

# ENVISION CAMBRIDGE

Alewife Working Group, Meeting 01

05/19/2016

Cambridge Water Department

## Committee Attendees

Geoff Wood, William Ahern, Eric Grunebaum, Margaret Gadon, Tom Ragno, Karen Dumaine, John DiGiovanni, Jennifer Gilbert, Sam Stern, Doug Brown

## Staff/Utile Present

Staff: Iram Farooq, Stuart Dash, Melissa Peters, John Bolduc, Gary Chan

Utile: Tim Love, Meera Deean

## Committee Members Absent

Catherine Connolly, James Butler, Margaret Drury, Mark DiOrio

15 attendees from the public.

## Meeting Overview

- Presentation from consultant on project overview and engagement strategy (available [here](#))
- Discussion

## Committee Feedback

- Housing affordability is real issue.
- Different levels (City, state, MBTA, DRC) have different agendas. If can come out of this with a shared agenda, that will be a success.
- Jerry's Pond is opportunity to reconnect people to nature.
- Alewife = Route 2. Talking about area without making demands on regional and state planning is futile. Need to really think big. Ideas include: extend Red Line to Lexington; underground Route 2.; getting Route 2 out of middle of Huron Village.
- Frightening to ride bike here. Investment and maintenance in infrastructure in needed.
- Area is car-centric with too many surface parking lots.
- Lots of new housing that has not been knitted together very well.
- Retail is not proximate, not easy for people to get loaf of bread/gallon of milk.
- Diversity of people is a value
- Need to get people out of their cars (i.e. pedestrian mall)
- Make Huron village safe
- Problem is not about bringing people here, but about making the area more vibrant. Plan needs to balance issues of housing and transportation.
- Mobility and transportation is impacted by urban form. Until Alewife is pedestrian/bike/transit-centric, there will be congestion.
- Issues are like dials on a dashboard; all are significant. Need to seek balance between all.

## Big Ideas

- Jerry's Pond - edge on Rindge Ave - fill in on that side to make park, expand on southern edge
- Opportunity to create Emerald Necklace

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- Move forward with pedestrian-bike bridge to connect Tri + Quad
- Commuter rail stop
- Alewife development has a suburban feel. Need to create more street edge to make it feel more urban
- Need total redesign of Alewife Station; pods

## Public Comment

- Poor water quality in Alewife Brook; area is most vulnerable
- Put commuter rail tracks underground, then would have connection between areas that are cut off; would also have surface crossing at Sherman
- Stop building in floodplain
- City seems to have commitment primarily to housing, sometimes at disadvantage to businesses; locally-owned retail is important; new housing is out of scale in size and cost; city should not be building luxury housing
- Need to implement recommendations in the short-term; 20 years is too late.