street to the south; but not including ML 81-50, ML 81-101, or ML 81-100.

Amend Section 11.207 as follows:

11.207.5.1 General Provisions

- (a) For the purposes of this Section, the phrase "District Development Standards" shall refer to the development standards of the base zoning district as they may be modified by the development standards of all overlay districts (with the exception of this Affordable Housing Overlay) that are applicable to a lot.
- (b) District Dimensional Standards shall include the most permissive standards allowable on a lot, whether such standards are permitted as-of-right or allowable by special permit. A District Dimensional Standard that is allowable by special permit shall include any nondiscretionary requirements or limitations that would otherwise apply.
- (c) An AHO Project that conforms to the following development standards shall not be subject to other limitations that may be set forth in Article 5.000 or other Sections of this Zoning Ordinance, except as otherwise stated in this Section.
- (d) An AHO Project containing more than one base zoning district shall follow the requirements of the zoning district that covers the largest percentage of the area of the lot or development parcel, as if the entirety of the lot was served by a single zoning district. Section 3.32 shall generally not apply to development that proceeds under the provisions of this Section 11.207.
- (e) Where an AHO Project may have various applicable Building Height and Stories Above Grade limitations as specified in 11.207.5.2.1, the most permissive height limitations shall generally control. Notwithstanding the provisions set forth in Section 11.207.5.2.1, an AHO Project may match the height of an existing building on an adjacent lot.

11.207.5.2.1 Building Height and Stories Above Grade. For an AHO Project, the standards set forth below shall apply in place of any building height limitations set forth in the District Development Standards.

- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less, an AHO Project shall contain no more than four (4) Stories Above

- Grade and shall have a maximum height of forty-five (45) feet, as measured from existing Grade. For AHO Projects containing active non-residential uses on the ground floor, the maximum height may be increased to fifty (50) feet but the number of Stories Above Grade shall not exceed four (4) stories.
- (b) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of more than forty (40) feet but not more than ~~fifty (50)~~ sixty-five (65) feet, an AHO Project shall contain no more than ~~six (6)~~ nine (9) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of ~~sixty-five (65)~~ one hundred (100) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except as further limited below. ~~For AHO Projects containing active non-residential uses on the ground floor, the maximum height may be increased to seventy (70) feet but the number of Stories Above Grade shall not exceed six (6) stories.~~
- (i) Except where the AHO Project abuts a non-residential use, portions of an AHO Project that are within thirty-five (35) feet of a ~~lot district~~ whose District Dimensional Standards allow a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less shall be limited by the provisions of Paragraph (a) above, ~~except that if the AHO project parcel extends into that District, then the height limitation shall only extend thirty five (35) feet from the property line.~~
- (c) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of more than ~~fifty (50)~~ sixty-five (65) feet, an AHO Project shall contain no more than ~~seven (7)~~ thirteen (13) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of ~~eighty (80)~~ one hundred and fifty (150) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except as further limited below.
- (i) Except where the AHO Project abuts a non-residential use, portions of an AHO Project that are within thirty-five (35) feet of a district whose District Dimensional Standards allow a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less shall be reduced to a minimum of five (5) Stories Above Grade or a maximum height of sixty (60) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except that if the AHO project parcel extends into that District, then the height limitation shall only extend thirty five (35) feet from the property line.
- (d) An AHO Project within an AHO Square shall contain no more than fifteen (15) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred and seventy (170) feet, subject to the height restrictions specified in Section 11.207.5.2.1.c.i above.
- (e) An AHO Project within an AHO Corridor shall contain no more than twelve (12) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred and forty (140) feet, subject to the height restrictions specified in Section 11.207.5.2.1.c.i above.
- (f) The Height Exceptions set forth in Section 5.23 of this Zoning Ordinance shall apply when determining the building height of an AHO Project.
- (g) An AHO Project may exceed the allowable height limitations of this Section, without restriction, under the following circumstances, subject to the Residential Density limitations set forth in Section 11.207.5.2.2. If the AHO Project is not subject to an FAR restriction in Section 11.207.5.2.2, then the total allowable floor area shall be calculated by subtracting the required open space from the total lot area, and multiplying the resulting lot area by the maximum number of stories otherwise permitted under this Section:

- (i) Where pre-existing, contiguous Green Area Open Space on a lot will be preserved or expanded, consisting of at least 5% or more of the total lot area.
- (ii) The AHO Project will exceed the minimum required open space as set forth in Section 11.207.5.2.4 of this Article.

11.207.5.2.2 Residential Density

- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards establish a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of less than 1.00, an AHO Project shall not exceed an FAR of 2.00. Otherwise, there shall be no maximum FAR for an AHO Project.
- (b) There shall be no maximum FAR for an AHO Project within an AHO Square or AHO Corridor.
- (c) There shall be no minimum lot area per dwelling unit for an AHO Project.

11.207.5.2.3 Yard Setbacks

- (a) For the purpose of this Section, the applicable District Dimensional Standards shall not include yard setback requirements based on a formula calculation as provided in Section 5.24.4 of the Zoning Ordinance, but shall include non-derived minimum yard setback requirements set forth in Article 5.000 or other Sections of this Zoning Ordinance.
- (b) ~~Front Yards. An AHO Project shall have a minimum front yard setback of 15 feet, except where the District Dimensional Standards establish a less restrictive requirement, or may be reduced to the average of the front yard setbacks of the four (4) nearest pre-existing principal buildings that contain at least two stories above grade and directly front the same side of the street as the AHO Project, or may be reduced to a minimum of ten (10) feet in the case of an AHO Project on a corner lot. Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth different requirements for residential and non-residential uses, the non-residential front yard setback requirement shall apply to the entire AHO Project if the ground story contains a non-residential use as set forth in Section 11.207.4 Paragraph (b) above; otherwise, the residential front yard setback shall apply. no minimum front yard setback.~~
- (c) ~~Side Yards. An AHO Project shall have a minimum side yard setback of seven and one-half (7.5) feet, or may be reduced to the minimum side yard setback set forth in the District Dimensional Standards for residential uses that is not derived by formula if it is less restrictive.~~
- (d) ~~Rear Yards. An AHO Project shall have a minimum rear yard setback of ~~twenty (20)~~ fifteen (15) feet, or may be reduced to the minimum rear yard setback set forth in the District Dimensional Standards for residential uses that is not derived by formula if it is less restrictive.~~
- (e) Projecting eaves, chimneys, bay windows, balconies, open fire escapes and like projections which do not project more than three and one-half (3.5) feet from the principal exterior wall plane, and unenclosed steps, unroofed porches and the like which do not project more than ten (10) feet beyond the line of the foundation wall and which are not over four (4) feet above grade, may extend beyond the minimum yard setback.
- (f) Bicycle parking spaces, whether short-term or long-term, and appurtenant structures such as coverings, sheds, or storage lockers may be located within a required yard setback but no closer than seven and one-half (7.5) feet to an existing principal residential structure on an abutting lot.

11.207.5.2.4 Open Space

- (a) Except where the District Dimensional Standards establish a less restrictive requirement or as otherwise provided below, the minimum percentage of open space to lot area for an AHO Project shall be thirty percent (30%). However, the minimum percentage of open space to lot area may be reduced to no less than fifteen percent (15%) if the AHO Project includes the preservation and protection of an existing building included on the State Register of Historic Places.
- (b) The required open space shall be considered Private Open Space but shall be subject to the limitations set forth below and shall not be subject to the dimensional and other limitations set forth in Section 5.22 of this Zoning Ordinance. Private Open Space shall exclude parking and driveways for automobiles.
- (c) All of the required open space that is located at grade shall meet the definition of Permeable Open Space as set forth in this Zoning Ordinance.
- (d) The required open space shall be located at Grade or on porches and decks that are no higher than the floor elevation of the lowest Story Above Grade, except that up to twenty five percent (25%) of the required open space may be located at higher levels, such as balconies and decks, only if it is accessible to all occupants of the building.
- (e) For the purpose of this Affordable Housing Overlay, area used for covered or uncovered bicycle parking spaces that are not contained within a building shall be considered Private Open Space.
- (f) Notwithstanding the foregoing, lots consisting of five thousand (5,000) square feet or less in total lot area that directly abut a Public Open Space consisting of at least one thousand five hundred (1,500) square feet of area shall not have a minimum open space requirement under this Article.

Attachment B

Amend Article 2.000 as follows:

AHO Corridor – One or more Lots with frontage on one or more of the following streets: Albany Street, Alewife Brook Parkway, Bishop Allen Drive, Broadway, Cambridge Street, Concord Avenue, First Street, Fresh Pond Parkway, Massachusetts Avenue, Memorial Drive, Mount Auburn Street, Prospect Street, and Sidney Street.

AHO Square – One or more Lots located entirely within the confines of the Central Square Overlay District, Harvard Square Overlay District, Lesley Porter Overlay District, or the area bounded by the centerline of Elm Street to the west, the Somerville/Cambridge municipal boundary to the north, the centerline of Windsor Street to the east, and Cambridge Street to the south; but not including ML 81-50, ML 81-101, or ML 81-100.

Amend Section 11.207 as follows:

11.207.5.1 General Provisions

- (a) For the purposes of this Section, the phrase "District Development Standards" shall refer to the development standards of the base zoning district as they may be modified by the development standards of all overlay districts (with the exception of this Affordable Housing Overlay) that are applicable to a lot.
- (b) District Dimensional Standards shall include the most permissive standards allowable on a lot, whether such standards are permitted as-of-right or allowable by special permit. A District Dimensional Standard that is allowable by special permit shall include any nondiscretionary requirements or limitations that would otherwise apply.
- (c) An AHO Project that conforms to the following development standards shall not be subject to other limitations that may be set forth in Article 5.000 or other Sections of this Zoning Ordinance, except as otherwise stated in this Section.
- (d) An AHO Project containing more than one base zoning district shall follow the requirements of the zoning district that covers the largest percentage of the area of the lot or development parcel, as if the entirety of the lot was served by a single zoning district. Section 3.32 shall generally not apply to development that proceeds under the provisions of this Section 11.207.
- (e) Where an AHO Project may have various applicable Building Height and Stories Above Grade limitations as specified in 11.207.5.2.1, the most permissive height limitations shall generally control. Notwithstanding the provisions set forth in Section 11.207.5.2.1, an AHO Project may match the height of an existing building on an adjacent lot.

11.207.5.2.1 Building Height and Stories Above Grade. For an AHO Project, the standards set forth below shall apply in place of any building height limitations set forth in the District Development Standards.

- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less, an AHO Project shall contain no more than four (4) Stories Above

- Grade and shall have a maximum height of forty-five (45) feet, as measured from existing Grade. For AHO Projects containing active non-residential uses on the ground floor, the maximum height may be increased to fifty (50) feet but the number of Stories Above Grade shall not exceed four (4) stories.
- (b) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of more than forty (40) feet but not more than sixty-five (65) feet, an AHO Project shall contain no more than nine (9) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred (100) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except as further limited below.
 - (i) Except where the AHO Project abuts a non-residential use, portions of an AHO Project that are within thirty-five (35) feet of a lot whose District Dimensional Standards allow a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less shall be limited by the provisions of Paragraph (a) above.
 - (c) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of more than sixty-five (65) feet, an AHO Project shall contain no more than thirteen (13) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred and fifty (150) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except as further limited below.
 - (i) Except where the AHO Project abuts a non-residential use, portions of an AHO Project that are within thirty-five (35) feet of a district whose District Dimensional Standards allow a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less shall be reduced to a minimum of five (5) Stories Above Grade or a maximum height of sixty (60) feet, as measured from existing Grade, except that if the AHO project parcel extends into that District, then the height limitation shall only extend thirty five (35) feet from the property line.
 - (d) An AHO Project within an AHO Square shall contain no more than fifteen (15) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred and seventy (170) feet, subject to the height restrictions specified in Section 11.207.5.2.1.c.i above.
 - (e) An AHO Project within an AHO Corridor shall contain no more than twelve (12) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred and forty (140) feet, subject to the height restrictions specified in Section 11.207.5.2.1.c.i above.
 - (f) The Height Exceptions set forth in Section 5.23 of this Zoning Ordinance shall apply when determining the building height of an AHO Project.
 - (g) An AHO Project may exceed the allowable height limitations of this Section, without restriction, under the following circumstances, subject to the Residential Density limitations set forth in Section 11.207.5.2.2. If the AHO Project is not subject to an FAR restriction in Section 11.207.5.2.2, then the total allowable floor area shall be calculated by subtracting the required open space from the total lot area, and multiplying the resulting lot area by the maximum number of stories otherwise permitted under this Section:
 - (i) Where pre-existing, contiguous Green Area Open Space on a lot will be preserved or expanded, consisting of at least 5% or more of the total lot area.
 - (ii) The AHO Project will exceed the minimum required open space as set forth in Section 11.207.5.2.4 of this Article.

11.207.5.2.2 Residential Density

- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards establish a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of less than 1.00, an AHO Project shall not exceed an FAR of 2.00. Otherwise, there shall be no maximum FAR for an AHO Project.
- (b) There shall be no maximum FAR for an AHO Project within an AHO Square or AHO Corridor.
- (c) There shall be no minimum lot area per dwelling unit for an AHO Project.

11.207.5.2.3 Yard Setbacks

- (a) For the purpose of this Section, the applicable District Dimensional Standards shall not include yard setback requirements based on a formula calculation as provided in Section 5.24.4 of the Zoning Ordinance, but shall include non-derived minimum yard setback requirements set forth in Article 5.000 or other Sections of this Zoning Ordinance.
- (b) Front Yards. An AHO Project shall have no minimum front yard setback.
- (c) Side Yards. An AHO Project shall have no minimum side yard setback.
- (d) Rear Yards. An AHO Project shall have a minimum rear yard setback of fifteen (15) feet, or may be reduced to the minimum rear yard setback set forth in the District Dimensional Standards if it is less restrictive.
- (e) Projecting eaves, chimneys, bay windows, balconies, open fire escapes and like projections which do not project more than three and one-half (3.5) feet from the principal exterior wall plane, and unenclosed steps, unroofed porches and the like which do not project more than ten (10) feet beyond the line of the foundation wall and which are not over four (4) feet above Grade, may extend beyond the minimum yard setback.
- (f) Bicycle parking spaces, whether short-term or long-term, and appurtenant structures such as coverings, sheds, or storage lockers may be located within a required yard setback but no closer than seven and one-half (7.5) feet to an existing principal residential structure on an abutting lot.

11.207.5.2.4 Open Space

- (a) Except where the District Dimensional Standards establish a less restrictive requirement or as otherwise provided below, the minimum percentage of open space to lot area for an AHO Project shall be thirty percent (30%). However, the minimum percentage of open space to lot area may be reduced to no less than fifteen percent (15%) if the AHO Project includes the preservation and protection of an existing building included on the State Register of Historic Places.
- (b) The required open space shall be considered Private Open Space but shall be subject to the limitations set forth below and shall not be subject to the dimensional and other limitations set forth in Section 5.22 of this Zoning Ordinance. Private Open Space shall exclude parking and driveways for automobiles.
- (c) All of the required open space that is located at grade shall meet the definition of Permeable Open Space as set forth in this Zoning Ordinance.
- (d) The required open space shall be located at Grade or on porches and decks that are no higher than the floor elevation of the lowest Story Above Grade, except that up to twenty

- five percent (25%) of the required open space may be located at higher levels, such as balconies and decks, only if it is accessible to all occupants of the building.
- (e) For the purpose of this Affordable Housing Overlay, area used for covered or uncovered bicycle parking spaces that are not contained within a building shall be considered Private Open Space.
 - (f) Notwithstanding the foregoing, lots consisting of five thousand (5,000) square feet or less in total lot area that directly abut a Public Open Space consisting of at least one thousand five hundred (1,500) square feet of area shall not have a minimum open space requirement under this Article.

Attachment C

Erwin, Nicole

From: Joan Pickett <jpickett7@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 8:32 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2.0

July 31, 2023

Dear City Councillors,

I am hoping we can put aside the proposed AHO amendments that have resulted from a chaotic process over the past several months and start developing a strategy and a plan for affordable housing. We thought we had reached agreement as a city with significant resident input on a way forward with the initial AHO and it was working. There are already 1,500 AH units being built or in development from the 2020 AHO.

These proposed amendments seemingly came out of nowhere surprising some members of the council with no public process. They appear reactive without thought or planning. No analysis or data has been produced to show how many more affordable units will be developed if these proposed amendments are approved.

As a matter of fact, in a July 24 opinion letter in the Cambridge Day, the Ordinance sponsors say that Cambridge will not be transformed into Manhattan because 'only 3 to 5 larger buildings will be constructed over the next decade spread out across the city'. I find this statement surprising given that the authors state we have a crisis. At the moment, there are no projects pending that will find relief with these new amendments and break ground soon. So, what is the rush to push through these amendments?

I agree Cambridge needs more housing stock to accommodate persons and families at different income levels so those who have lived in the city can continue to live in the city. I believe we can accommodate some modest increase in height which is what the AHO developers spoke about--- some relief--- I did not hear them say 12-15 stories were needed. The emphasized that building design is within the context of the neighborhood. One way this contextual design happens is with community input which is removed by these amendments.

The city does know how to do inclusive planning as demonstrated by the recent Alewife Quadrangle process. This important issue deserves the same thoughtful and deliberate public planning process.

Sincerely,

Joan Pickett

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: JoeMcGuirk <popsmcguirk@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 7:14 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Comments regarding the public hearing on a City Council Zoning Petition relative to amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO)

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Joe McGuirk, 314 Columbia Street in support of the amendments

It is easy to be dismissive of imperfect solutions to our housing crisis when you don't have to worry about where you are going to live when your lease is up. But for those of us who do not own our homes even imperfect solutions are better than the status quo. Lower and middle income residents are essential to the well being of our city, but we are being displaced.

Folks are naturally afraid of change. When people hear about new policies, they are understandably anxious about how their neighborhoods might be impacted. But as someone who has struggled to remain a resident here, I can tell you that change has already come. Neighbors whose housing costs exceeded their ability to pay have left, to be replaced by wealthier folks. Displacement of lower- and middle-income residents is a much bigger threat to Cambridge than changes to our skyline. And it has reached a crisis.

I support comprehensive zoning reform. But I also support the amendments to the AHO. It will allow us to build more affordable housing along our major corridors and in our squares. The folks who develop and administer Cambridge's affordable housing overwhelmingly support the amendment. It will absolutely lead to change, but it is the change our city needs. This change will not happen rapidly. The amendment simply makes it more likely that we can build affordable housing. Residents will still be able to give input on what that will look like, but will no longer be able to stonewall good projects. And down the line, our neighborhoods will return to places where people from various income levels live in proximity to each other, rather than the enclaves of wealth they are becoming. The change that has happened over the last twenty years is not due to increased housing density. It is due to the influx of wealth at the cost of displacing those valuable lower and middle income residents who are unable to afford the city's skyrocketing housing costs.

We cannot use fear of what might happen to stop us from meaningfully addressing the urgent issue of what is happening.

Thank you

Erwin, Nicole

From: Anne Sundaram <anne.sundaram@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 7:11 PM
To: City Clerk
Cc: City Council; Anand Sundaram
Subject: AHO 2.0 proposal

Hello and good evening!

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed direction and concern that not all council members are doing what is right for the city of Cambridge and the community.

We have adequate AHO units in the city (in our humble opinion). It is not our responsibility to provide affordable housing for everyone who wishes to live in the city. Pls show us that current AHO 1.0 is not working as planned and the actual current city resident need (excluding all people around the country who are signing up for this).

Why don't we make it the responsibility of employers to provide subsidies to their employees to live in the city and transportation. Don't make it a burden for our tax payer monies to be spent on housing everyone who wishes to live in the city. People who work in other metros around the country like Manhattan, San Fransisco commute in - like every other American.

Pls don't further a project that will demolish our existing historic home, remove our critical green spaces and mature trees. We are in the top 5 densest city in the country for our population size.

The cost is prohibitive - About \$1MM for a unit. This is ridiculous. The only people who will win are the for profit builders and their circles.

We are lacking in transparency, oversight and a process where ensures a good investment of our \$\$s, a good design and and an approach that seems sensible for the community.

You are planning to build massive towers. It will exacerbate our parking woes. It will dwarf the neighboring residences and commercial spaces and will be an eyesore.

We cannot take an approach of 1 size fits all. Different neighborhoods and corridors have different needs and constraints. We don't appear to have a viable approach that amplifies good design matching the needs of the neighborhoods where these units are being proposed to be built.

The AHO 1.0 project proposal for 1627 Mass Ave was poor, planning board members were highly critical, the process followed was flawed and it came with no parking. The neighborhood had no voice and lacked city oversight. **Why are you rushing the AHO 2.0 project?**

THE 1.0 project has just begun and the reviews are not in. As we see in the national elections, the PACs are running the show. I would urge a majority of the council members to regain your bearings and do what council members like Paul Toner, Dennis Carlone, Patty Nolan are doing. Voting NO to the AHO 2.0 proposal.

I would strongly urge the entire council to vote against this proposal and restore a sense of oversight, common sense, transparency, fiscal sensibility and care for the communities, neighborhoods and people who have made you our voice on the city council.

thank you and respectfully,
Anne Sundaram
City of Cambridge resident

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 6:29 PM
To: City Clerk; McGovern, Marc; Zondervan, Quinton; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Mallon, Alanna; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Nolan, Patricia; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul
Subject: My Oral Comments

Dear Co-chairs, members of the Ordinance Committee and City Clerk,

City should first establish a goal and then decide what is the best way to achieve such a goal. Mass Chapter 40B established a minimum of 10% of housing inventory to be affordable. As of December 21, 2020, Cambridge had 14.8% of 2010 Census Housing Units as Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory. Would 20% be enough? Or 30%? It is a vicious cycle – the more affordable housing we build, the more people will apply to live in them.

CDD should have more up to date data and should know how well AHO is working. We need to know these before we amend AHO.

CDD should present case studies of potential developments comparing them to what is possible under AHO #1 and showing plot plans, with abutting neighboring properties, with footprint of the development, the number of residential units and total number of residents as well as parking impact assessment. Good example would be a potential development at Harvard Square, 2072 Mass Ave and joint 2400/2418 Massachusetts Ave. For the joint project, CDD should include what would be possible under the Barrette Zoning.

Given the chance, a developer will find a way to get around the Zoning Ordinance or even the State statutes. City has no way to prevent unscrupulous developers taking advantage of this amendment to reap windfall profits as the Planning Board review will be advisory only. 2072 Mass Ave is a good example of a developer not following the guidelines under which the development is being proposed.

A 12-story building with retail space on the ground floor and 7 units on each residential floor would have 77 units. Assuming 3.5 residents/unit, that will mean 269 new residents with no accessory parking. Has anyone considered the impact of such a massive influx of residents?

Erwin, Nicole

From: Teresa Cardosi <tercar1961@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 5:58 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: support AHO amendments

Dear City Councillors,

Please support the AHO amendments so that affordable housing is increased. Cambridge is still in dire need of housing in the price range of middle and low-income people. Supporting these amendments will allow the affordable housing developers to compete with the for-profit developers to purchase property.

Thanks,
Teresa Cardosi
7 Woodrow Wilson Court, #47
Cambridge, MA 02139

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: j hannon <marchanthannon@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 5:46 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Affordable Housing Overlay amendments

Dear Councilors,

I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the amendments you are working on for the AHO. I believe the greater heights in the revised AHO will enable affordable housing to be more competitive economically and result in more sites for affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jean Hannon
7 Woodrow Wilson Ct., #45
Cambridge

--

j. hannon

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Andy N <anash18@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 5:38 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: AHO

Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

I'm writing to express my support for the AHO proposal and for the suggestions submitted by the Cambridge Residents Alliance. Like other residents, for me the new building heights have been a hard pill to swallow. But I feel that given the housing crisis that is likely to worsen, and the constraints we're working under, I cannot in good conscience oppose the proposed changes.

I hope that the city works to pull as much property as possible off the private housing market and supports social housing options that can reduce the vulnerability of resident renters to housing speculation.

Thank you,
Andy Nash
18 Worcester Street

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Beth Gamse <bethgamse@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 5:11 PM
To: City Council; Mallon, Alanna; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Zondervan, Quinton; Toner, Paul; Carlone, Dennis; Simmons, Denise; Nolan, Patricia; City Manager; City Clerk; Azeem, Burhan; McGovern, Marc
Cc: Judith Singer
Subject: Please pause on the AHO

Dear Members of the City Council, City Manager, and City Clerk-

We write in strong support of pausing any abrupt decisions about an affordable housing overlay that the Council is considering:

1. Absent any meaningful process to solicit perspectives of city residents
2. Absent any meaningful bidding process for potential developers
3. Absent meaningful reliance on local data from CAMBRIDGE residents or city employees about waiting lists for low-income housing
4. Absent coordination across city departments and
5. Absent a coherent development and urban planning strategy that takes the city's growth and future into account.

As long term residents and taxpayers, we love the Cambridge landscape with its mix of architectural styles, shapes and sizes, and the mix of public and private housing. The mix of street-level commercial buildings on thoroughfares and residential buildings both on main streets and side streets is part of what has made Cambridge an appealing place to live for many years. Changing the streetscape so dramatically without attending to the issues listed above would be a grave mistake. Please hold off on committing the city to a rash and ill-conceived decision.

Thank you for your consideration

Beth Gamse and Judith Singer
 14 Walker St
 Cambridge MA 02138

617-448-4860

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rabbi Yoni Central Square Tenants <centralsquaretenants@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 5:00 PM
To: City Council; Carlone, Dennis; Nolan, Patricia; Toner, Paul; Simmons, Denise; Quinton Zondervan; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Azeem, Burhan; Siddiqui, Sumbul
Cc: Rep. Mike Connolly; City Manager; City Clerk; Cportneighbors; Jay Livingstone; Marjorie C. Decker; luke.oroark@mahouse.gov; christianna.golden@masenate.gov
Subject: Support for AHO Amendments + Tenants' Rights!

Subject: Support for AHO Amendments + Tenants' Rights!

Dear City Councilor,

Despite my sympathy for Councilor Carlone's tireless advocacy of 7-story inclusionary housing, I remain more deeply concerned for the immediate housing deficit in Cambridge of maybe 40,000 tenancy-spaces. Rather than relying on the CHA list of 21,000 households, I count students at MIT and Harvard. During the depths of COVID, vacancies were around 6%, when that community was away at home.

The dearth of housing impacts low income households and their friends the harshest. In a local house of worship, we are losing core members and constrained in our growth because our community members cannot find reasonably priced rentals within walking distance. This problem could be addressed by the Franklin Petition. This amendment would likely help many in our community.

I support building the Tower of Babylon-style affordable housing, because our crisis is so deep, the situation is so dire, and the time is vanishingly short. However, for-profit management companies or building owners may be seeking to maximize profits rather than to preserve our diversity. The bigger the building, the more the for-profit inclusionary housing program landlord's head rests in the clouds. Managers of Inclusionary Housing asserted inaccurate ledgers against nearly 30% of inclusionary tenants. Some managers even issue notices to quit, one after another, even when a tenant owes no rent.

It is time to consider an ownership structure where a for-profit company would not hold legal title, but maybe instead solely a profit-based beneficial interest. Perhaps the land belongs to the City.

Perhaps, management of a building containing inclusionary housing apartments would be subject to continuous annual compliance review by the City of Cambridge (CDD) and Cambridge Housing Authority. The CDD should consider implementing a rental abatement tax system for non-compliant landlords that parallels the HUD penalties against a landlord for failure to pass housing inspection.

The Cambridge Human Rights Commission should be empowered to enforce the CDD Zoning ordinance (as well as covenants that run with the land) against inclusionary housing program landlords once a tenant alleges disability discrimination. The CHRC should also be empowered to enforce HUD regulations against a section 8 landlord, once a tenant alleges source of income discrimination.

Retaliation against an inclusionary housing program tenant who complained and prevailed with probable cause, on one or more allegations, should be protected against summary process for six years with a finding rather than a presumption of retaliation. So, such a tenant automatically wields as a shield to protect the communal interest in holding landlords in large buildings accountable.

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We heard that according to a recent survey, "We often talk with residents of existing affordable housing, whether owned by a non-profit, for-profit, or CHA, who say they feel they have no voice in how their buildings are run".

"I was not surprised," said E. Denise Simmons, the councillor chairing the Housing Committee hearing where the data was presented. "I have heard [inclusionary residents say they] felt like they were a child of a lesser god."

People in inclusionary units also often live in Cambridge longer than the market-rate tenants or owners. The average length of residence among inclusionary renters was 26 years.

Throughout the City of Cambridge survey presented on 12/13/2022, respondents talked about fear of retaliation and eviction, and some talked about experiencing it, "getting an eviction notice as soon as they report a problem," Dr. Curley said. With that fear as a backdrop, "we didn't hear from anybody who indicated that they had reported an incidence of bias that it was resolved in an appropriate way."

In summary, I strongly support building affordable housing at a large scale to grow the number of residents in Cambridge by an additional 30% (i.e. 40k new units for a city of around 120k people). However, I urge the City Council to consider one or more of the above tenant-raised suggestions to offset the increasingly lopsided balance of power in the hands of inclusionary housing landlords of tall buildings.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Yoni

Central Square Tenants Union

Affiliate of Greater Boston Tenants Union

Erwin, Nicole

From: michael kennedy <mp_kennedy@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 4:56 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: City Ordinance Meeting Regarding AHO 2.0/Monday July 31, 2023

Dear Cambridge City Council Members,

Thank you for reading my long email. Thank you for your tedious work. Thank you for being sensible to the city's needs and not to the desires of outside influence.

While you have heard from me before, I'd like to reiterate my feelings and my position regarding the amending of the Affordable Housing Overlay that is in front of the council this evening. **It is a bad idea from start to finish, and I trust you will listen to reason and a majority of the Cambridge public-- and vote no.** I understand that Councilor Toner, Nolan, and Carlone have committed to such a vote, and I commend their steadiness and their wisdom.

Indeed, allowing any amendment to the not yet reviewed AHO would be an unmitigated disaster for Cambridge for many reasons. How is it that a vote to amend can precede a bona fide review of the two-year old AHO? From a standpoint of protocol and procedure, this stands out as problematic.

To the point, however: were this AHO to be amended, it would immediately and without recourse allow for-profit concerns such as Capstone & Hope to construct what they term '100% affordable housing' while employing misleading PR campaigns with tropes such as 'desperate housing crisis' that conflate (in the public ear) both low-income housing and the unhoused population with affordable housing, which is not the case. Were you to amend this AHO before official review would be to be complicit in a ruse that disadvantages already disadvantaged people because their situation is used to sell this 'opportunity' to the city and the public. It is disingenuous to use the descriptor 'affordable housing' in this manner when it is used to create an atmosphere of fear and desperation.

This problem of poverty and housing is not unique to Cambridge or Boston; rather, it is endemic to the entire nation, city by city, and giving for-profit developers an 'as of right' impetus to build buildings that will not benefit the unhoused or low income residents AS MUCH as it will benefit the middle and upper middle class residents (and already wealthy developers) is unethical.

Such an amending of this AHO would constitute a move toward tall and long buildings along the corridors and in the squares, which not only sets a dangerous precedent going forward (during climate change where energy infrastructures are under dynamic stresses unknown before) but also returns the 'answer' backward to a solution of the past that has been proven not to work : 'warehousing' people into buildings (regardless of income level) is problematic in itself and worsened when not requiring setbacks, parking, and standard FARs.

Listening to the 'feasibility argument' of the for-profit developers as if they are doing the city a favor (!) only benefits the developers who benefit tremendously through city, state, and federal subsidies as well as generating long-time residual income streams from rents as well as subsidies and incentives in terms of tax

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write-offs and other deductions that protect and bolster the developer's bottom line. Why is the city council interested in benefiting for-profit development construction companies?

Cambridge should assume and meet the challenge(s) of its low-income and homeless populations. Cambridge should not be in the business of off-loading its responsibility toward the unfortunate to for-profit developers.

This situation becomes, indeed, how the rich enrich themselves at the expense and suffering of the poor and the lower and middle classes. This model is broken, and I would ask the members of the council to tune out the hyperbole and then carefully study this proposal. Clearly the profit motive plays loudly here, in Cambridge, for these development companies who want to build here (why aren't they clamoring to build in other towns and cities?) when Cambridge already has a high saturation rate of affordable housing (17%) and is one of the top three most dense small cities in the country. The answer? Because property values and profit schemes are favorable in Cambridge, not so much or as much in other towns.

The PR campaign behind this movement is nationwide, and this 'high density development near public transportation and along corridors' has big money and big developers behind it, as well as plenty of PR appearing in the NYT, The Atlantic, and other national publications, all that read in a highly biased manner that obfuscate the profit motive and blame tax paying residents while name-calling them NIMBYs, claiming that these units are necessary to resolve the problem of the unhoused and low-income when indeed these buildings will by and large serve middle and upper middle-income people and further enrich construction companies.

Until such developers or the city delivers a building and business model that leads to home ownership for those who desperately need it, such as rent-to-own, I will have to continue to look on certain council member's hope to amend the AHO as political theatre with self-rewarding ends. As elected city officials, you have the duty to help all citizens realize improvements in their lives, if indeed you have put or used the words 'desperate housing crisis' into your campaign to win your elected office. This AHO amendment business has big business in mind, not potential residents of affordable housing units. Truly, the housing crisis is much more complex than represented, and the motive of these for-profit companies couldn't be more obvious.

I hold that you reject this move to amend the AHO. **Cambridge ought to seek a way to bring affordable housing to its residents in a way that leads to homeownership, so new residents of affordable housing units can build equity and move forward financially like others who enjoy the American dream.**

Is there anyone on the council who is not a home-owner, and who does not nod at increasing equity in their home value year by year? How is it we will not be stewards of the same for those less fortunate and have been shut out from realizing home ownership? Why should income compromised residents rent from wealthy development companies that will, eventually, sell the building down river to further their profits down the road?

Just vote no.

Cambridge voters are paying attention.

Sincerely, again,

Michael Kennedy

Erwin, Nicole

From: Matt Goldstein <goldsteinster@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 4:52 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: vote yes in support of the AHO

Dear Cambridge City Councillors,

This email is to ask you to vote YES to report the AHO amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee. We are eager to have more affordable and, indeed, all kinds of housing in Cambridge.

Thank you.

Matt Goldstein
52 Clarendon Ave

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dave Halperin <halperin.dr@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 4:51 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support AHO Amendments

Dear Council,

The Cambridge Citizen's Coalition has recently sent out a mailer hailing the current AHO, which they opposed at the time, as "standard best practice" and accompany it with a picture of Frost Terrace, which again many of their members opposed at the time. So much of the opposition to this proposal is simply about fear of change. Yet change of some kind will happen whether or not we want it, whatever policy course the council chooses to take. What we can do is influence what kind of change happens. Do we pursue the status quo and have Cambridge increasingly become an enclave for the wealthy? Or do we zone for more affordable housing? As the mailer demonstrates, changes many dread might not be so scary once they're here. I live right near LBJ apartments and it is an asset to our neighborhood and causes no negative impacts to me. I am happy to have more tall buildings in our city to help accommodate some of the more than 20,000 people on our affordable housing waitlist in desperate need of housing.

Thank you,
Dave

Erwin, Nicole

From: Raminta Holden <rholden.bmc14@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 4:49 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support AHO expansion

Please support the amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay!

As Cambridge housing becomes affordable to fewer and fewer households, the character of the city will also change – economically, socially, and racially. Without more affordable housing, we will continue to lose our diversity, more residents will be displaced, and more residents will become homeless.

Building housing in Cambridge specifically is environmentally friendly, because it reduces sprawling exurban housing development, and Cambridge residents have much lower carbon footprints than suburban residents (for instance, they are less likely to drive and more likely to use public transit). This is even more true of residents of affordable housing.

Stand with our diverse population and help protect the environment! Vote YES to report the AHO amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee!

Raminta Holden
she/her/hers
828-279-5304
rholden.bmc14@gmail.com



Erwin, Nicole

From: Jonathan Haber <hijon89@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 4:31 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: AHO Changes

Hi there,

Unfortunately I'm unable to attend the meeting tonight. However, in lieu of speaking on the Zoom, I wanted to send an email in support of the expanded affordable housing overlay. We need more housing in Cambridge, and we need to use every tool at our disposal to make that happen. I'm so glad to see parking minimums go away (especially after reading Paved Paradise by Henry Grabar), and I think the AHO expansion is another great step. Hopefully in the longer term we can make more comprehensive zoning changes that encourage denser housing development across the board.

Thanks,
Jonathan Haber
11 Bellis Circle

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Tom <thomascrodriguez@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 4:29 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Supporting Affordable Housing Overlay

Hello,

I am a Cambridge resident in the Harvard Square area and I am writing to express my support for additional measures which will make it easier to build affordable housing in my neighborhood. I work for a local community development corporation, and understand how these decisions have major impacts on residents of our community.

Please let me know if you'd like to speak with me further.

Best regards,
Tom Rodriguez
52 Garden St., Apt 34, Cambridge MA 02138
(860)377-3568

Sent from my iPhone

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Elaine O'Reilly <eoreilly@governmentalstrategies.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 4:15 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: Elaine O'Reilly
Subject: Affordable Housing Overlay: Please Vote YES tonight

Importance: High

Dear City Council Members:

Thank you as always for your public service and for taking the time to read this message and take my request into consideration as you participate in meetings and discussions. As you consider options for improving upon Cambridge's availability of affordable housing across the city for our residents whether they be seniors, disabled individuals and their families, long time city residents or newcomers that we welcome here...I urge you to support the Affordable Housing Overlay Amendments currently under consideration.

Please Vote YES tonight to report the Affordable Housing Overlay amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee. This will allow the process to move forward to continue making improvements to the availability and accessibility of affordable housing options in our great City.

Thank you again.

Elaine O'Reilly

Elaine O'Reilly
 95 Cushing St.
 Cambridge 02138
 C: (617) 447-5174

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jess Sheehan <jess.sheehan@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 4:08 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: support for AHO amendments

Dear Council,

I am writing to you in support of the amendments to expand and improve the 100% Affordable Overlay.

Cambridge is a rich city, but it shouldn't be a city just for the rich. Our community is stronger and more closely knit when the people we rely on for services throughout our lives - people like teachers, restaurant servers, elder care workers, and many more - can afford to live and raise families here, rather than having to commute in. Long commutes cost precious time, and they cost carbon too.

Cambridge has made important strides in recent years, principally with the initial AHO, but we must keep building on that success. We already know what happens to cities that fail to build enough affordable housing in all neighborhoods. They become home to lifeless downtowns, rising homelessness, and extreme economic segregation. A healthy city consists of more than high-income white collar workers, wealthy retirees, and students scraping by. It needs store clerks, and childcare workers, and musicians, too. Not one, two, or three cities over - right here.

We call it a housing *crisis* for a reason. It's not hyperbole. Homelessness, displacement, and extreme rent burden are large and growing problems, and urgent, bold action is warranted to combat them.

It is true that Cambridge cannot solve the housing crisis alone, and no one is claiming otherwise. But we should be doing all we can to share our beautiful city and walkable, climate-friendly neighborhoods with as many people as possible, from all walks of life and of every economic circumstance. We should be doing all we can to stem displacement and curb the rise in homelessness, and that means building substantially more high-quality affordable housing, as quickly as possible.

I understand not everyone in the city currently supports the amendments. That was also the case with the initial AHO, and many of the same people and groups who opposed it then now quite literally point to apartments made possible through the Overlay as "standard best practice." Opposition is passionate but short-lived; people get over it once they see a few extra stories is not the apocalypse. It's a lot harder to get over not having an affordable place to live. That's the damage that lasts, and preventing as much of it as possible should be our priority.

Please vote YES to pass the AHO amendments from Ordinance with a favorable recommendation.

Sincerely,
 Jess Sheehan
 48 Fairmont St.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Jackson Moore-Otto <jmojmo@bu.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 3:56 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Testimony in Support of AHO Amendments

Subject: Support for Affordable Housing Overlay Amendments

Dear Esteemed Councilors and City Staff,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Affordable Housing Overlay amendments and to urge you to vote in favor of their implementation.

Cambridge, like many other vibrant cities, is facing a housing affordability crisis that disproportionately affects low- and moderate-income individuals and families. This crisis not only threatens the well-being and stability of our fellow residents but also challenges the diverse and inclusive character that makes Cambridge so special and threatens our future prosperity.

The proposed amendments offer a strategic and pragmatic approach to tackling this crisis and should be embraced as a step forward in ensuring a sustainable future for our city.

By modernizing zoning rules, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and expediting the approval process, we can encourage and empower our nonprofit affordable housing developers to invest in affordable housing projects that may otherwise be deemed infeasible due to stiff competition for land, complex regulations, and financial constraints (particularly in an environment of relatively high interest rates). This, in turn, will increase the supply of affordable housing units, making it more accessible to those who need it most.

Furthermore, the Affordable Housing Overlay Amendments align perfectly with our collective goals of promoting sustainable development and fostering diverse neighborhoods. Affordable housing plays a crucial role in enhancing social cohesion, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability. When people of different backgrounds and income levels have the opportunity to live and work together, we foster a sense of community and promote social integration.

Thank you for your dedication to serving our community. I look forward to seeing Cambridge continue to thrive as a city that values diversity and provides ample opportunities for all its residents.

Sincerely,
 Jackson Moore-Otto

Erwin, Nicole

From: judithblack <judithblack@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 3:42 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: affordable housing in Cambridge

- Vote YES to report the AHO amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee

I support affordable housing in Cambridge. I have lived here since 1979 and benefited from being able to find housing I could afford while attending MIT while raising four young children. We were able to continue living here after finishing the program. I found employment in the area and my children were able to get excellent public schooling. I'm sorry to say that the recent housing prices have led them to moving to other cities. We need housing that our families can afford.

Please support the 100% Affordable Housing Overlay amendment.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kathleen Moore <kathleensmoore@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 3:41 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk

TO:
 Cambridge City Council
 City Hall
 795 Massachusetts Avenue
 Cambridge, MA 02139

Subject: Support for Important Amendments to the 100% Affordable Housing Overlay

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the important amendments to the 100% Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), which will be under consideration today.

These amendments are crucial in our efforts to address the pressing housing challenges faced by our community, and I believe they will allow our local non-profit homebuilders to create more affordable housing that Cambridge desperately needs. By removing zoning barriers that limit new housing, the AHO will pave the way for the development of more housing units that are within reach of our fellow residents struggling to find suitable and affordable homes.

Affordable housing is not just a matter of numbers; it significantly impacts the lives of individuals and families in Cambridge. As a parent on Cambridge Housing Authority's 22,500 household affordable housing waitlist stated, having access to affordable housing means "working just one job and being able to be more present in my children's lives."

Ensuring that more families have access to affordable housing is not only an economic issue but also a social one, allowing parents to be more present and engaged in their children's lives, contributing to the overall well-being of our community.

By supporting the AHO amendments, we can foster a more equitable and inclusive city, where socio-economic diversity is promoted, and residents from all walks of life can thrive.

I understand that opponents of affordable housing may be vocal during the hearing, and I urge the City Council to consider the long-term benefits of these amendments for the community. It is essential to remember that a strong showing of support is critical to countering misinformation and ensuring that the voices of those in need of affordable housing are heard.

I am committed to making a positive difference in our city, and I urge the Cambridge City Council to vote YES to report the AHO amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee. I am confident that these amendments will be a significant step forward in providing many more Cambridge families with housing they can afford.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to witnessing positive progress for our community.

Kathleen Moore
9 Doane Street
Cambridge MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: hwalker434@rcn.com
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 3:37 PM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please Reject Amendments to AHO

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council,

One Councillor wrote to me: "It is...important to note that the AHO includes strict design guidelines and community engagement requirements,...giving residents a voice in shaping their neighborhoods."

May I offer a couple of quotes from these same design guidelines, which reflect the ideas of the better angels of CDD and the Council:

- • "It is expected that affordable housing projects will be designed in a way that is **compatible** with their existing neighborhood contexts." (P. 5)
- • "Relate new building **height, massing, scale, and form** to that of existing adjacent buildings." (P.24)
- • "Incorporate **stepbacks** to relate to the heights of adjoining buildings and to the scale of the street; and to provide a transition between the height of taller buildings and lower surrounding buildings." (P. 24)
- • "**Adjust building configuration and massing** to maximize access to sunlight, air, and sky views from neighboring buildings and sites, and to maintain privacy." (P.26)
- • "Locate and orient new buildings so that their **front yard setbacks** relate to those of neighboring and adjacent buildings." (P. 12)
- • "Locate **open space** in relation to adjacent yards, residential units, and public spaces that would benefit from natural light and views." (P.12)

Where we have Amendments allowing building heights vastly out of scale with neighborhood context, where there are no minimum front and side yard setbacks, where FAR allowances negate stepback requirements, and where minimal-to-no open space is allowed, the existing AHO guidelines are inapplicable.

As for resident voice, we have just seen non-binding Planning Board review in action at 1627 Mass. Ave. According to the *Cambridge Day*, there was general praise for providing affordable housing, but criticism of the project for not relating to the neighborhood. Yet this was merely 6 stories, not 12 or 15 stories. For \$1 million per unit, we can and must do better.

Please reject these amendments to the AHO.

With many thanks for your consideration,
Helen Walker

43 Linnaean Street
(617) 491-4998

Erwin, Nicole

From: Catherine Zusy <cathzusy@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 3:28 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Please vote against AHO 2.0!

Dear Councilors,

I urge you to vote against AHO 2.0. I honor your desire to remove obstacles to building more affordable housing. I agree we need more. But at \$1,000,000 a unit, we can't house everyone and passing blanket ordinances giving developers more and more license to build without the benefit of Planning Board or community review is problematic.

1,500 affordable units are currently under construction. This is fabulous. Please stop imposing development on us without checks and balances. Cambridge is a desirable place to live for so many reasons, including architectural variety, parks, and treelined streets. I worry that this well intentioned ordinance will yield disastrous results: stuffing out-of-scale buildings where they don't belong, that cast shadows and polarize neighbors.

Let's understand the implications of the Affordable Housing Overlay before relinquishing more control to developers. What's the hurry?!

Thank you.

Cathie Zusy
 202 Hamilton St.
 Cambridge, MA 02139

Erwin, Nicole

From: Philip Laird <PLaird@arcusa.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 3:02 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Toner, Paul
Subject: AHO

Dear City Council members,

I have lived in Cambridge for the past 44 years and I strongly oppose AHO 2 proposal and support alternatives put forward by Councilors Toner, Mallon, and Nolan to review obstacles and propose carefully considered solutions to expand AHO without ruining our fine city forever. There is no reasonable purpose to double the AHO height limit. The developers are the only ones who will profit from this mistake and the tax payers will end up footing the enormous bill. Please invest in neighborhood scale affordable housing where residents will enjoy a better quality of life than if they are in towers. We cannot and should not be responsible to house every person who desires to move to Cambridge, MA. Our small city is already among the densest cities. What some of you are proposing is going to destroy the fabric of our city and what makes it desirable to live in. Our historic houses should be protected and embraced, not dwarfed by a 12-15 story buildings that are proposed all over the city. Please listen to the advice and wisdom of city planners and do not rush this impactful decision.

This will be an enormous mistake if this is implemented. There is no way back once these tall buildings are erected. They will cause a blight on the city. Dennis Carlone stated it perfectly in his article on the subject. The residents in Cambridge are closely watching this and who votes which way. We are also paying attention to who is giving money to each of your campaigns as that explains why some of you are voting for this ill-advised proposal.

Please reconsider. This is so important to all of the residents of Cambridge.

Sincerely,

Philip Laird

Philip L. Laird, FAIA, LEED AP
Pronouns: he/him
 Principal



Architectural Resources Cambridge
 501 Boylston Street, Suite 4101
 Boston, MA 02116
 Direct : 617.575.4226
 Cell : 617.460.0289
www.arcusa.com

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Erwin, Nicole

From: Will Monson <wmonson@homeownersrehab.org>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 3:02 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: In Support of the Proposed Amendments to the AHO

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council:

I am unable to testify at tonight's hearing due to our National Night Out event so I am writing to strongly urge you to vote in support of the proposed changes to Cambridge's Affordable Housing Overlay. As a senior project manager at HRI, a local affordable housing developer, these amendments would be important tools in our toolkit to expand the supply of affordable housing in Cambridge, where the incredibly high fixed costs of land can be spread over more units. Greater flexibility would also allow a wider array of building massing options that might better suit a particular parcel and neighborhood, for example, by creating a taller building and preserving more open space.

Thank you for your support of affordable housing in Cambridge and your consideration of these amendments.

Sincerely,

Will

William Monson (He/Him)
 Sr. Project Manager



280 Franklin St.
 Cambridge, MA 02139
 617-868-4858 x202

Erwin, Nicole

From: Cathleen Higgins <cahigg@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 2:54 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for the AHO amendments

To Members of the Ordinance Committee:

I am writing in strong support of the AHO amendments currently before the Ordinance Committee. These amendments are not radical; rather, they offer common sense, reasonable modifications to the AHO. Contrary to opponents claims, 12-15 story buildings would be allowed in selected squares only. The City Councilors who authored the amendments, in a Cambridge Day op-ed, debunk the idea that there will be towers all over Cambridge: "we anticipate only 3-5 larger buildings over the next decade." What a difference to so many families those future homes will make! Any opportunity to stabilize the lives of those tens of thousands desperately seeking a safe, adequate living situation, the City should implement. It is a step toward the housing justice everyone deserves. Please vote YES to report the amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee.

Thank you.

Cathy Higgins

345 Norfolk St, #3F

Cambridge, MA 02139

Erwin, Nicole

From: hwalker434@rcn.com
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 2:50 PM
To: Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; CityManager@cambridgema.gov
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please Reject Amendments to AHO

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council and City Manager Huang,

One Councillor wrote to me: "It is...important to note that the AHO includes strict design guidelines and community engagement requirements,...giving residents a voice in shaping their neighborhoods."

May I offer a couple of quotes from those same design guidelines, which reflect the ideas of the better angels of CDD and the Council:

- • "It is expected that affordable housing projects will be designed in a way that is **compatible** with their existing neighborhood contexts." (P. 5)
- • "Relate new building **height, massing, scale, and form** to that of existing adjacent buildings." (P.24)
- • "Incorporate **stepbacks** to relate to the heights of adjoining buildings and to the scale of the street; and to provide a transition between the height of taller buildings and lower surrounding buildings." (P. 24)
- • "**Adjust building configuration and massing** to maximize access to sunlight, air, and sky views from neighboring buildings and sites, and to maintain privacy." (P.26)
- • "Locate and orient new buildings so that their **front yard setbacks** relate to those of neighboring and adjacent buildings." (P. 12)
- • "Locate **open space** in relation to adjacent yards, residential units, and public spaces that would benefit from natural light and views." (P.12)

Where we have Amendments allowing building heights vastly out of scale with neighborhood context, where there are no minimum front and side yard setbacks, where FAR allowances negate stepback requirements, and where minimal-to-no open space is allowed, the existing AHO guidelines are inapplicable.

As for resident voice, we have just seen non-binding Planning Board review in action at 1627 Mass. Ave. According to the *Cambridge Day*, there was general praise for providing affordable housing, but criticism of the project for not relating to the neighborhood. Yet this was merely 6 stories, not 12 or 15 stories. For \$1 million per unit, we can and must do better.

Please reject these amendments to the AHO.

With many thanks for your consideration,
Helen Walker

43 Linnaean Street

(617) 491-4998

Erwin, Nicole

From: Martin Elvis <martinselvis2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 2:46 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support for AHO amendments

Councilors:

Please vote YES to report the AHO amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee.

Affordable housing is an urgent issue in Cambridge and is hindered by existing rules.

While there is not instant fix, these modest amendments provide relief that may ease the problem over time.

Thank you,

-Martin Elvis

Martin Elvis
28 Linnaean St. Cambridge MA 02138
cell: 617 331 3009

Erwin, Nicole

From: rclarey <rclarey@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 2:02 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: affordable Housing Overlay

Dear Councillors:

Today's hearing is an attempt to use the distractions of summer to reward the developers with a first strike bonanza they can only dream of when they must contend with the public interest in the form of public notice, the planning board and other city departments, the law, the Danehy case, and the zoning protections that the state legislature and previous councils have enacted to protect otherwise powerless Cantabridgians.

The riches awarded by AHO to developers and their allies at the expense of the unprotected and unwarned citizens boggles the mind.

Richard D Clarey, 15 Brookford St.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Suzanne Blier <suzanneblier@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 2:00 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Huang, Yi-An
Subject: Points on AHO 2.0

Honorable Mayor and Cambridge City Councillors,

I write urging you to vote NO on AHO 2.0

- The required 5-year review of AHO 1.0 has yet to be started
- The need for this kind of radical up-zoning has yet to be shown
 - c.3,000-3,500 Cambridge residents are on our affordable housing lists
 - we have c.1500 units in AHO 1.0 already in the works
- This kind of income-restricted tall tower approach is problematic, went out in the 1950s and 1960s, and many such towers are now being taken down around the country.
- The most successful and widely accepted new affordable housing developments in the city are of human scale and fit into the neighborhoods where they are situated. The AHO 2.0 ones wouldn't.
- There have been no design guidelines presented re how these projects would look in various contexts around the city.
- The current plans (without setbacks for green spaces and trees) would cause greater heat island impacts and both environmental and health inequities.
- The Envision Plan is asking us to ADD more green spaces and keep our mature trees, which AHO 2.0 goes against.
- We do not have a viable public transportation system that would allow residents to get to where they need to go without cars and parking, particularly for those who are disabled, with young children, or seniors.
- Without some level of compliance with neighborhood setbacks, green space requirements, and design features, these structures will stick out like a sore thumb and will not even comply with the design requirements of AHO 1.0.
- The city has not yet undertaken a survey of affordable housing resident experiences; and indeed, one complex, Walden Square, has provided evidence that there are serious concerns.
- No attempt has been made to learn what the inhabitants of the affordable units want to see happen in their own buildings, much less new ones.
- To date many of the AHO-1 developers have simply doubled the density and size of the properties already in place and have not used the city \$\$ to purchase new properties.
- The AHO units now are costing close to \$1 million apiece – well beyond what market price units cost (where is the oversight)?
- AHO 1.0 and 2.0 does NOT help affordable housing residents to build equity through the acquisition of their own homes, and indeed leaves them in a financial state of disempowerment too often by participating in this effort.
- No infrastructure is in place to allow this kind of density and height.
- The fact that this effort was timed for the election, as with AHO 1.0, is problematic but more so since there has been no citywide or neighborhood outreach effort, so most residents of the city have no idea that this is in the works, and there seems to be no intention of requiring that kind of neighborhood outreach before the final Council vote.
- The political pace pushing this effort published an early celebratory article in the builders, bankers, and developers trade journal (March 26, 2023 Banker and Tradesman) before the proposal discussion was underway, making it clear that this large scale up-zoning amendment is grounded in a self-serving political interest not what is best for the city or for our residents.
- The city decided long ago to support labs over housing.
- We need a viable citywide affordable housing plan, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood not this market driven AHO 2.0 model.

Cordially,

Suzanne Blier

Erwin, Nicole

From: Missy Carter <missycarter@usa.net>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 1:27 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please Oppose AHO Amendments

Dear Councillors,

Cambridge residents have written at length about the flaws in the proposal- buildings that are too high without setbacks, high-per-unit construction costs, and taxpayer funding of private developer benefits.

Also, the developments proceeding under the current Affordable Housing Ordinance will go a long way to addressing the AH wait-list of 3,000-3,500 people.

Before an amendment of such cityscape-changing scope is adopted, please undertake a review of the impact of the AHO passed less than three years ago.

An important consideration also is the style, materials for building and the consistency of the design with Cambridge architecture and history. Many innovative materials, technology to make utilities contribute to the extreme need for climate change implications should be part of the motivation of Cambridge leadership to contribute rather than build units without these urgent needs a key priority.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Missy Carter and Marshall Carter

4 Riedesel Avenue
 Cambridge, MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: Elaine DeRosa <ederosa67@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 1:09 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance Committee Testimony

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council,

I am writing to request that you vote favorably for the proposed amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) before the Ordinance Committee.

Since the passage of the original AHO we have heard repeated testimony from non-profit developers that they still face barriers to their ability to financially build affordable housing to meet the affordable housing crisis in Cambridge. They have also reported lost opportunities to develop affordable housing because of the current barriers that the original AHO did not address, that these amendments correct.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition's Annual Out of Reach report found that Massachusetts is the third most expensive state in the US to rent. In Cambridge we have known this to be true for many years as it has been reported many times that there are thousands of individuals on the Cambridge Housing Authority's waiting list for affordable housing. We can no longer wait to put in place policies that support the development of this desperately needed housing for all those waiting.

It is time to move forward to put these amendments in place that create the foundation for future funding and new construction opportunities.

I urge you to vote to support these amendments.

Thank you.
 Elaine DeRosa
 4 Pleasant Place

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Aaron Shakow <ashakow@post.harvard.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 1:08 PM
To: City Council; Huang, Yi-An; City Clerk
Subject: Proposed AHO changes

To the Mayor and members of the City Council:

As a longtime Cambridge resident who has lived in rental housing for twenty-five years, and as a board member of the Cambridge Residents Alliance, I am writing to express my support for proposed changes to the Affordable Housing Overlay. These thoughtful revisions are a good start to addressing our city's deep inequalities in access to stable housing.

However, I believe the current draft fails to approach the problem of housing in Cambridge in the broad framework to which the city committed in the Envision Cambridge roadmap, which speaks of "maintaining Cambridge as a place for everyone, regardless of economic background or circumstance."

If our city is to *maintain* itself as a place for everyone regardless of economic background or circumstance, then we must offer those who access the housing market through the AHO *ongoing* support, so that they are not forced out of their homes if their economic circumstances change.

I therefore urge the council to consider a line item in the revised ordinance for the Office of the Housing Liaison, to support services for those living in housing created through the AHO, and a new fund for homeowner and renter assistance for that same population, complementary to the statewide RAFT program.

Thank you very much for considering this suggestion.

Respectfully,

Aaron Shakow
 4 Newton St. #3

Erwin, Nicole

From: Marg-Laptop <mlauritson@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 1:02 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: AHO - Please vote NO

To members of the Cambridge City Council:

Please vote no on AHO. I'm grateful for those who have done so and urge others to join them.

Cambridge is already one of the most densely populated cities in the country, and it's area is very small and unable to accommodate all who want to live here. Building large/tower housing (without parking) in the most densely populated areas of Cambridge makes no sense and diminishes the quality of life for all who will live there. They/we are already green-space, fresh air and open space poor - and parking space poor. We should be expanding green and open space not increasing density and build in scale with neighborhoods (with green space and fire escape set-backs) - spread out throughout Cambridge. Why does anyone want high-rise buildings?

I'm shocked that builders will be allowed to build without set backs and other things. How do people escape fire if they don't have a side door and side space to flee? How do fire fighters rescue those living in high rises or fight a fire? The fire department sign-off should be mandated on all plans and finished builds. If builders have permission to do that, what else are they going to do to cut corners to enhance profits?

Things seem to intersect. One is "no parking" forcing people to rely of pedal power or the MBTA. Of course the T can not be relied upon to get to work on time. More and more people are using e-bikes and e-scooters to make cycling easier and allowing greater distance. We may soon have e-bike food deliveries and other entrepreneurial services. So what does that have to do with AHO? E-bike lithium batteries and fires they create. In high rise buildings, this is asking for disaster and trapped people. Is the fire department ready to fight these extremely hot and smoky blazes and rescue people?

Below are two examples of Lithium battery fires. Is Cambridge ready? Where should they be stored and recharged when not in use?

https://www.google.com/search?q=fires+in+NY+caused+by+lithium+batteries&client=firefox-b-1-d&biw=1920&bih=919&tbm=vid&ei=7kXAZNjeJMaoqtsPu_uAc&ved=0ahUKEwjYjdDY7aqAAxVGIGoFHbv9D3cQ4dUDCAw&uact=5&oq=fires+in+NY+caused+by+lithium+batteries&gs_lp=Eg1nd3Mtd2l6LXZpZGVvIidmaXJlcyBpbjBOWSBjYXVzZWQgYnkgbGI0aGl1bSBiYXR0ZXJpZXMyCBAhGKABGMMESNk2UKARWLo0cAB4AJABAjgBvwGgAakIqgEDMC43uAEDyAEA-AEBwgIFEAAYgATCAgYQABgFGB7CAggQABiKBRiGA8ICBxAAGA0YgATCAggQABgFGB4YDclCBRAAGKI

[EwglKECEYoAEYwwQYCogGAQ&sclient=gws-wiz-video#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:3efc5691,vid:jCGS2k5j7QM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwglKECEYoAEY&list=PLQYCogGAQ&client=gws-wiz-video#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:3efc5691,vid:jCGS2k5j7QM)

<https://www.newyorkpersonalinjuryattorneysblog.com/38-people-injured-in-a-fire-caused-by-a-lithium-ion-battery-in-a-e-bike-in-midtown-manhattan-high-rise/>

Thank you for your time and the work you do,

- Margaret Lauritson-Lada

Erwin, Nicole

From: Susan M. Carter <studiogirl1946@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 1:02 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2.0

Dear Councilors, AHO 2.0 will deprive us , the citizens of Cambridge, of our current right to determine our quality of life and health on our own property,

in our neighborhoods and our city in general. How can we protect ourselves and our city if we have no vote??? This is depriving us of our civil rights.!

Thank-you to Councilors Carlone, Nolan and Toner for understanding our Rights,

Susan Carter 41 Holden St. Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: Annette LaMond <annettelamond@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 1:01 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please Oppose AHO Amendments

Dear Councillors,

Others have written at length about the flaws in the proposal before you – buildings that are too high without setbacks, high-per-unit construction costs, and taxpayer funding of private developer benefits.

Further, the developments proceeding under the current Affordable Housing Ordinance will go a long way to addressing the AH waitlist of 3,000–3,500 people.

Before an amendment of such cityscape-changing scope is adopted, please undertake a review of the impact of the AHO passed less than three years ago.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Annette LaMond & Joe Moore

7 Riedesel Avenue
 Cambridge, MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: Carolyn Fuller <carolyn.fuller2018@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:48 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay

Ordinance Committee Councillors,

I want to express my deep gratitude to the councilors who have supported and championed these amendments to the original Affordable Housing Overlay despite the pressure from very focal and, at times, hostile, opponents.

I am very much hoping to see support for work force housing in the future. Having the city actively support housing for all is the only way we will ever be able to maintain a diverse and vibrant city.

Thank you!

Carolyn Fuller
12 Douglass St
Cambridge, MA 02139

Erwin, Nicole

From: Suzanne Shaw <suzanne.shaw46@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:46 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for AHO amendments

Dear Council-

I want to voice my strong support for the AHO amendments.

We need more housing for low and middle income folks in the city. Full stop. The amendments won't provide homes to all of the 22,000 folks on the affordable housing wait list, but it will help some families and that is something transformative. It is a small price to pay for greater housing equity.

I live in a neighborhood with lots of affordable housing. The Burns Apartments across the street. Two other developments on adjoining streets. Trolley Square and Ridge Ave nearby. This all adds to the amazing cultural and socioeconomic diversity of this city.

I have lived and owned my home in Cambridge for nearly 30 years. As an owner, I have benefitted from rising real estate prices. I feel so lucky to have raised my children here and could never afford a house in Cambridge today.

Please don't let the fear of a vocal minority get in the way of doing what is right.

Thank you,

Suzanne Shaw
 46 Clarendon Avenue

Erwin, Nicole

From: Deborah Valenze <dvalenze@barnard.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:39 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2.0

Dear City Councilors,

I want to thank Councilors Patty Nolan, Paul Toner, and Dennis Carlone for planning to vote NO on AHO 2.0. I hope that the City Council will take the time to evaluate AHO 1.0 and commit to a careful long-range plan for Cambridge Housing, which we still do not have. I am in favor of affordable housing, but I do not believe that the current plan is advisable from the point of view of all city residents. We need more transparency and oversight; good design is imperative. Development interests are taking advantage of politically sensitive issues, which they are hoping to profit from, while Cambridge residents are not being heard. This includes those who seek housing. (I hope the Councilors have seen the short documentary made last year by the Walden Street Neighborhood.)

I hope that other councilors will join Councilors Nolan, Toner, and Carlone and stop AHO 2.0 from being implemented.

Thank you very much.
 Deborah Valenze
 1 Shady Hill Square

--

Erwin, Nicole

From: Susan M. Carter <studiogirl1946@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:37 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2.0

Dear City Councilors, AHO 2.0 is HARMFUL to Cambridge, to Massachusetts, and to the world. We residents of Cambridge are trying to protect our small city in order to do our part in protecting our world.

We cannot cover all the land just to build a building.

We cannot cover all the land just to help all the people who need help.

We cannot cover all the land just to satisfy housing statistics.

We cannot cover all the land just because someone made the suggestion.

We need the land in order to plant as many trees as possible to protect our city and our world.

Thank-you to Councilors Carlone, Nolan and Toner who understand the magnitude of harm that AHO 2.0 can cause.

Susan Carter 41 Holden St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Janet Reckman <jreckman@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:28 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager; McGovern, Marc; Zondervan, Quinton; Simmons, Denise; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Nolan, Patricia; Toner, Paul
Subject: NO vote for revised AHO

To my city counselors,

I am against the revised AHO. My reasons are many, beginning with - Too tall, too dense, no setbacks, inadequate infrastructure, environmental concerns. Yes, there may be some locations where a tower is appropriate, but a blanket by-right approval on all city main streets and squares is ridiculous. Of greatest concern in this proposal is that you wish to strip our city Planning Board and Neighborhood Associations of any and all power in this revision. Developers must hold two meetings with Neighbors and two with the Planning Board, during which they will hear feedback, but are in no way obligated to incorporate any of this feedback into their design or project planning. Those counselors who wish to strip the power of the city Planning Board deserve the same, and should be stripped of their power as well. **I will not vote for any counselor in November who supports this extreme and premature AHO revision, and will ensure the topic is widely discussed in my community prior to election day.**

In a recent communication, one counselor told me that AHO design would be subject to strict guidelines. Does he not understand that Guidelines do not supersede Regulations? The revised AHO even cautions against the optimism found in the Design Guidelines in section 11.207.8(b): "The City's 'Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing Overlay' ... are intended to inform the design of AHO projects and to guide the Planning Board's consultation and report as set forth below. It is intended that designers of AHO projects, City staff, the Planning Board and members of the public will be open to creative variations from any detailed provisions set forth in such objectives and guidelines as long as the core values expressed are being served." So all of the wonderful Guidelines encouraging complementary design, courtyards, setbacks and green space are meaningless when the AHO specifically permits as-of-right 15 stories, zero setback, unlimited FAR, etc.

That same counselor told me that the AHO is not profit driven, and that AHO projects would only be built by nonprofit developers using city funds. This is also not Specified anywhere in the revised AHO. For-profit developer such as WinnCompanies and Capstone Have received city funds for their affordable housing projects, including 2072 mass ave, which would greatly benefit under this revision.

I am worried that city counselors supporting this revision don't even understand what they are voting for.

Thank you for your time.

Janet Reckman
 Newport Road (26+ year resident)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rose Hanig <rhanig1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:27 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for AHO Amendments

I am writing in support of the proposed Affordable Housing Overlay amendments. We desperately need more affordable housing in Cambridge! Many people who grew up in Cambridge can no longer afford to live here. Our city keeps getting more and more expensive and people who aren't wealthy are being pushed out. We need our city to be diverse socially, economically and racially and that can only happen by supporting the AHO amendments.

Thank you,
Rose Hanig

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dan Totten <dantottencambridge@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:23 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: supporting the AHO amendments

Hi Councillors,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the AHO amendments - I hope you will advance them out of the Ordinance Committee this week without changes.

Some have said that this proposal is being rushed through without appropriate deliberation, but it was first introduced in November 2022 and there have already been at least four hearings on the topic.

Some have said that it would have been more prudent to wait until the five-year review. That might seem like a principled stance on some level, but keep in mind that thousands of people are waiting for housing, and the affordable housing providers are telling us that this will make it easier for them to carry out their mission.

Some have said his proposal will destroy the neighborhood character by redefining our streetscapes with too many taller buildings, but we already have buildings of this height in every neighborhood and there will only end up being a few of these AHO buildings across the city over the next decade, even in a best case scenario.

Some have said that this proposal will result in housing that won't be nice for people to live in, but life at a greater height can come with many hidden benefits, and most applicants really just want an affordable place to live.

So please cut through the misinformation and advance this ordinance. Choose to be remembered as the council that took this brave, bold step.

All the best,

Dan Totten
 54 Bishop Allen Drive #2

Erwin, Nicole

From: Bill McAvinney <bmcavinney@earthlink.net>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:19 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Bill McAvinney
Subject: Support the AHO Amendments! We desperately need more housing!

Dear Councilors,

Please VOTE YES to report the AHO amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee.

This is just a small, but very important, step to creating the housing we need, and leveling the playing field between affordable housing developers and market rate developers.

Sincerely,
Bill McAvinney
12 Douglass St

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Samuel Burgess <seburg@bu.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:17 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Cc: info@abettercambridge.org
Subject: Re: AHO Amendments--Comment In Support

Good afternoon,

In advance of the Ordinance Committee Meeting tonight, I am once again expressing my support for the AHO amendments as proposed. Please see my below email articulating my rationale.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sam Burgess
 Cambridge Resident (Kendall Square)

On Sun, Jun 11, 2023, 8:06 AM Samuel Burgess <seburg@bu.edu> wrote:
 Good morning--

I am a Cambridge resident writing in support of the proposed amendments to the AHO, as drafted by CDD. These amendments are crucial to unlocking the potential to permit and construct highly-needed income-restricted housing across the city of Cambridge.

The city is increasingly unaffordable for families across the income spectrum, in large part due to its onerous, antiquated, and highly-restrictive zoning code. The AHO amendments are a good step in the right direction and will help more families both stay in and move to Cambridge. A growing city is a healthy city, and the best way to ensure that Cambridge keeps growing in a sustainable way is to permit more multifamily housing, especially income-restricted housing, as the AHO will help to do. We can't leave Cambridge frozen in amber.

Please vote **in favor** of the AHO amendments. Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important issue.

Best,
 Sam Burgess
 Cambridge Resident (Kendall Square)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Pittori <pittori@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:14 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: AHO 2.0

Dear City Councilors,

Please vote NO to the proposed AHO 2.0 for the following reasons among the many put forth by the Cambridge Citizens Coalition.

Since AHO 1.0 has just started and key reviews of it have yet to be done, why is there such a rush to push forward with AHO 2.0?

Cambridge deserves a comprehensive, city-wide Affordable Housing Strategy, not this haphazard, rushed approach with poor city design which would have long lasting adverse effects.

Currently, AHO units cost far above average. Why hasn't there been better oversight? Are outside-of-Cambridge financial interests perhaps driving these high costs, donating to some councilors for their support for AHO. 2.0? Cambridge City Council should be focused on what is best for Cambridge, not pandering to outside financial interests.

AHO 2.0 projected buildings would be way out of scale, destroying neighborhoods with their excessive heights w/o setbacks and unlimited density.

Cambridge was recently voted one of the most liveable cities in the USA. Why are some city councilors seemingly bent on destroying that image by promoting AHO 2.0?

I applaud Councilors Carlone, Nolan and Toner for their commitment to oppose AHO 2.0 as it currently stands and urge other Councilors to join them in saying NO. Cambridge deserves better than this misguided, dangerous plan.

Again, I do hope the other Councilors will commit to opposing AHO 2.0. This issue is of prime importance to me, and I will vote for the city councilors who opposed AHO 2.0.

Thank you,

Aileen O. Erickson

Cambridge resident, property owner, and voter since 1980

Erwin, Nicole

From: Santhi Hariprasad <santhi.hariprasad@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:12 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please Vote YES to report the AHO amendments favorably from the Ordinance Committee

Dear city Council,

As a Cambridge resident who deeply values affordable housing and the resulting benefits to our community, I urge you to vote yes to support the AHO amendments from the ordinance committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, yours,
Santhi Hariprasad
2 Notre Dame Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dana Niu <x.dana.niu@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 12:08 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: Please expand affordable housing

Dear City Councilors,

I am writing to express my support for expanding affordable housing.

I lived in affordable housing until I was 7. My parents were young immigrants, who had made the decision to live in this country due to political violence in China. And they struggled -- working multiple jobs, learning a new language, raising two young children, and navigating the challenges of poverty.

I was lucky to have known none of this at the time. I was a little kid who got to worry about little kid things. I played in the little courtyard in front of our apartment with other neighborhood children, I ate dinner at the kitchen table with my family, and my parents tucked me into bed in the room I shared with my sister. Home was home. And I never had to find out what our lives would have been without it.

I know now that the life my parents built in this country, the life they built for me, was made possible by affordable housing. It enabled my dad to find a stable, well-paying job and eventually afford a home of our own. It enabled me to go to college and eventually earn my public policy degree at Harvard Kennedy School down the road. And it enabled me to get a job in Massachusetts state government, where I hope to give back to the community what it gave to me.

I support affordable housing because it is a part of my story, and I want it to be a part of 22,000 more stories. I support it because it represents to me what a community should be, one in which we give what we can and take what we need, so that everyone can thrive, or at the very least, survive.

Best,
 Dana Niu
 Cambridge resident
 --
 Sent from Gmail Mobile

Erwin, Nicole

From: Sara Barcan <sbarcan@homeownersrehab.org>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 11:45 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Proposed Changes to Affordable Housing Overlay
Attachments: image001.wmz

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council:

While I am unable to testify at tonight's hearing due to our National Night Out event, I strongly urge you to vote in support of the proposed changes to Cambridge's Affordable Housing Overlay.

As you know, the need for affordable housing in Cambridge remains desperate, with lengthy waitlists for our developments as well as those owned by the CHA, Just-A-Start and other developers. We frequently receive calls and emails from families who seek housing in Cambridge. Many of them have lived here previously, or grew up here and want to return with their children to allow them to attend Cambridge's excellent schools, play in the parks, and grow up near family and community. Our residents often tell us of friends or family who can no longer afford to live in Cambridge.

I note that not every site will be suitable for the increased height allowances under the new overlay. For instance, at 1627 Massachusetts Avenue, our current AHO project, we did not elect to build to the highest allowable height even under the current overlay, choosing to limit our building to six stories. We and our architects felt that was the correct treatment, both due to neighborhood context and added cost.

However, in locations where we can build higher, we need to do so. Land in Cambridge is among the most expensive in the country. When we or other developers purchase a site, we should maximize affordable housing opportunities on that site. At some locations, a taller building will allow us to achieve maximum density with a smaller footprint. In those cases, we can plan for additional open space on our site. Alternatively, we can build on sites that would otherwise be too small for an affordable housing development.

Again, I ask that each of you vote in favor of the proposed changes to the Affordable Housing Overlay. Thank you for your time, and for your steadfast support of affordable housing in Cambridge.

Sincerely,

Sara Barcan



Sara E. Barcan (She/her/hers)

Executive Director
Homeowner's Rehab, Inc.

Phone: 617.868.4858 ext.207 | Mobile: 617-831-3953
Email: sbarcan@homeownersrehab.org

280 Franklin St., Cambridge, MA 02139
www.homeownersrehab.org

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dominick Jones <dj@dominick-jones.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 11:10 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: spread the load - NO vote for AHO 2.0

There's plenty of opportunity in Cambridge to build four or five storeys and create a beautiful city - look at St Mark's Square in Venice, and Les Invalides in Paris. I don't believe the only option for affordable housing is to build vertically instead of horizontally.

--
Dominick Jones
www.dominick-jones.com
for cookbook <http://www.dominick-jones.com/literary2.html> > cookbook

Erwin, Nicole

From: David Hattis <davidwhattis@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 11:07 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for AHO Amendments

Hello,

I wanted to write in support of the amendments to the affordable housing overlay. I found the comments from the leadership of the Cambridge Housing Authority, Just a Start, and HRI throughout this process really informative and convincing. They are all strongly in support and have made it clear how these changes would strengthen the overlay, leading to better outcomes for affordable housing in the future. Sara Barkan and Carl Nagy-Koechlin, the executive directors of HRI and Just a Start respectively, both expressed on multiple occasions that these amendments would help with site acquisition, which is quite difficult in Cambridge given the high cost of land and stiff competition that arises whenever any property hits the market.

Here are some quotes of theirs, which I've done my best to transcribe:

"I'm here to speak in favor of the proposed AHO amendments...The AHO has already been a very valuable tool in our shared goal of creating quality affordable housing in Cambridge. However, it is not sufficiently leveled the playing field as we compete with private developers for the infrequent development opportunities here in the city. In previous hearings I've identified sites that we've missed out on, some of which I believe we would have secured if the AHO allowed for more height and density along the lines of those that are proposed in the amendment."

--Carl Nagy- Koechlin, executive director of HRI during public comment on June 12th

"To Carl's point, we are looking at additional sites all the time and now that we can take the AHO into account and will hopefully you know be able to do so in a way that is even more robust, we do think we'll be more competitive. We haven't yet been able to harness it for a new site acquisition but we feel like these changes will be immensely helpful in the future"

--Sara Barkan Executive Director HRI during the Housinging Committee meeting on February 8th

I also was struck by how many concrete examples were given of how these amendments would have helped past projects be even better and could help future projects. In her testimony on February 8th, Margaret Donnelly Moran gave some examples:

"The language would provide, as councilor McGovern referenced at 116 Norfolk St at Jefferson park, a better outcome both in terms of the possibility of additional units, but also the possibility of maintaining or adding to the open space. So for example under the current Affordable Housing Overlay at 116, we were able to add 25 units as part of a 3.5 story addition and we were able to maintain 44% open space. Under the proposed language, we would have been able to increase the unit count by 4 to 9 units, but also by adding to the unit count increase open space by 48 to 50%. And I know from the comments that we received from the community and through the process there was a lot of support to make those tradeoffs to provide additional green space and the addition of the added height at 116 Norfolk St in that instance was supported by the community but we had the limitation of the affordable housing existing regulations that kept us to the height that we were able to achieve with the addition"

"And at Jefferson Park the AHO limited all the buildings to 4 stories, and that meant that the footprint of each building was slightly larger than it needed to be to maintain the unit count that we were seeking, and it left us with an open space

of 31% which was slightly higher than the requirement, but not by a whole lot. And under the proposed language we would have been able to vary the heights of certain buildings and particularly focusing on the back end of the site, we could have potentially seen one 6 or 7 story building in that design and that would have helped us shrink the sizes of all the bounds of the buildings on the site. And also based on the work that our architectural team did we would be able to add potentially up to 16 more units and also see an increase in open space. And as councilor McGovern referenced, shrinking the buildings and having only one building instead of three buildings having elevators would have ended up with a project that was less expensive on a square footage basis”

“And then looking ahead towards a new building on Cambridge St adjacent to our existing Millers River structure, the proposed amendment would allow us to build to a height comparable to the existing building on the parcel and also double the amount of affordable housing in that building on that location. And what’s unique and special and important about that new structure is you know we have reserved our ability to connect to the existing Miller’s River building, and that would allow us to introduce or connect the two buildings and allow us to introduce an expansion of elevator service to the entire complex. Folks who may have been in the building realize that we have three hundred units of housing served by just two elevators and by adding on to the existing Miller’s River property you know at a higher height level than the current AHO would allow, would allow us to actually not only provide for new affordable housing but also help us with you know just vertical transportation in the existing building as well.”

--Magaret Donnelly Moran, Director of Planning and Development Department at Cambridge Housing Authority, during the February 8th Housing Committee meeting

Giving nonprofit affordable housing developers more flexibility has a lot of benefits. It allows nonprofit affordable housing developers to make their projects better and more cost effective, allowing for us to create more desperately needed high quality affordable housing in Cambridge with the limited funding that is available.

Thank you,

David Hattis

154 Central St. Somerville, MA

Erwin, Nicole

From: Richard Krushnic <rkrushnic@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 10:43 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: I Support the AHO proposed changes

I support the proposed changes to the AHO. The greater heights in the revised AHO will enable affordable housing to be more competitive economically and result in more sites for affordable housing. I am glad that 30% open space would continue to be required.

Since working- and middle-class families continue to be forced out of the city due to housing costs, these AHO changes are needed right now.

I would like to see an addition that would require that 20% of units be three bedroom affordable units, with some for households between 30% and 50% of AMI, and some for households below 30% of AMI.

I would also like to see a requirement for provision of an opportunity for tenants to form tenant unions in AHO buildings allowed under these changes. The city should contract with independent organizations to offer this opportunity to each project after it is tenanted, including organizational assistance. Boston does this. For two decades I know of it contracted with City Life, CEDAC and ESAC to provide these services to tenants in projects financed in part by Boston. If this can't be done by zoning, it could be done by policy order.

The city should show us before final passage, the feasibility analysis for the 3 height zones, so we can have some idea how they were arrived at. Specific examples would help.

I don't agree with the removal of setback requirements, and would like to see 7' side and rear setbacks from the lot-line of an existing residential building, or 10' from an existing residential building. This would increase fire safety and reduce light loss.

Thanks for your consideration.

Richard Krushnic, 20 Oak St., Clambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: Daniel Hidalgo <fdhidalgo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 10:41 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support the AHO amendments

Dar Councilors,

I want to express my support for the AHO amendments before the ordinance committee. I live in a single family house , but 3 doors down from me is a 7 story affordable housing building. The residents of this Just a Start building are great neighbors and add so much to our community. This ordinance would encourage more of this kind integration of our community by allowing the less advantaged to live throughout a larger swath of Cambridge and take advantage of our local economy, quality services, and generally excellent education system. Please support a more welcoming Cambridge by moving this ordinance forward.

Thank you,

Daniel Hidalgo
79 Norfolk St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: biba@igc.org
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 10:27 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Please oppose AHO 2.0

Dear Councilors,

I am writing to urge those of you who are members of the Ordinance Committee to OPPOSE the latest version of the AHO being very notably rushed through committees.

We need a well-considered, comprehensive city-wide affordable housing strategy. It should be premised on established urban design and planning principles, not campaign donations. A comprehensive strategy would create housing that is livable, in scale and context—that fits into existing neighborhoods without casting shadows or creating wind tunnels. A well-considered, comprehensive affordable housing strategy would respect the health, well-being, and comprehensive needs of affordable housing residents—not just isolate people in concrete towers for want of housing. Housing should be scaled to our real affordable housing needs—not to a wildly exaggerated number which includes anyone who wants to live in Cambridge. Healthy housing includes usable adjacent green spaces (think COVID), easily accessible playgrounds, mature trees for shade and cooling, and a strong relationship to the surrounding community.

I ask that as our City representatives, please do the hard work of developing a comprehensive city-wide affordable housing strategy rather than this poor, profit-oriented approach to quick-fix problem solving which just gives us more overbuilding while contributing to community erosion. We can do much much better...

Thank you.

Sincerely,
 D.R. Biba
 Area Nine neighborhood

Erwin, Nicole

From: Hadley, Shelagh <shadley@bu.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 9:43 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2.0 (corrected version)

Dear City Councilors

Please vote NO to the proposed AHO 2.0 for the following reasons, among many others:

Since AHO 1.0 has just started and key reviews of it have yet to be done, why is there such a rush to push forward with AHO 2.0?

Cambridge deserves a comprehensive, city-wide Affordable Housing Strategy, not this haphazard, rushed approach with poor city design.

Currently, AHO units cost far above average. Why isn't there better oversight? Are outside of Cambridge \$\$\$ interests driving these costs while pressing for AHO. 2.0?

AHO 2.0 projected buildings would be way out of scale, destroying neighborhoods with their excessive heights w/o setbacks and unlimited density.

Cambridge was recently voted one of the most liveable cities in the USA. Why are some city councilors seemingly bent on destroying that image by promoting AHO 2.0?

I applaud the decision by Councilors Carlone, Nolan and Toner for their decision to say NO to proposed AHO 2.0, and urge other Councilors to join them.

Please say NO to AHO 2.0 as it currently stands. Our beautiful city of Cambridge deserves much better than this terrible, dangerous plan.

Thanks,
 Shelagh Hadley, voter and longtime resident owner

Erwin, Nicole

From: Hadley, Shelagh <shadley@bu.edu>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 9:35 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: AHO 2.0

Dear City Councilors

Please vote NO to the proposed AHO 2.0 for the following reasons, among many others:

Since AHO 1.0 has just started and key reviews of it have yet to be done, why is there such a rush to push forward with AHO 2.0? It makes no sense.

Cambridge deserves a comprehensive, city-wide Affordable Housing Strategy, not this haphazard, rushed approach with poor city design which would have longlasting adverse effects.

Currently, AHO units cost far above average. Why hasn't there been better oversight? Are outside-of-Cambridge financial interests perhaps driving these high costs, donating to some councilors for their support for AHO. 2.0? Cambridge City Council should be focused on what is best for Cambridge, not pandering to outside financial interests.

AHO 2.0 projected buildings would be way out of scale, destroying neighborhoods with their excessive heights w/o setbacks and unlimited density.

Cambridge was recently voted one of the most liveable cities in the USA. Why are some city councilors seemingly bent on destroying that image by promoting AHO 2.0

I applaud Councilors Carlone, Nolan and Toner for their commitment to oppose AHO 2.0 as it currently stands, and urge other Councilors to join them in saying NO. Cambridge deserves better than this misguided, dangerous plan.

Thanks,
 Shelagh Hadley, longtime Cambridge resident and voter

Erwin, Nicole

From: Deborah Galef <drgalef@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 9:22 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: AHO

I am writing to encourage you NOT to expand the AHO ordinance. All new construction in the city should be subject to guidelines such as setbacks, green space and appropriateness for the setting. Those in favor are in effect saying that low income renters or homeowners don't need such amenities, and I think that's disrespectful. Eyesores, such as what's currently planned to go behind 1627 Mass. Ave. are also not beneficial for any of us. Good architecture need not cost more and the city desperately needs more greenery.

Some kind of overview for any new construction should be required. Large, ugly buildings, allowed as of right, should have no place in Cambridge. Yes, there is a housing crisis but it's not just local. Squeezing in whatever can be built in this one already densely packed city is not the way to go.

Debby Galef
Hammond St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Debra Fox <dfox228@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 9:15 AM
To: City Clerk; City Council
Subject: Support for the amendments to the 100% Affordable Housing Overlay

Dear City Councilors, I urge you to support the proposed amendments to the AHO that will expand and strengthen the AHO by making more sites across the city available for affordable housing, and increasing the allowed density of affordable housing on those sites. Debra Fox 35 Blake St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Luis Mejias <lmejias@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 9:04 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Vote YES on AHO amendments

Good morning Councillors,

Please vote yes to report the AHO amendments favorably from the ordinance committee. It's incredibly important to continue pushing to encourage more housing to be built.

Thank you,
Luis Mejias
18 Plymouth Street

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Neil Miller <neilmiller95@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 8:56 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support for AHO expansion

Dear City Council,

I strongly support the proposal to expand the Affordable Housing Overlay, that you're discussing at Ordinance Committee tonight.

Voters consistently list affordable housing as their #1 priority. Many of you do, too. This is a common sense proposal to help address the affordable housing crisis -- expanding on an innovative proposal (the AHO), to add more housing near public transit, without adding any new mandates or requirements or committing us to spend anything extra.

Thank you for your work.

Neil Miller

102 Pearl St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Stephanie Guirand <stephanie.guirand@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 6:50 AM
To: City Clerk
Cc: McGovern, Marc; Zondervan, Quinton; Nolan, Patricia; Carlone, Dennis; Toner, Paul; Simmons, Denise; Mallon, Alanna; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Azeem, Burhan
Subject: Support for AHO 2

To the Cambridge City Clerk and City Council,
 I support the revised Affordable Housing Overlay. I encourage you all to vote in support of it.

Stephanie

Stephanie Guirand

P.s. I am on the board of a small organization called AMINGA. We run education and sports programs for youth in West Africa. Please make a tax deductible donation to AMINGA at:

https://www.gofundme.com/f/aminga-2023-program?member=22966223&utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer

Erwin, Nicole

From: Andy Zucker <andyzucker@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 5:52 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Vote no on AHO

Dear Councillors,

I appreciate the thoughtful views of Councillors Carlone, Nolan and Toner, who are in favor of responsible growth and who will vote 'no' to unchecked development.

The proposed AHO is too much: too high, too little input, too much needless change in the character of Cambridge, too pro-developer, too shortsighted, too removed from concern about transportation.

I hope that the Council votes no on the AHO.

Andy Zucker
35 Winslow St, Cambridge, MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: carol.weinhaus@outlook.com
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 3:26 AM
To: City Council; City Manager
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Strongly Against the Massive Affordable Housing Overlay

Dear City Council and City Manager,

I am strongly against the proposed Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). There has been no planning for the increase in utilities, such as electricity and water/sewer services. The City's Community Development Department website says that "As of 2021, Cambridge is the tenth most densely populated city in the United States."

The zoning includes the length of entire streets and not portions near the MBTA subway stops. There is no consideration of the impact on local businesses, access to transportation, and parking for local residents and repair contractors, such as plumber, electricians, and appliance repairs. The loss of local parking serves to eliminate small local businesses.

I live on Concord Avenue, a portion of which is so narrow that buses and large vehicles going in opposite directions can barely pass one another during the summer. In the winter, after a snowstorm, this portion becomes the equivalent of a one-way street. Twelve-story building would also create dark canyons and not provide enough sunlight of people and trees. The loss of setbacks from the curb and the loss of yards translates into a direct loss of plants and habitats for pollinators and wild animals and a place for children to play close to home. A large portion of the Concord Ave is also a mile away from the nearest MBTA subway stop. The MBTA bus service has already been reduced, doesn't run in the evening, and runs infrequently during the daytime on weekends.

This zoning issue is so important that residents and local businesses should be given a voice and an opportunity to directly vote on this issue. The zoning should look at the impact on individual areas. This is a plan for New York City and not for Cambridge.

Sincerely,

Carol Weinhaus
 271 Concord Avenue

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 11:59 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Huang, Yi-An; City Clerk
Subject: Residents Alliance letter on proposed AHO changes
Attachments: CResA AHO letter 7-30-23.pdf

Dear Mayor and Councilors.

Please find attached a letter from the Cambridge Residents Alliance on the Affordable Housing Overlay.

Sincerely,

Lee Farris, President, for the Board of the Cambridge Residents Alliance

Cambridge Residents Alliance: *Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge*
<https://www.cambridgeresidentsalliance.org/>

7/30/23

Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). I'm writing to share some thoughts from the Cambridge Residents Alliance.

The Cambridge Residents Alliance recognizes the urgent need for affordable housing and we strongly support increasing the amount of affordable housing.

In general, we are pleased with the AHO proposal and feel that it will be a step toward a more diverse and vibrant community. We believe the greater heights in the revised AHO will enable affordable housing to be more competitive economically and result in more sites for affordable housing. We like that the AHO proposal increases flexibility for AHO projects while continuing to require 30% open space.

Given the current state of the residential housing market in Cambridge, which denies access to so many residents, we feel great urgency to bring the AHO to fruition. We would however like to highlight a few areas where the current draft might be improved.

1. We want any increase in the AHO to focus on creating family housing and housing that is affordable to people whose income is 30% of AMI or less; at least 20% of the units should be 3BR or larger.
2. Affordable housing should be high quality both in how it is built and how it is run. We often talk with residents of existing affordable housing, whether owned by a non-profit, for-profit, or CHA, who say they feel they have no voice in how their buildings are run and that they would like there to be some form of democratic tenant governance. We would like the Council to consider how to address this problem, for example, by requiring that any project that uses the new AHO zoning address the issue of resident democracy when it asks for funding from the Affordable Housing Trust. The City could either A) contract with a non-profit like City Life to do tenant organizing, as Boston did, or B) city staff could hold an initial meeting to offer tenants a chance to organize an ongoing residents group. If these concerns are not addressed within the AHO zoning, the Council could pass a policy order asking for a way to ensure democratic tenant governance.
3. To know whether the proposed heights are the ones that are actually needed, we'd like to understand how the proposed additional heights for each of the three zones were arrived at. We'd like to see examples of specific sites in each of the 3 zones, with the amount of units needed for the site to be financially viable, vs. the number of units allowed under the current AHO. We'd also like to be clear whether the primary competitive use for the site was market residential or commercial/lab.
4. The Cambridge Residents Alliance leadership is concerned about the lack of any required set-backs where the AHO site is next to an existing residential building. We ask

that the Council add some modest minimum requirement for side and rear setbacks, such as at least 7' from the lot-line of an existing residential building, or at least 10' from an existing residential building. This would increase fire safety and reassure residents of existing buildings that their understandable concerns about shade and loss of light are being taken into consideration. We note that relevant Fire Safety and Inspectional Services staff said they were not aware of the proposed changes in the AHO, and had not been contacted for their opinions on the changes, including building proximity.

Thank you for your consideration of these points,

Lee Farris, President, for the Board of the Cambridge Residents Alliance

Cambridge Residents Alliance: *Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge*
<https://www.cambridgeresidentsalliance.org/>

Erwin, Nicole

From: Paula Cortes <paulavcortes@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 9:38 PM
To: City Council; City Manager; City Clerk
Subject: AHO overbuilding

Dear Councilors,

You have an opportunity and a responsibility to guide development in Cambridge in a way which will not irreversibly damage the quality of our cityscape for all residents. Building super high rise buildings in a city such as ours which is small scale and already extremely dense, is an outdated way to provide more housing opportunities. Other cities are tearing down their high rises.

Have you researched and examined all the already available parcels of land and buildings which can be turned into more efficient housing? Why have you not pursued a comprehensive city wide housing strategy? Please take the responsible path and do not continue to advance this current AHO proposal. It will cause severe damage to our cityscape and create many unintended consequences to our lives in Cambridge. This proposal is really going too far. Our Councilors must be responsive to us, the voters and residents.

Respectfully,
 Paula Cortes

--

Paula V. Cortes, FASLA

Tel & Fax: 617-441-9353

Cell: 617-868-7900

paulavcortes@gmail.com

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Judi Neu <judineu@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 9:28 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please vote no on AHO 2.0

Dear City Councilors,

Thank you Councillors Carlone, Nolon and Toner for your commitment to vote NO on AHO 2.0. We are so grateful for your leadership.

We appreciate your thoughtful, clear sighted decision to reject the massive towers that are being proposed and to encourage a citywide affordable housing strategy that takes into account the density of Cambridge, the need to respect and preserve the scale and uniqueness of historic Cambridge neighborhoods, and a realistic (not inflated!) assessment of need.

Why is there such a rush to adopt AHO 2.0 without key reviews of AHO 1.0?

We need oversight and clear design guidelines before proceeding. These decisions will have long-term impact on the City of Cambridge that we all love.

Thank you for voting No on AHO 2.0.

Sincerely,
 Judi and Carlos Neu
 14 Longfellow Road

Sent from my iPhone

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rebecca Pries <rebeccakpries@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 8:59 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Please Vote No on AHO 2.0

Dear City Councilors,

Thank you Councillors Carlone, Nolon and Toner for your commitment to vote NO on AHO 2.0. We are so grateful for your leadership.

We appreciate your thoughtful, clear sighted decision to reject the massive towers that are being proposed and to encourage a citywide affordable housing strategy that takes into account the density of Cambridge, the need to respect and preserve the scale and uniqueness of historic Cambridge neighborhoods, and a realistic (not inflated!) assessment of need.

Why is there such a rush to adopt AHO 2.0 without key reviews of AHO 1.0?

We need oversight and clear design guidelines before proceeding. These decisions will have long-term impact on the City of Cambridge that we all love.

Thank you for voting No on AHO 2.0.

Sincerely,
 Rebecca and Weldon Pries
 10 Longfellow Road

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Mary Jane Kornacki <amicusmjk@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 8:47 PM
To: City Clerk; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Mallon, Alanna; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul; Zondervan, Quinton; City Manager
Subject: Ordinance Committee meeting on AHO amendments - vote NO

Dear Councillors -

The proposed amendments to the AHO is up for debate Monday evening and, once again, I urge you to vote responsibly and reject the current amendments for 12 and 15 story housing without planning board approval or neighborhood design input.

We need affordable housing but towers are not the way to go. When affordable housing fits into its surroundings it enhances neighborhoods and accomplishes a needed goal...economic, cultural, age and ethnic diversity in our city.

Please reject this amendment and focus on best practices...6 to 7 story buildings or taller, where such fit in with existing nature of surrounding buildings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Jane Kornacki

--

Mary Jane Kornacki
 103 Avon Hill St
 Cambridge, MA 02140
 617.354.7983 (h)
 617.480.5778 (m)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rosalind Michahelles <rosalind@dominick-jones.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 3:46 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: NO vote for AHO 2.0

Dear Councillors,

I applaud Denis and Patty and Paul for their position to restrict high rise building in the low-rise areas of Cambridge.

Please revise the AHO to give communities that include affordable housing the chance to feel like neighborhoods, not alienating silos.

Thank you -- Rosalind Michahelles, Hurlbut Street, Cambridge

--

Rosalind Michahelles
617-491-3239
rosalind@dominick-jones.com

Erwin, Nicole

From: Vickey Bestor <vickeybestor@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 3:08 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Not this AHO Plan!

Dear Members of the City Council, City Manager, and City Clerk:

If Cambridge wants to remain a leader in developing as a green community the current proposal for AHO expansion is headed in all the wrong directions, not to mention is vastly outstripping the the current potential for our electrical grid. While we experience an ongoing heat emergency, the proposal to build at such tall heights, with no setback, unlimited density and no provision for green space is nothing short of a really bad idea.

Cambridge needs more affordable housing for our current residents and for people who work here. We have a working AHO that is only part way to completion, keep to that plan, fully evaluate it, and move forward based on what you learned in the process. You need to listen more to your residents, developing affordable housing without adequate parking for residents will not force residents to take mass transit or bike to work if they work far away, w/o adequate mass transit, or work late hours when trains and busses are not running. It is a pure green-washed fantasy to think so.

Cambridge needs to develop a city-wide affordable housing strategy that considers not only the squares and corridors but helps neighborhoods to expand local density and increase the habitability of older homes for those with all abilities. Many in Cambridge neighborhoods with older homes would welcome strategies for residents to age in place in a home sub-divided to accommodate a unit or two of affordable housing. Be creative, such modifications could preserve the character of our neighborhoods while keeping older residents at home, and simultaneously infusing the community with new more diverse families.

You need to think outside those 15 story boxes, they will not do what Cambridge needs.

Sincerely,

Vickey Bestor
 149 Upland Road

Erwin, Nicole

From: Camilla Elvis <camillaelvis@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 1:21 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Support the AHO amendments

Dear Councilors,

I am writing in support of the AHO amendments. While the AHO has many benefits from social justice and environmental benefits as well as changing the live of people who will live in these homes, I want offer this reassurance to councilors who may not yet be fully in support.

Even with new zoning the Cambridge's built environment will change slowly. Approving these amendments means a few more buildings over a long stretch of time. It does not mean our squares and corridors will radically transform. **Most buildings will be the same ones that here right now.**

This reform will create important changes but the look of our fair city will largely stay the same.

Thank you,

Camilla Elvis
 28 Linnaean St

Erwin, Nicole

From: Robert Camacho <musicamach@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 30, 2023 12:27 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: new AHO
Attachments: 7-31-23 response to new AHO proposal.docx

7/30/23

Re AHO 2

Cambridge City Councillors, City Clerk, City Manager,

Please see attached for my comments to AHO 2.0

Robert Camacho, Cambridge, MA

7/30/23

Re: AHO Revisions

Cambridge City Council, Clerk - City of Cambridge, Cambridge City Manager,

I write to express my opposition to the latest revisions of the Affordable Housing Overlay proposals. This revision still features excessive heights, no setbacks, unlimited density and no regard for neighborhood integration nor quality of life for affordable housing residents.

The pro-developer proponents on this Council continue to propose an AHO to benefit private sector developers and not the 3500 hundred or so Cambridge residents on the city's affordable housing rolls. This misguided agenda and the lack of a majority of a public agreement with their unchanging, build-now, plan-later strategy continues to display the total and constant disregard of the Councillors driving this agenda. This proposal continues to suffer from the same lack of real planning that fails to appear in any of their previous ABC driven proposals.

And again, as evidenced by the article appearing in the 3/26/23 edition of Banker & Tradesman, the two co-chairs of ABC, financial backers of the Councillors presenting yet again the same proposals, it is painfully obvious to all Cambridge citizens whose agenda this proposal benefits the most. It is definitely not those Cambridge residents on the city's affordable housing rolls. Passing AHO 2 will destroy current historic preservation policies, Neighborhood Conservation Districts and will enable investors and developers to build higher, bigger, newer structures to replace (instead of repurposing) historic buildings. Even the units at Jefferson Park are costing taxpayers nearly \$1 million apiece to build which is ridiculous and even beyond most market-rate (luxury) housing.

Cambridge deserves an affordable housing plan, not a haphazard build now, plan later approach which benefits only Real Estate developers. In conclusion, I wish to thank Councillors Dennis Carlone, Patty Nolan, and Paul Toner who have made a commitment to vote NO on AHO 2.0. I urge other Councillors to display both common sense and a little backbone and follow their lead!

Robert Camacho, Corporal Burns Road, Cambridge, MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rob Everts <rob_everts@igc.org>
Sent: Saturday, July 29, 2023 4:59 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Please oppose AHO 2.0

Dear Councilors,

I am writing in hopes that those of you on the Ordinance Committee will oppose the latest version of the AHO. I do not oppose some level of higher building in some areas but this version has not been well thought out and adds far too much density to one of the densest cities in the entire country of our size.

I also deeply resent the proponents perpetual misinformation campaign re: 20,000 plus people on the waiting list for affordable housing in Cambridge. That type of dishonest playing with numbers is right out of the MAGA handbook and should be beneath public representatives in this city. Please do the hard work of developing a comprehensive city-wide affordable housing strategy rather than this poor approach to problem solving which just gives us more overbuilding and poor design for the eventual tenants and neighbors of these developments.

Thank you very much.

Rob Everts
20 Newell St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Catalina Arboleda <catalarbol@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 29, 2023 3:18 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2.0 vote

Respected Councillors,

I am grateful to Councillors Dennis Carlone, Patty Nolan and Paul Toner who have committed to voting NO on AHO 2.0, I want to urge other city councillors to join them in voting NO. We have enough (1500 AHO units) now in the pipeline and need to make upgrades to our infrastructure and see how the city handles this increase in residents. Building of this scale are not advisable for affordable housing. Research has shown that smaller scale is better for the residents in need and that is doable.

Best,
 Catalina Arboleda
 950 Massachusetts Ave. #413
 Cambridge, MA 02139

Sent by:
Catalina Arboleda, Ph.D
508-450-3868 (cell)
www.arboledaphd.com

The information transmitted in this electronic communication is intended only for the person to whom it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. If you think you have erroneously received this communication please properly dispose of it and notify the sender.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ausra Kubilius <ausmkub@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 29, 2023 2:24 PM
To: City Council; City Manager; City Clerk
Subject: NO to the proposed NEW AHO--please develop an admirable and sound citywide housing plan

Dear Cambridge City Officials,

I am against the new AHO proposal. Why? It's not because I'm against height per se.

Please visit or revisit the AH at Lincoln Way and Rindge Towers. Where would you prefer that you and your family live? I'm for more human-scale housing such as Lincoln Way. Please develop and support an overall City housing plan that has Lincoln Way as a model.

Also, please note that the 2072 Mass Ave project (that some say sparked this new AHO proposal) is by for-profit developers at a precarious location (see northwaldenneighbors.org). Why would you support housing children there?

It's not just about height and crammed capacity at "transit hubs." Safe locations and some greenery and space matter too.

Thank you.
 Ausra Kubilius
 Cogswell Ave

Erwin, Nicole

From: Dan Phillips <danlphillips234@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 29, 2023 11:55 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Support for Expanding the AHO

To the City Council,

Please act now to fight Cambridge's housing crisis by voting in support of the amendments to expand the AHO.

Every day we don't act, the housing crisis worsens, with more people displaced as rents rise. Expanding the AHO would let more of the over 22 thousand on the CHA's waitlist obtain stable, affordable housing in Cambridge. Cambridge can't be an inclusive city if only the rich can afford it.

Thanks,
Dan Phillips
Broadway St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: donald.giller@comcast.net
Sent: Friday, July 28, 2023 8:48 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; 'Pamela R Giller'
Subject: AHO Amendments

Dear Councilors:

We wish to repeat our concern about the untimely and potentially destructive amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlap statute by the Ordinance Committee of the City Council.

First, the Council needs to develop a citywide strategy on affordable housing, rather than adding on the proposed revisions, which reflect and promote both overbuilding and extremely poor urban design.

Second, it is our understanding the sponsors of the revisions have openly stated that their proposed revisions have been designed primarily to benefit the private-sector developers of a proposed 2072 Massachusetts Avenue project that would place a high-rise building with no setbacks or parking and a single elevator at the congested corner of Walden Street and Mass. Ave. These revisions would undermine faith in the way that Cambridge operates.

We believe that the Council is on the wrong track in forcing this poorly designed proposal onto the city. Based upon neighborhood conversations, we expect that voters will remember the votes of Councilors on the revisions in the upcoming November election.

-Don and Pam Giller
 177 Pemberton Street, Unit 4
 Cambridge, MA 02140

Erwin, Nicole

From: cmagid@gmail.com on behalf of Our Revolution Cambridge
<ourrevolutioncambridge@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 28, 2023 5:45 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: letter sent individually to Councillors

Our Revolution Cambridge is writing in support of the AHO with amendments that provide that new AHO buildings have (1) democratic tenant governance (2) eviction protections and (3) tenant access to lawyers. We believe that housing is a human right and that increasing affordable housing for low and moderate income tenants should be a very high priority for the City. Our suggested amendments speak to our belief that tenants should be secure in and empowered to make important decisions about their homes.

Cambridge is a city in which institutional, commercial and market rate housing developments have resulted in the displacement of lower and moderate-income residents, including many residents of color, greatly diminishing the resident diversity of which Cambridge has always been so proud. Nothing speaks more clearly to the need for more affordable housing than the 6500 people who live or work in Cambridge who are on wait lists for CHA housing.

The AHO will not solve all the problems of displacement or meet the needs of everyone who needs affordable housing in Cambridge. We desperately need many other mechanisms, including City purchase of land that can be developed as social housing, limits on lab development to help make land purchase possible, increased tenant protections for all tenants, increased funding for the Affordable Housing Trust, City vouchers, increased funding for non-congregate shelters, and more.

The fact that the AHO won't accomplish all we want to see isn't a reason to oppose it—it is a reason to support it AND all the other mechanisms to move towards housing as a human right. Let's take this step to provide stable housing for our low and moderate income community members and agree to do all the rest as well.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Amy Clarkson <amysclarkson@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 28, 2023 1:19 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2 proposal

Dear City Council members,

I strongly oppose AHO 2 proposal and support alternatives put forward by Councilors Toner, Mallon, and Nolan to review obstacles and propose carefully considered solutions to expand AHO without ruining our fine city forever. There is no reasonable purpose to double the AHO height limit. The developers are the only ones who will profit from this mistake and the tax payers will end up footing the enormous bill. Please invest in neighborhood scale affordable housing where residents will enjoy a better quality of life than if they are in towers. We cannot and should not be responsible to house every person who desires to move to Cambridge , MA. Our small city is already among the densest cities. What some of you are proposing is going to destroy the fabric of our city and what makes it desirable to live in. Our historic houses should be protected and embraced, not dwarfed by a 12-15 story buildings that are proposed all over the city. Please listen to the advice and wisdom of city planners and do not rush this impactful decision.

This will be an enormous mistake if this is implemented. There is no way back once these tall buildings are erected. They will cause a blight on the city. Dennis Carlone stated it perfectly in his article on the subject. The residents in Cambridge are closely watching this and who votes which way . We are also paying attention to who is giving money to each of your campaigns as that explains why some of you are voting for this ill advised proposal.

Please reconsider. This is so important to all of the residents of Cambridge.

Sincerely,
 Amy Clarkson
 22 Mt. Pleasant St.
 Cambridge , MA

Sent from my iPhone

Erwin, Nicole

From: Percy Tzelnic <tulnic@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, July 28, 2023 12:45 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2.0 in light of a recent, strong warning, by the UN global heat officer

Dear Councillors,

I would like our City Council members to read "**It's criminal to build squares that do not have shade or cooling elements**", an interview with the UN global heat officer:

https://english.elpais.com/science-tech/2023-07-24/un-global-heat-officer-its-criminal-to-build-squares-that-do-not-have-shade-or-cooling-elements.html?utm_source=pocket-newtab

How is AHO 2.0 related to this warning?

It seems evident that the intended AHO buildings will inescapably lead to killing many more trees in Cambridge. To construct these buildings, such as they are planned, it will be necessary to make room by eliminating significant patches of trees, many old trees — recent examples to this happening are numerous. It is unfortunate that a majority of the current Council members have consistently supported this kind of decimation of our trees, proposing, supporting, and voting for initiatives that mainly the interests of wealthy, for profit, building contractors. (In contrast to the other members, I would like to thank Councillors Dennis Carlone, Patty Nolan, and Paul Toner for their opposition to this ill-conceived initiative. I am proud that I voted for them at the last election; I will do so again.)

Quote from the interview:

"Q. What is urban redesign?

A. We have created some guidelines on how to make public spaces — streets, squares and parks — designed to be cool, with plants, water and different materials. But, if we don't limit cars and asphalt in cities, we won't have enough space to make them cooler. That space can be used to create linear parks on the streets. We have created small, very dense green areas in streets and intersections, called pocket parks, which help increase biodiversity and favor the wind. What's more, we have created narrower lanes, so cars have to go slower. Spain is doing incredible things in this area: Barcelona is taking space away from cars to make superblocks. And in Oslo they have already gotten rid of most of the cars."

This paragraph is focusing on the car traffic problem as a major problem — however, the construction required by AHO 2.0 will have a similar, significant, deleterious effect on the environment. The current Council is taking steps in a positive direction to limit car traffic (even though many of these efforts are rushed and faulty in their design and implementation.) However, attacking one problem should not create another problem.

Another quote:

"Q. What do you think about building squares without shade, like the Puerta del Sol square in Madrid?

A. **Today, it is criminal to build squares without shade** or cooling elements, because they create higher temperatures in the city, put people's lives at risk and keep people away from public space. It is very crazy to design squares as if climate change did not exist.

Q. What will happen to cities that do not adapt?

A. Many people will die in these cities, and many others will lose their jobs. It will affect the economy, because a lot of income is lost due to extreme heat: productivity drops, people go to shops less because people stay at home... And we will have to make an effort to avoid shortages of water, food and power cuts during heat waves.

Adaptation has to do with food and medicine, logistics and with the people who are going to be hospitalized and die. We have to prepare our hospitals for days of extreme heat."

Thanks for your attention.
Percy Tzelnic
Willard St, Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: Nancy E. Phillips <nanphill73@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 27, 2023 5:35 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Amendments to the Affordable Housing Overlay

Ordinance Committee Councillors, please vote YES to report favorably the proposed AHO amendments. Cambridge needs to do everything reasonably possible to increase its supply of affordable housing, and in my opinion the proposed amendments are reasonable.

Thank you very much,
Nancy E. Phillips
36A Rice St.

Erwin, Nicole

From: John Trever <jtrever@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 27, 2023 5:07 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance Committee Meeting on the AHO 2.0

Councilors:

Please oppose the advancement of the AHO amendment that would allow 12-story buildings along key corridors and 15-story buildings in squares.

- **Heights, Scale and Context:** The proposed radical AHO Revision features excessive heights, zero setbacks, and unlimited density which are not conducive to neighborhood integration and affordable housing residents' quality of life.
- **Who Benefits:** the proposal is primarily designed to benefit the private-sector developers, whose ill-conceived plans and exorbitant costs will have little if any oversight. Units at Jefferson Park are costing taxpayers nearly \$1 million apiece to build - well beyond most market rate housing.
- **Our city's needs:** We now have c.3,000-3,500 Cambridge residents on our affordable housing lists; we can easily accommodate them with the current AHO (now with c.1,500 units in the pipeline. Cambridge is too small and dense to accommodate everyone in the region or nation in need.
- **Cambridge deserves:** a comprehensive city-wide Affordable Housing Strategy rather than taking a haphazard approach that promotes poor urban design.

Whatever the rationale, the proposed AHO amendment would not help lower income Cambridge residents build equity (through the acquisition of their own units); instead, this provides (at taxpayer expense) AHO developers the opportunity to build (with taxpayer dollars) these \$1 million units – and then manage them (receiving related compensation) in perpetuity. We need a smarter, better plan, one that helps people own their own homes and gain some equity.

Sincerely,

John Trever

156 Richdale Ave, Cambridge, MA 02140

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Karen Klein <kklein@brandeis.edu>
Sent: Thursday, July 27, 2023 5:02 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: AHO2 Vote

I am encouraging all the City Councilors to follow the lead of Patty Nolan, Paul Toner, and Dennis Carlone in voting NO to the proposal before you at the Monday, July 31 meeting.

As an 86 year old resident of Cambridge since 1990, I share the goal of providing affordable housing. I do not, however, believe in outsize buildings, overly tall in relation to their surroundings without leaving any green space for kids to play and elderly to sit. For me the goal of affordable housing should be to help those who need housing, especially those who are already living with relatives or are unhoused in Cambridge. You are the voices for the residents of Cambridge; your allegiance is to us, all of us, and not the developers. Their interests are not yours, or ours.

Thank you for voting responsibly,
 Karen Klein
 416 Mount Auburn Street
 Cambridge, MA 02138
 617-417-0921
kklein@brandeis.edu (retired faculty)

Erwin, Nicole

From: William Bloomstein <wittcreate@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 27, 2023 4:57 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: NO to the AHO 2.0 amendment

Please say NO to 12- and 15-story structures all over Cambridge without setbacks or any growth controls.
THANK YOU Councillors Dennis Carlone, Patty Nolan, and Paul Toner who have made a commitment to vote NO on AHO 2.0

Everyone else please join them!

This 2.0 proposal is bad government and will irreparably damage the character of Cambridge.
 Don't sign up to a pro-builder / pro-developer amendment that eliminates safeguards and allows hugely lucrative structures to be built by for-profit companies.
 We are way, way, way smarter than this when it comes to affordable housing.

Willie Bloomstein
16 Crescent St.
Cambridge MA 02138

Erwin, Nicole

From: Allan Sadun <aesadun@alum.mit.edu>
Sent: Thursday, July 27, 2023 10:36 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; info@abettercambridge.org
Subject: Thanks for your support of the AHO

Dear Councillors -

It saddens me that y'all have had to spend so much time and energy on the AHO amendments. Our housing crisis requires solutions that are much bigger than what these amendments can offer.

We need to facilitate development of significantly more housing in all parts of the city. We need to enact bolder zoning for transit-oriented development in Central and Porter Squares to build on the successful planning in Alewife. We need to enact bolder zoning for multifamily housing in neighborhoods - in my dreams we would see zoning that could enable 15-20-unit buildings, large enough to support inclusionary units, but at the very very least we need to be promoting fourplexes and sixplexes! Given the funding and capacity constraints, zoning solely for affordable housing, solely in a few areas, won't get us there.

But what it will do is unlock a few projects. And that's a great thing to do. I hope you will consider your vote in support of these amendments as a vote for hundreds of new homes for people who need them.

Thanks,
 Allan Sadun
 237 Elm St #1

Erwin, Nicole

From: Catalina Arboleda <catalarbol@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 2:47 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Ordinance Committee Meeting on AHO 2.0

Respected City Council Members,
I have written several times on all the reasons why I am so opposed to allowing the current AHO (2.0) to be passed. Buildings of this height, without appropriate infrastructure, will make Cambridge unlivable and will have a very adverse effect on our environment.

Best,
Catalina Arboleda
950 Massachusetts Ave. #413
Cambridge, MA 02139

Sent by:
Catalina Arboleda, Ph.D
508-450-3868 (cell)
www.arboledaphd.com

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Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 8:19 AM
To: McGovern, Marc; Zondervan, Quinton; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Mallon, Alanna; Azeem, Burhan; Carlone, Dennis; Nolan, Patricia; Simmons, Denise; Toner, Paul
Cc: City Manager; City Clerk; Denise Jillson; Ruth Ryals; Blier, Suzanne; James Williamson; federico.muchnik@gmail.com; Joe McGuirk; Joan Pickett; Robert Winters; Catherine Zusy; John Hanratty
Subject: Ordinance Committee Meeting. Monday, July 31, 2023 - CDD Proposed Amendments to the AHO Zoning Ordinance

Dear Co-chairs and members of the Ordinance Committee,

As you are well aware, Massachusetts Comprehensive Permit Act: Chapter 40B established minimum of 10% of a municipality's housing inventory to be affordable. According to the Department of Housing and Community Development Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of December 21, 2020 (nb SHI has not yet been updated to reflect 2020 Census figures), Cambridge has 14.80% of 2010 Census Year-Round Housing Units as SHI units, yet it still faces severe affordable housing shortage that drove establishing the Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning Ordinance (AHO ZO) and now the amendment before you. City should have more up to date data and CDD should include this information on their presentation at your upcoming meeting.

City needs to balance the need for affordable housing against other critical needs such as

1. transportation improvements to make it easier to get around City without using cars to reduce carbon emission by cars idling in grid locked traffic;
2. remedial education for children who fell behind due to the pandemic;
3. safety net programs for those who are already in affordable housing but living in overcrowded conditions, paying over are paying more than half of of their income on rent etc;
4. provide more tree canopy for healthier living

to name just a few such needs.

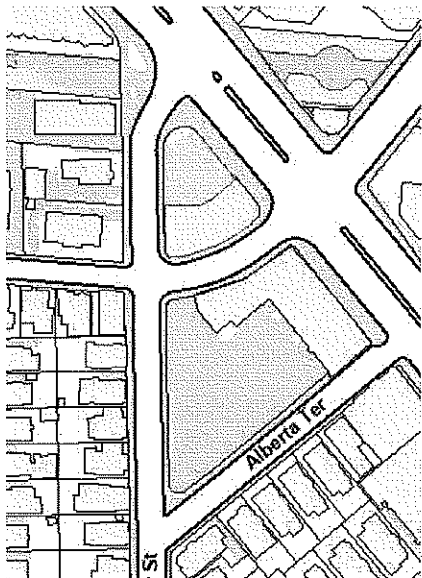
City needs to establish true need for affordable housing and establish a minimum percentage of housing inventory to be affordable before enacting any amendments to the AHO ZO. To be fair to all taxpayers, this should be decided by referendum.

Please request CDD to present case studies of potential developments under the proposed amendments at the Monday's meeting to explain the amendments and assure you and the public that there will not be any major impact to the neighborhood. Case study should include but not limited to

1. Most recent affordable housing units in number and as % of total housing units
2. plot plan (with abutting neighboring properties) with footprint of the development; number of units and residents; parking impact assessment. Good examples might be:
 - o potential site in Harvard Square for impact on historic district.
 - o at 2072 Mass Ave, withdrawn 40B 100% affordable housing project.



- o Joint development by owners of 2400 Massachusetts Ave (lot size of 27,717 sq. ft) and 2418 Massachusetts Ave (lot size of 8,328 sq. ft.) who will forego just ordained Barrette Zoning petition and take advantage of AHO amendment.



Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully yours,
 Young Kim
 Norris Street

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Andrew S. <ams125@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 25, 2023 7:48 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: AHO 2.0

Dear City Council,

I am writing as a long-time resident and voter to implore you to continue your work on passing AHO 2.0. As just one example of why housing development is needed, I have seen my rent increase by double digits in the past few years. I know so many people who have experienced the same thing here in Cambridge.

The only way to get a handle on the crisis of housing affordability is to build more housing. Full stop. The longer we let the housing agenda be dictated by NIMBY concerns and the emotional appeals of opponents of reform, the more Cambridge will become inaccessible to working and middle class families.

The status quo is unacceptable, unjust, and dangerous to the economic and ecological future of our city. But rather than offer real alternatives, opponents of AHO 2.0 only offer critiques and impractical "other ways." Opponents have no real plan for solving our housing crisis.

I received a mailer today from the "Cambridge Citizens Coalition" that claimed that Cambridge has "one of the best MASS records" on affordable housing. Tell any renter here in Cambridge how good our record is on affordable housing, and they will show you their rent bill.

Beyond mere complacency, there is a real pernicious element here. In an email to supporters that I received on March 21, 2023, the person who speaks for this "Coalition" wrote: "In short, we should seek to promote policies that prioritize OUR OWN city-specific needs. Not everyone who wants to live in Cambridge can do so, particularly with all the investor and developer money driving up home prices." That statement (and all of its subtext) captures the comfortable and exclusionary NIMBYism of opponents of deep housing investment.

I hope that the Council will serve the vast community of Cambridge renters and residents who need more housing. Please continue to support AHO 2.0.

Sincerely,

Andrew Solomon
 Cambridge, MA

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 31, 2023 6:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Kitty Gormley <kitgorm@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, July 25, 2023 2:49 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: NO 2.0 on AHO 2.0

Dear Fellow Cantabrigians,

PLEASE! We desperately want and need you to push yourselves & the city to **find new, better, transcendent solutions!** You can do it. Why not dedicate some of the vast city budget to holding an international urban planning competition to come up with better ideas for our unique challenges? It would be great!

FACE FACTS: The proposed AHO 2.0, inviting developers to over-construct 12- and 15-story buildings, will inflict irreversible damage on the city. There is not a need on the affordable housing waiting list in Cambridge for the scale of these structures, which envision the kinds of high-density, hi-rise projects that were tried and failed in an earlier era, never mind flooding the city with cars it has no more room for.

Lost or threatened will be qualities both tangible and intangible that define the City of Cambridge and create its beautiful livability: scale, character, sense of place, urban fabric and historic continuity, integrated multigenerational diversity, openness, etc. These are treasures that belong to everyone. We are so fortunate to have all of this and it should be the city council's responsibility to protect it.

Instead, some members of the council seem close-minded in pursuit of AHO 2.0 and don't seem to be heeding the uncontrolled destruction it will bring, falling for the ABC property-developer myth-making and somehow convincing themselves it is beneficial to go along. This is hard to understand.

To repeat: please push yourselves & the city to **find new, better, transcendent solutions!** We can do it. Why not dedicate resources from the city budget to hold an international urban planning competition, spearheaded by the city's own urban planners and architects, to come up with better ideas for our unique challenges? Or collaborate to execute such an invitational competition with the urban planning faculty at MIT and/or Harvard, both of which are huge city stakeholders? Maybe there could be a special project/tutorial at CRLS for future urban designers to develop a competition entry from the school. Etc.

Please think big and give everyone hope, and try to reassure all residents that their well-being is being taken into account.

Thank you,

K. Gormley
 Holworthy Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: rosemous@rcn.com
Sent: Thursday, August 3, 2023 2:20 AM
To: City Council; City Clerk; citymanager@cambridge.gov
Cc: rosemous
Subject: Fwd: A Citizen Voices Opposition to the Council Approval of AHO 2.0 in the Ordinance Committee Meeting 8/3/23

Subject: Fwd: A Citizen Voices Opposition to the Council Approval of AHO 2.0 in the Ordinance Committee Meeting 8/3/23

To: The Cambridge City Council

From reading Suzanne Blier's extensive background materials on AHO 2.0, I have gathered that following the last Council meeting of July, the entire City Council will be congregating once again Thursday afternoon, August 3rd, for an Ordinance Committee meeting to reconsider its final recommendations concerning the passage of the AHO 2.0, as it is presently constituted. From what I gathered reading the materials Ms. Blier has sent on, if the AHO is accepted in the Ordinance Committee in its present form on Thursday, it will most likely be approved in a full Council meeting sometime in late summer.

Therefore, I am writing this email to Council members to add my single citizen's voice about the passage of AHO 2.0 as I last did in June, registering my opposition once again to the ordinance's passage as it is presently constituted. However, given that Ms. Blier has provided such an excellent & succinct summary as to why my fellow citizens should oppose AHO 2.0, I am including her summary below: in order to bring it before the Councilors' eyes once again & also to refer readily to points she has made about which I would like to comment further.

As a resident of N. Mass. Ave. in Quick-Build territory (i.e., across from the vacant Season to Taste storefront), I am all too familiar with the rushed, drastic approach to implementing the CSO lanes up here (Dudley-Alewife) -- with scant community outreach -- which occurred in the late summer & fall of 2021: just prior to the rapid reconfiguration of our major corridor fully implemented shortly before Thanksgiving, November of 2021. By coincidence, I see the current efforts of city officials to bulldoze through AHO 2.0 this summer as following a very similar approach to implementation. Indeed, as Ms. Blier comments at the end of her email below: "There has been no citywide or neighborhood outreach effort, so most residents of the city have no idea that this [AHO 2.0], is in the works, & there seems to be no intention of requiring that kind of neighborhood outreach before the final Council vote" -- on what will be a very substantial upzoning of affordable housing projects in the city's squares (15 stories) & major corridors (12 stories). Indeed, it would not surprise me in the least if such a massive project -- with scant setback or greenery softening its impact -- were to crop up in the coming years right here on N. Mass. Ave.: which -- after all -- was deemed 'Poverty Row' during the 19th century.

As to the timing of AHO 2.0, I cannot help but wonder whether its consideration before the Council during the 'dog days' of August is hardly coincidental? Indeed, on July 31st, I heard a report on a TV news program that the citizens of the state of Ohio are about to vote up or down a new ordinance that may well substantially diminish voting rights in key sections of that state. A local journalist commenting on the timing of that vote (I believe it is to occur on August 8th) then voiced his suspicions on national TV that it was timed deliberately to occur when many people are away --

thereby itself suppressing the vote. Having been similarly shocked to discover in late August of 2021 that a dramatic reconfiguration of the major corridor below our windows was suddenly in the works for that fall, I am left to ponder whether the timing of AHO 2.0 during the 'dog days' of summer is also entirely coincidental?

In fact, I found myself thinking along similar lines last night when my husband & I visited a local eatery along 'restaurant row' in Trolley SQ. After dinner, we asked the son of the owner whether his father had responded to the survey sent out by the CDD (collaborating with the Volpe Center) to assess the economic impacts of the Cycling Safety Ordinance. This young man (who dealt with his father's email & correspondence) knew all about the \$700,000 figure that had been bandied about for Volpe's services (though he is NOT a Cambridge resident). However, he knew nothing about the survey & thanked me for alerting him! I quickly suggested to him that he contact city officials immediately: as having attended two meetings about the economic impacts study remotely, I knew that this survey which had ostensibly gone out to 1600 businesses in Cambridge in July was anticipated to be completed by August 15th (I believe that Volpe economist Sean Pierce mentioned that date in response to a question at the 2nd meeting). As I have a substantial research background myself, I find myself openly questioning the timelines of several important issues before the Council this summer: e.g., AHO 2.0, BEUDO, an opaque budgeting process, the fate of historic preservation, & the economic impacts survey.

As I have previously indicated in my emails to the Council, such doubts about something as simple as the timing of when key matters of public policy are considered make me skeptical as to what extent some of its members are committed to the outreach process - whether to local residents or small businesses -- a process which is certainly an essential component of local politics in a democracy. Indeed, while I am genuinely sorry to see some Councilors about to retire, the fact that I harbor such doubts about the political process in the 'People's Republic' of Cambridge inclines me to hope that the coming election may bring some fresh faces to the Council: more inclined to think long-term & metropolitan-wide, research options thoughtfully, plan comprehensively, & engage actively in the community process with the full diversity of our citizenry.

My thanks to those who read & consider what I have written here --

Linda Moussouris
2440 Mass. Ave.

From: "Suzanne Blier" <suzanneblier@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 31, 2023 2:02:46 PM
Subject: [ACN] FW: Points on AHO 2.0

Here is my email to City Council.
Best, Suzanne

Honorable Mayor and Cambridge City Councillors,

I write urging you to vote NO on AHO 2.0

- The required 5-year review of AHO 1.0 has yet to be started
- The need for this kind of radical up-zoning has yet to be shown
 - - c.3,000-3,500 Cambridge residents are on our affordable housing lists
 - we have c.1500 units in AHO 1.0 already in the works
- This kind of income-restricted tall tower approach is problematic, went out in the 1950s and 1960s, and many such towers are now being taken down around the country.

- The most successful and widely accepted new affordable housing developments in the city are of human scale and fit into the neighborhoods where they are situated. The AHO 2.0 ones wouldn't.
- There have been no design guidelines presented re how these projects would look in various contexts around the city.
- The current plans (without setbacks for green spaces and trees) would cause greater heat island impacts and both environmental and health inequities.
- The Envision Plan is asking us to ADD more green spaces and keep our mature trees, which AHO 2.0 goes against.
- We do not have a viable public transportation system that would allow residents to get to where they need to go without cars and parking, particularly for those who are disabled, with young children, or seniors.
- Without some level of compliance with neighborhood setbacks, green space requirements, and design features, these structures will stick out like a sore thumb and will not even comply with the design requirements of AHO 1.0.
- The city has not yet undertaken a survey of affordable housing resident experiences; and indeed, one complex, Walden Square, has provided evidence that there are serious concerns.
- No attempt has been made to learn what the inhabitants of the affordable units want to see happen in their own buildings, much less new ones.
- To date many of the AHO-1 developers have simply doubled the density and size of the properties already in place and have not used the city \$\$ to purchase new properties.
- The AHO units now are costing close to \$1 million apiece – well beyond what market price units cost (where is the oversight)?
- AHO 1.0 and 2.0 does NOT help affordable housing residents to build equity through the acquisition of their own homes, and indeed leaves them in a financial state of disempowerment too often by participating in this effort.
- No infrastructure is in place to allow this kind of density and height.
- The fact that this effort was timed for the election, as with AHO 1.0, is problematic but more so since there has been no citywide or neighborhood outreach effort, so most residents of the city have no idea that this is in the works, and there seems to be no intention of requiring that kind of neighborhood outreach before the final Council vote.
- The political pace pushing this effort published an early celebratory article in the builders, bankers, and developers trade journal (March 26, 2023 Banker and Tradesman) before the proposal discussion was underway, making it clear that this large scale up-zoning amendment is grounded in a self-serving political interest not what is best for the city or for our residents.
- The city decided long ago to support labs over housing.
- We need a viable citywide affordable housing plan, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood not this market driven AHO 2.0 model.

Cordially,

Suzanne Blier

--

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to association-of-cambridge-neighborhoods+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To view this discussion on the web visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/association-of-cambridge-neighborhoods/PH0PR11MB5901BE31E7417366CD736EFFF205A%40PH0PR11MB5901.namprd11.prod.outlook.com>.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Marilee Meyer <mbm0044@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 3, 2023 12:25 AM
To: Carlone, Dennis; Patty Nolan; Toner, Paul; City Clerk; City Manager; City Council
Subject: Please PAUSE AHO 2.0 it is irresponsible as written

Dear Councilors,

Thank you for allowing residents full time at Monday's ordinance meeting. I believe that extra minute changed the tone of the meeting to one a bit calmer. We all, both sides- listened intently, many people empathizing while still presenting practical concerns. The volume of letters was also impressive yet they still feel ignored.

I did not hear one person say they were against affordable housing, rather- several supportive suggestions were made. This is a man-made crisis we can't build our way out of on six non-conforming sq miles. We should re-examine waiting list numbers regularly. We should be learning from other cities and states what works and what doesn't. Vancouver housing is a great lesson.

The AHO came out of ENVISION (and even contradicts some of its mandates). What continues to be the problem is emotion vs feasibility, lack of planning, public process and buy-in. This is NOT about the wish list of affordable housing itself but HOW to achieve the goal. The original 25 stories chopped to 12-15 stories was a red herring designed to confuse and panic. It created resentment. The original AHO contract with the public is ignored while many residents are still in the dark.

Radically changing height and zoning details is not a simple amendment. It is re-writing the agreement after an extensive original process. That AHO policy went to at least 5 ordinance meetings over 2 years before the Council tabled it Sept 9, 2019- an election year. After expiration, the AHO was re-introduced by Councilor McGovern with a new council Feb 25th, 2020, and still intact was a 5-year review clause (now deemed irrelevant) and that Neighborhood Conservation districts and the Historical Commission would be respected. Councilor McGovern is a terrier concerning those too. Fast forward, to a pre-mature "amendment" dismissing that original understanding with the public.

"It is important to note that the overlay includes strict design guidelines and community engagement requirements ensuring transparency and giving residents a voice in shaping their neighborhoods". This is not so. And as councilors, please support Walden Apts.

The original AHO is still in place. There are no projects in the pipe line. The charge is that Affordable Housing developers can't compete or act quickly enough for potential properties. Instead of building 15 stories in knee-jerk fashion, look at the deeper issues affecting building-- inconsistent zoning details, financial system, subsidies from the city for quicker purchase, looking at group housing, converting office space. Be creative instead of spoon feeding developers.

In your deliberations, what would make you consider the practicality, feasibility and implementation of this new plan? Does this have to be so my-way-or-the-highway? What is negotiable? Some places are ripe for a taller buildings while other locations are not.

The pre-existing tall buildings all tend to be on side streets or blocks off the main corridor. 929 Mass Ave (19 stories) has a deep front plaza, open ground floor space and transitions to 5 stories in the

abutting neighborhood. LBJ apartments is tucked on a side street but has set backs with parking (now eliminated). And Rindge Towers is built on 10 acres. As-of-right violates resident rights. Where is the compromise from this heavy-handedness?

Things to consider:

- 1) Instead of city-wide standard heights which may not be appropriate to certain locations, consider an exception or mechanism allowing for review instead of as-of-right.
- 2) Identify property coming to market for purchase- would it be cheaper and quicker to buy a \$2 million property for 4-5 units than to build a tower from scratch? Then partner for homeownership?
- 3) the revised set backs, massing mechanisms and other careful details are in conflict with the original policy. How are they going to be implemented?
- 4) Have you thought about pre-fab buildings?
- 5) smaller homes will be available faster than tall towers.
- 6) how are those tall towers going to address the resources needed including electricity and how will mechanicals affect abutters? How expensive will implementing BEUDO be and is technology available?. How do you keep broken elevators from trapping upper floor tenants if there is only one?
- 7) Will towers overshadow solar panels on shorter buildings?
- 8) Design review is part of the process for a sustainable building. 1627 Mass Ave (an AHO building) had a robust public and CDD review with the responsive HRI. This preservation/ new construction is a valuable way to go and makes for a better project. The greenest building is the one already built.
- 9) regulate two family homes reverting to single-family. If it is two units, keep it two units.
- 10) make sure schools and institutions provide housing for students. The one commenter from the Harvard Tenants Association has housing paid for by Harvard. But they need more.
- 11) upgrade transportation with bus routes, more EV plugs and shuttle buses for those who don't use bicycles, are disabled, have small children. larger towers in Fresh Pond don't have transportation.
- 12) Why wasn't eversource, the fire department and other city departments at the table when this was thought up? Why were only developers included? They are not the only "experts".

I suspect the focus on passing the 2.0 before the election is a calculated one. But I suggest that with more time spent in analysis the less mistakes made and need for further bandaids.

Finally, developer Jason Korb reading letters historically against Frost Terrace (not an AHO project) was disingenuous. Of course he received criticism on a bad oversized tall box with a solid full-length facade which was widely panned. His hard work and abutter input made it the touted project it is today. These projects are not temporary. They are around for at least 50 years (or how long synthetic materials last). It would be nice to have them part of the community- something people are proud of living in.

Please put this AHO 2.0 on hold and take your time ironing out details. Given timelines, take a couple of months and do it right. Even if you pass it now, you won't see the fruits of your focus for several years anyway.

Thank you,

Marilee Meyer
10 Dana St #404
02138