



Massachusetts Chapter

October 26, 2010

Belmont Community Development
Attention: Glenn Clancy- Building Inspector
Belmont Selectmen
Belmont Conservation Commission
Belmont, MA

Cambridge Conservation Commission
Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Manager
Cambridge, MA

RE: Proposed AP Partners II LLC Development in the Alewife Silver Maple Forest Floodplain,
Cambridge & Belmont, MA

Dear Mesdames and Gentlemen,

The Sierra Club is deeply concerned that Massachusetts DEP has denied the right to the Belmont Conservation Commission and its citizens to a hearing in the proposed development of the Alewife Silver Maple Forest Floodplain by AP Partners II LLC.

As one of the largest remaining upland parcels in the Alewife Reservation area, the Uplands contain an unusual forest of Silver Maple Trees, which is an unusual natural feature in a densely populated urban area. The Uplands also contain vegetation and wetlands that provide an exceptional environment for a diverse variety of birds and animals and serve to absorb storm water and thereby minimize flooding of low-lying residential areas around Little Pond. The Uplands abut the 115 acre Alewife Reservation in Cambridge which is a mixed community of trees, shrubs, and other wetlands plants that provide habitats for a wide variety of wetland and upland species. The Uplands and the Reservation are ecologically connected and together provide sufficient space, soil conditions, and vegetation to accommodate the needs of large birds and animals, including deer.

The Mystic River watershed, which includes this property, has been targeted by federal and state environmental agencies, as well as, the Mystic River Watershed Association, the Friends of Alewife, and the City of Cambridge as a watershed needing major improvements. The developer has a recognized pollution track record in other states. The stated positions and goals of the federal, state and local agencies would be completely breached by the destruction of the forest and building of a large residential project by a developer with a poor environmental track record.

By refusing to include in its final decision April 2010, the testimonies and cross examinations and witnesses of the plaintiffs in the 3 day Adjudicatory Hearings in March-April of 2009, the Town of Belmont failed to consider vital testimony. The Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals failed to consider all the facts when they declared changes to the developer's plans as "insignificant" at this month's Belmont meeting. Two years ago, Belmont granted an original Comprehensive Permit and Order of Conditions.