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Multi-Family/AHO Zoning Petition: Comments & Recommendations
Neighborhood 9 Meeting of January 7, ~~2024~~ 2025

Comment on zoning petition (**25-page memo Zoning Frequently Asked Questions**)
Do no harm = Urban Design

4+2 or 3+3 both are at six? 3+2 is enough for AHO (Study Economics and UD)
AHO neighborhood heights keep increasing with AHO3

Petition is overly aggressive zoning and not the answer

Zoning should supply certainty, not uncertainty

What is the City Housing Plan vs. **Shoot from the Hip Russian Roulette Up-Zoning**
Keep Increasing height/density – 4, 6, 9, and 16 stories – throughout the city
Must study true impacts of proposed zoning first, not last, and modify petition

Zoning needs to be studied with all factors and impacts, and not isolated by itself
Public Money should not do harm – All should benefit in a balanced and fair way

Affordable residents want to fit in and not live in a building that stands out

Affordable Housing Trust Funding Criteria

1. Creation and preservation of long-term affordability
2. High-quality sustainability design **to benefit housing residents and the surrounding neighborhood and community – Expand to include strong design review**
3. Use of energy-efficient materials, and environmentally-friendly construction techniques
4. Emphasis on the creation of family-sized housing (i.e., units with two and more bedrooms)
5. Leverage of Trust funds by other public and private funding sources

The Trust Is The Key:

Oversee public housing funds

Are their other responsibilities?

Responsibilities should expand:

1. **Stronger guidelines/design review directly tied to funding by AHT**
2. **Fully report on project funding sources and costs**

Learn from Housing Construction Cost Parameters:

1. Six story height threshold – 30% cost premium above
2. Fire and police safety
3. Multi-family open space needs
4. Social amenity – porch gathering
5. Community support

Side-yard Setback and Height Concerns:

1. Scaffolding dimensions (8 feet minimum setback needed)
2. Fire Department access to side yard bedroom windows

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What are the most important drivers to create housing in Cambridge (in order)

1. Gaining land ownership
2. Developer type - residential versus commercial
3. Low interest rates
4. Reduced commercial development pressures on land and construction costs
5. Zoning
6. Project Construction efficiency

City Should:

1. Mandate Affordable Housing Trust, which includes City Manager, to **enforce strong design guidelines as condition for public funding**
2. Set-up separate agency to **buy land and long-term lease** same to housing providers
3. **Buy (additional) units** in proposed private buildings (construction cost only) as condition of increased zoning (Somerville approach)
4. Any height increase **over 35 feet in neighborhoods should automatically include Inclusionary zoning percentage**
5. **Maintain Article 19 design criteria with any public funded project**

Most Importantly: Since this multi-family petition will bring about the most change in neighborhoods in the history of Cambridge, it requires significantly more time for analysis of impacts. It must be refiled with a more thorough community process.