TWO SIDED DOCUMENT

January 31, 2006

To: Wellesley Board of Selectmen

From: Kepes Panel Subcommittee

Subject: Report of the Subcommittee

1. **Subcommittee Recommendations:**
   - retain ownership of the panels by the town,
   - keep the panels in Wellesley,
   - keep the panel sets together as much as possible,
   - make the panels accessible to the public,
   - extend the life of the *Kepes Panel Subcommittee* for an additional year to resolve the issues described below.

2. **Background:** Following the failure of Article 43 of the 2004 Annual Town Meeting to authorize the Library Trustees to sell the Kepes enamel panels that had been installed on the exterior of the old library, the Library Trustees asked Town Meeting member, Robert H. Murphy to form a committee and to serve as its chair to study the matter and to determine ways the panels could be re-used or disposed of. It was recognized that these are significant examples of public art unique to Wellesley. After the transfer of the panels to the Board of Selectmen, the ***Kepes Panel Subcommittee*** was appointed made up of persons who had served on the previous Library study committee. In keeping with the charge, the Subcommittee has met on numerous occasions, spent countless hours examining the panels, delved into the background of the panels, established contact with MIT and other archival sources and visited many possible location sites in town. It is obvious to the Subcommittee that there is high interest in town in the review process and final disposition of the panels.

3. **Information gathered so far:** Of the approximately 70 panels from the original library, 15 have been placed on the exterior of the new library and the rest are loosely stored in the basement of the Hills Branch Library. The Committee has spent time sorting the panels and attempting to identify each one and its location on the original library. However, we have been hampered by lack of adequate exterior photos of the 1959 library and the 1977 addition. We recognize the need to have each panel professionally photographed to help us document its original position. This would guide us in reconstructing each panel's

original location and assist us in deciding how they might be re-used. The photos also would become part of the town archives. As we looked at these possibilities we kept in mind that these panels are linked to Wellesley, not only because they were commissioned by the town but also appear to have been inspired by local natural settings. Therefore, our goals are the following:

- to retain their ownership by the town,
- to keep them in Wellesley,
- to keep the panel sets together as much as possible, and,
- to make them accessible to the public.

4. **Ideas for re-use:** Based on these objectives and the work to date, the Subcommittee suggests the following re-use ideas:
   a. install as screens at one or more of Wellesley's three railroad stations visible to passengers and riders;
   b. install as screens or panels at local colleges. Babson has expressed the most interest. MassBay has expressed considerable interest as well;
   c. install as screens between various town facilities such as the Cameron Street parking lot and library or between Hunnewell School and library driveway. Other possibilities include the railroad parking lot or the Town Hall driveway;
   d. install in a reading pavilion (a quiet area) to be developed near the Wellesley Free Library.

Other possible locations include the following:

<u>In Wellesley</u>:

- DPW Recycle area (book swap);
- Schools (elementary, High School);
- Senior Housing (particularly at Morton Circle);
- Duck Pond;
- Open spaces (to be created in connection with the proposed development along Linden Street and possible new construction in the Lower Falls)

<u>Not in Wellesley</u>:

- Kepes Museum in Hungary;
- MIT;
- new Museum of Contemporary Art in Boston;
- Rose Kennedy Greenway;
- Building Museum in Washington;
- Massport.

The Subcommittee feels that it is imperative that the town keep ownership, but that they might be loaned for exhibition separately or collectively to other museums or art associations. If some of the panels cannot be reconstituted as full sets they might be allowed for display as lesser sets or individually. Various town offices including the Board of Assessors and private organizations like the Wellesley Historical Society have expressed an interest.

5. **Work Remaining:** The Kepes Panel Subcommittee feels that there is more work to be done on resolving the disposition of the panels as follows:

   - get quality, correct color photographs of the panels, documenting them for posterity. We are unsure of the costs of such work.

   - consider restoration of the panels in relation to their eventual use. Again, we are unsure of the costs.

   - obtain guidance on the feasibility of the various kinds of re-use proposed herein.

It is our recommendation that the life of the Kepes Panel Subcommittee be extended for an additional year in order to resolve these issues. We would be happy to meet with the Board of Selectmen to discuss these.

Robert H. Murphy, Chairman

Salvatore De Fazio, III, Dante De Gruttola, George A. Roman, Joel Slocum
(Barbara A. Searle also served on the Subcommittee through September 2005 when she stepped down to avoid any possible conflict with her service on the Advisory Committee)

Gyorgy Kepes, founder of CAVS, dies at 95

January 16, 2002

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. -- Gyorgy Kepes, the painter, designer, author and educator who founded and directed the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, died on Dec. 29. A resident of Cambridge, he was 95.

"Gyorgy Kepes was the greatest pioneer in the marriage of art and technology in America, if not the world. He was a visionary, a towering intellect and a breathtaking artist. He single-handedly created the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT and turned it into an internationally acclaimed program for the development of the finest in late 20th-century art. His work will endure for many centuries to come," said Alan Brody, associate provost for the arts.

Born in Selyp, Hungary in 1906, Kepes studied painting at the School of Arts in Budapest. The horrors of World War I convinced him that "only film could bring into a single focus my joy in the visual world and the social goals to be realized in this world," he wrote.

In 1930 he went to Berlin, collaborating on film, stage and exhibitions, and graphic design with Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, one of the principals in the Bauhaus movement.

Kepes came to the United States in 1937 as head of the Light and Color Department of the Institute of Design in Chicago, then known as the New Bauhaus. He joined MIT in 1946 as associate professor of visual design, becoming a full professor in 1949. He was appointed Institute Professor in 1970. Kepes founded the Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) in 1967 and served as its director until 1972.

The director of CAVS, Stephen A. Benton, the E. Rudge and Nancy Allen Professor of Media Arts and Sciences, said of Kepes, "He was one of the earliest faculty to be brought to MIT to widen its historical mandate into the visual arts. He was wonderfully articulate about the arts in general, as well as an important contributor to them, and communicated especially well with the MIT culture."

While World War I had convinced Kepes that some art forms were inadequate, World War II, he wrote, "virtually destroyed" his hope that any one person acting alone "could marshal his inner strength to take constructive action."

Noting repeatedly the alienation of artists from scientific advances and scientists, from basic "issues of how to see and feel the quality of the world," he sought ways to promote a sense of connectedness and

Photo / Jan van Ste

Gyorgy Kepes, w hand, works in hi studio in this 198

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belonging among them.

Kepes' vision for CAVS took shape in the 1960s. A community composed of both artists and scientists, he wrote, might be the way to "find some common denominator between the landscape open to the artist and that which is open to the scientist."

Researchers at CAVS have pioneered the use of technologies such as lasers, plasma sculptures, sky art and holography as tools of expression in public and environmental art.

In addition to his career as an artist and an educator, Kepes was a prolific author. He published "The Language of Vision," a summary of educational ideals and methods, in 1944; "The New Landscape in Art and Science" in 1956, and the seven-volume "Vision and Value" series in 1965 and 1966.

Throughout his career, Kepes continued working as a designer, producing both small and large-scale works. The First and Second Church in Boston commissioned him to make stained glass windows, and he designed a window and all sculpture for a church in Japan. His paintings are included in 30 permanent collections including the Brooklyn Museum, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington and the Whitney Museum in New York City.

In 1995 the Hungarian government endowed a museum in Eger, Hungary, devoted to housing a major collection of Kepes' paintings, drawings and photographs as well as his archives. A permanent collection of his photographs is in Hungary's National Photography Museum.

The Kepes Prize is presented annually at MIT.

Among many tributes, Kepes was awarded the Fine Arts Medal of the American Institute of Arts and Letters. He was a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1996, he received both the Medal of Honor and the Middle Cross of the Republic of Hungary.

Kepes met his wife, the late Juliet Appleby Kepes, in 1936. He is survived by a son, Imre, of Pelham, Mass.; a daughter, Juliet Stone of Watertown; six grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

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