

February 24, 2014

To: Richard Bourre, MEPA

Dear Mr. Bourre,

Please deny Leggat-McCall's request for a waiver of the MEPA review of its proposed development project in East Cambridge. To the contrary, thorough MEPA review is absolutely essential, due not only to the massive additional traffic that the project will generate, but also due to other factors such as asbestos and noise pollution (more details below).

The developer Leggat-McCall (LMP) has applied for a Special Permit from the City of Cambridge to renovate and re-skin in glass the former Sullivan Courthouse, a giant tower in East Cambridge. LMP's application package cites a traffic study, conducted at their expense, that estimates that about 5,000 additional trips to the building will occur daily once development is complete.

Under the MEPA statute, the fact that the development will generate more than 3,000 daily trips — in fact the true figure is well above that threshold, even by LMP's presumably low-balled estimate — must trigger a mandatory and full Environmental Impact Review by MEPA.

We understand, however, that LMP has requested a waiver of that review. We ask you emphatically to deny their request, for these reasons:

- 1) The already-cited increase in daily trips, many of them vehicular;
- 2) The need to remove an estimated 90,000 pounds of toxic asbestos from the site; and
- 3) The additional noise pollution that the completed building will generate, both from the large mechanical structures on the roof (estimated at 30 feet tall in LMP's application), and from the increased truck traffic anticipated at the base of the new building, for service providers, deliveries, and trash removal.

In addition to the above specific concerns, I observe that the LMP project envisions placing 2,000 people — about 1/50th of the population of Cambridge — into a land area of a single square block, about 1/3000th the land area of Cambridge. This is an intensity of use that is fully 60 times — sixty times! — the average intensity of use City-wide.

Plainly stated, the Sullivan Building is a toxic site. It has been the subject of lawsuits by occupants:

http://www2.suffolk.edu/sjc/archive/opinions/SJC_09739.pdf

For all of these reasons, and in light of the extreme controversy around this site's original construction and subsequent history, up to and including the present day, any proposal to redevelop the site should be subject to the most thorough oversight process possible. Such oversight would clearly preclude denial of the requested MEPA waiver.

Please deny Leggat-McCall's request for a MEPA waiver. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Seth Teller
281 Hurley Street
Cambridge MA