**Mischaracterizations of CCC**

**A Sign of the Times – and let’s stick to the facts**

We will not get into the mud with social media critics and others, but we will address factual errors.

1. **Facts on CCC’ August 19, 2021, AHO First Year Report** [**AHO First Year Report**](https://www.cambridgeday.com/2021/08/19/the-affordable-housing-overlay-a-first-year-report/)

* This was followed by an Op Ed by Councillor Marc McGovern and Candidate Joe McGuirk in the Cambridge Chronicle claiming falsely that our report (that CCC was unwelcoming, not the report) was unwelcoming. The Chronicle has now published CCC’s [response](https://www.wickedlocal.com/story/cambridge-chronicle-tab/2021/09/13/letter-cambridge-citizens-coalition-responds-mcgovern-mcguirk-op-ed/8315766002/) to the latter letter’s factual errors. In this we point out that:
* CCC never called for the city to decline all federal and state funding. We stated that it might make sense for some projects to be funded in such a way that all the units could go to Cambridge residents. Do they not agree it might be good to find funding to create housing specifically for the city’s teachers, social workers, custodians, firefighters and others?
* CCC never suggested that low-income people are not welcome to move into Cambridge. To the contrary, CCC has pushed for creative approaches - for example, using every city -owned lot to build on - that would increase the number of affordable housing units. Emigres have long made important contributions to the city and will continue to do so. We need to address the needs of current city residents as more and more are forced to leave as housing costs escalate due to speculation and other factors.
* It is regrettable that the writers of the opinion piece did not address the several suggestions made or concerns listed, and instead twisted one comment giving it a completely wrong interpretation.

1. **Facts on CCC and the 2072 Mass Ave. Project (withdrawn on August 27, 2021)**

* CCC did not take a formal stand on 2072 Mass Ave. We neither supported nor opposed it.
* This project was NOT an AHO development but was created through the Massachusetts Chapter 40B special permit process. This project that did not receive support from the BZA, most likely because it was asking for too many exceptions to the 40B regulations. Had it been an AHO development with the agreed to height and setbacks, and a second elevator for residents to reach the higher floors, CCC may have supported it.
* Like any civic association, CCC members may and often do engage in many City projects, sometimes as individuals and sometimes as neighborhood or other group leaders. Their views are their own.
* The CCC President independently reached out to developer Jason Korb to try to see if one could lower the height while retaining the same number and size of the units. The final decision on the project was in the hands of the BZA.

1. **Facts on CCC and Affordable Housing**

* While CCC is a young organization (founded in 2019), and the AHO itself was only passed last year, CCC strongly supports affordable housing. CCC leaders both individually and together have advocated on behalf of a number of major affordable housing developments.
* One of these is the New Street Development, a large 100 unit plus affordable housing complex that was transformed from a storage unit building into a large AHO development. Situated between the Fresh Pond mall and Danahy Park it offers both amenities and green spaces to its many residents.
* Many of our leaders also support the proposed affordable housing intended for the renovated Sacred Heart School [Sacred Heart School](https://sacredheartredev.org/) site in East Cambridge, a perfect reuse project if the city can provide parking nearby.
* We remain diligent about issues of transparency and how money is spent as well as about good design, removal of green spaces or trees, nearby amenities, and impacts of doubling density at these sites
* The single unit cost of $908,000 at Jefferson Park is far above what even market rate housing costs. This is a serious concern, reducing the number of affordable units that can be built in the city.

**4**.**Facts on the Tree and Gun Violence Rally held on August 2, 2021.**

* CCC never sought to inappropriately claim partnership between the August 2021 Tree Rally with the Youth Violence’ rally on City Hall lawn, the latter hosted by My Brothers Keeper (MBK).
* Mothers Out Front (MOF) had acquired the permit and led the 14 participating groups, including CCC as co-hosts. The two groups (MOF/CCC and MBK) worked closely together on the timing of the event, as well as the wording and imagery of the two posters, encouraging attendees of both rallies to support each other in both these events. The falsehood that CCC was trying to upstage MBK began with a misunderstanding on the approved twin posters, which suggested that the plan was to share the same lawn space. This had never anticipated. This misunderstanding/error was repeated and politicized on a neighborhood list serve by Councillor McGovern and members of ABC.

5.**Facts on a neighborhood list serve homophobia incident, and responses (October 2020)**

* A Northpoint resident experienced an unfortunate sexual comment on a neighborhood list serve in October 2020. See: [Cambridge Day](http://mbridgeday.com/2020/12/01/passing-orders-resulting-from-october-incident-councillors-seek-to-help-groups-decry-bullying/). Neighborhood groups around the City were called to task soon after by City Council. Six of these neighborhood groups wrote a letter to City Council in response to this push against the neighborhood groups citywide. The neighborhood group led by CCC’s president was one of the six groups who responded. She separately emailed the Northpoint resident to send “best wishes in finding peace” and urging a means to “create a better climate for civic engagement….” The two had a lengthy and cordial phone conversation soon after. A week prior she mailed Council background on the incident from the list serve in question, and its aftermath, urging for more civic discourse. It is a misrepresentation to label CCC as purveyors of homophobia in this incident or any other.
* In late September 2021, soon after CCC’s 2021 City Council candidate forum was announced, and one week before the Northpoint resident’s petition to gut Neighborhood Conservation Districts citywide was scheduled to come up before City Council, this person launched an angry tweet torrent against CCC. His tweets linked to a distortion-filled blog post attacking CCC, its endorsees, CCC donors, and CCC’s president. He also wrote a blogpost urging support for the ABC political Pac with which he is affiliated. CCC will not respond point by point to this torrent except to reiterate that CCC was formed by Cambridge Neighborhood Group Leaders citywide to address issues in our neighborhoods with respect to the City. Also, the criteria for AHO heights changed over the course of addressing e AHO Mr. Crowe’s petition and CCC edited visuals following these changes for accuracy. CCC stands by the Neighborhood Conservation District Report of CCC’s president which points out inaccuracies of the Northpoint resident’s analysis, which used criteria from national historic districts - very different from Cambridge neighborhood conservation districts as established in Cambridge. The Cambridge Development Department has since then come out with a position close to the CCC report position. On Anthony Galluccio (an ABC supporter and go to attorney for developers) and the issue of City meeting signups, the City now has changed the way residents sign up to speak at meetings, making this process far clearer and more transparent in responding to this incident and others.

6. Facts on attacks leveled against CCC and endorsees in the lead up to the 2021 election.

* CCC, our leaders, and endorsees are being slandered by ABC affiliates and leaders on twitter and other media. The attackers have often resorted lies, mischaracterizations, and bullying but CCC has refused to climb into the social media cesspool created by them, particularly since the main purpose of these efforts is clearly political in nature. The main aim is to intimidate CCC and our candidates, urging voters to not support them. What Newt Gingrich gleefully introduced nearly thirty years ago as the “politics of personal destruction” has been ramped up here beyond belief in the past few years.
* Homophobia and exclusionist practices are never acceptable. And CCC has not engaged in this kind of behavior. One CCC member accused of homophobia by ABC was a charter member of the Mass Lesbian and Gay Bar Association (Now the Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association) and has stated that while a comment by an outsider to our group was “mean, nasty, and indefensible,” ABC’sfalsely accusing CCC or other individuals of homophobia constitutes hate speech and diminishes the reality of actual homophobia, and has been done for crass political gain. It is time to move beyond the political bullying to address the many serious issues facing the city.