

[Area4] FW: Newtowne Court discussion follow-up

From: Roscoe Thomas <rthomas@margaretfullerhouse.org>
To: Area 4 List Serve
Subject: [Area4] FW: Newtowne Court discussion follow-up
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Attachments: [unknown-187 B](#)

Hello Area 4 neighbors and friends, here is an update from Iram Farooq, in the hopes that it might help clarify the discussion about concepts related to Newtowne Court and the Area 4 community.

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" A healthy community
is a garden that people
grow in"

Dear Central Square Advisory Committee: 2011,

The discussion of the possibility of rezoning the section of Newtowne Court closest to Main Street to allow taller heights and higher density was noted by Goody Clancy at the last Central Square Committee meeting and elicited comments from both Committee members and residents. Subsequently, there has been discussion and some concern in the neighborhood about the possible impacts on Newtowne Court residents and the preservation of affordable housing in the neighborhood.

We understand and appreciate the Committee and the community's commitment to diversity and both the City and Goody Clancy consultant team fully embrace this value. We want to take this opportunity to clarify the City's commitment to affordable housing, the intent of the K2C2 planning process, and clarify the Newtowne Court concept:

- The City of Cambridge has a strong commitment to affordable housing and to the tenants at Newtowne Court. The Community Development Department (CDD) would not support any proposal that resulted in reduction of affordable housing, particularly affordable family housing, the creation and preservation of which remains a priority for the City.
- The aim of the K2C2 project is to foster a vibrant Central Square, Kendall Square and Transition Area (along Main Street between Kendall and Central), and enhance the connections among these areas and the existing neighborhoods.

- It is our hope that the K2C2 process would open up opportunities to better serve the residents of the study area, including Newtowne Court, and further support affordable housing. This will be part of ongoing discussions in the planning process and the affordable housing efforts of CDD.
- Conceptual ideas shown for Newtowne Court and other parts of the Transition Area as part of the K2C2 planning process are primarily intended to show the possibilities of improved pedestrian connectivity within and through the Transition Area, across Main Street (linking Area 4 and Mass Ave) as well as along it (linking Central and Kendall Squares), and to show how a transition from larger scale uses envisioned south of Main Street to existing lower scale residential uses north of Main might be achieved.
- The conceptual idea of additional density would allow for future infill development to create a retail edge along Main Street that would provide an opportunity for services and stores to serve the neighborhood along with opportunities to create additional housing, potentially including a mix of incomes to be added to existing Newtowne Court housing. The addition of these uses would be consistent with planning goals for the Transition Area.
- The ideas are meant to promote an open community discussion of these possibilities. Any recommendations which might allow for the future possibility of creating new housing at Newtowne Court along Main Street depend on the idea that they would create desirable opportunities for the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and the Newtowne Court community to consider in the future.
- It is beyond the scope of this study to explore in depth, specific development options for any site in the study area. Any future changes to the Newtowne Court site would be planned by the CHA through a separate process with residents. We understand CHA has no such intentions at this time as there are many CHA properties with more significant needs for modernization and capital improvements than Newtowne Court.
- CDD had a preliminary discussion with the CHA to inform them that this portion of Newtowne Court was included in the study area and to ensure that they did not see an immediate problem with the idea of exploring potential zoning recommendations at a conceptual level.
- Goody Clancy and CDD have produced zoning studies of this section of Newtowne Court and other sites in this area as ideas for discussion. If after discussion, these ideas are consistent with goals and desires of stakeholders participating in this process, recommended zoning changes would be written to ensure that any future development made possible through these changes would not lead to a reduction of affordable housing.
- We anticipate further discussion of the concepts with the Committee and the neighborhood.

As you know, a public meeting for Central Square is planned for April 11. We are forwarding notice of the meeting to adjacent neighborhoods, including Area 4.

Additionally, we will be presenting K2C2 ideas, including the Newtowne Court area included in the Transition Area, to the Area 4 Coalition at their meeting on April 12 at the Pisani Center. We invite Committee members, especially those of you who are Area 4 residents, to attend and hear the neighborhood perspective. We will bring back what we hear at a future committee meeting and encourage residents to attend the K2C2 meetings.

We propose to defer further discussion of this topic at the Central Square Committee: 2011 until after CDD has had a chance to meet with the neighborhood on April 12 to get their input. Please let us know if you have additional thoughts or comments.

Warm regards,
Iram

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