By Walter T. Middlebrook

As reported in the Cambridge Chronicle, NASA has withdrawn all its interests in the Kendall Square area.

The withdrawal actually was reported in December of 1969. Since that time, however, nothing has been done toward the development of this land. It has also been one year since US Transportation Secretary John Volpe allowed the city to proceed with private development of the eleven acres of so-called "surplus NASA land."

Yet, nothing has been done.

City officials of Cambridge consider it one of Cambridge's top priorities to begin development in that area.

So far they've received many suggestions from community groups and the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. On the other hand, they've only received two formal proposals.

These came from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) and the city planning board for uses of the eleven acres, also known as the quadrangle - west of Sixth Street. That plans calls for both groups conflict, though. The CRA's plans call for development of the quadrangle and the adjoining 13 acre "Golden Triangle" (south of Broadway and north of Main Street) to produce more tax revenue for the city. The planning board's plans call for the development of low and moderate income housing for families, with ownership potential as a key ingredient. The plans also call for a recreation area there.

The board also admits that these plans would mean a tax loss.

The problem which has arisen now is that ever since Kendall Square was declared an urban renewal area in 1964 to make way for NASA, the CRA has had the responsibility for drawing up plans. The planning board must approve the plans, however. The inability of the two agencies to reconcile differences is a part of the reason for the delay in development of the area.

Not only has a disagreement between the two agencies caused a delay in the development of Kendall Square, but the CRA also has caused a fair amount of hostility between the two. Members of the CRA say its project plans were drawn on the basis of previous planning board guidelines and approvals, that the planning and development department initially approved its plans, and that the change of heart of the board was a surprise.

In reference to these statements, the board has its own ideas. According to Arthur C. Parrin, board chairman, the CRA wants to initiate a "get the old residents out" program. He went on to say, "We want to develop housing for people who live here now."

When contacted about the issue at hand, City Planning and Development Director Robert Bowyer said, "The board and CRA are aiming at different objectives. The CRA wants to expand the tax base. The planning board wants to promote family housing in its top priority. You can't compare the two."

The CRA plans for the development of the area are the product of 18 months of work and are based mostly on recommendations made by consultants employed by the agency. Those consultants, Gladstone Associates, Inc. completed their study in the fall of 1971. They carried out their study on the assumption the Quadrangle and the Triangle would be developed simultaneously.

The CRA's recommendations for the Triangle are:
- a motor hotel with 400 units, varying in height up to about 40 stories, a retail complex, 184,900 square feet in area.
- 706,000 square feet in area. 400 units of high rise, market rate apartments.
- 7140 parking spaces, 740 of which would be underground.
  - The CRA wants an advanced subsidy of land costs and maintains the Quadrangle to establish an enlarged rent supplement program in other areas of the city.

Parrin said that the Quadrangle was originally to be developed in Kendall Square but also nearby residential neighborhoods which are currently insufficient in such amenities."

"The CRA has received the acquisition price reason- able."

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