
Cambridge Civic Journal

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A MONTH OF THE CIVIC LIFE

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0) Introduction

Starting a publication like the Civic Journal has been on my mind for years. As I sift through all the paperwork that surrounds me, I continue to find notes about a project like this dating back for over five years. I'm glad to have finally taken the leap, though the burdens of my teaching job as well as my novice status as a publisher and lack of familiarity with the tools necessary for publishing on "the Web" have proven more difficult than I thought they'd be. I shall struggle on, albeit a bit later than I had originally planned. In this issue, I will take a chronological approach, which may lend some insight into what living a civic life can be like.

1) November 17 City Council meeting highlights

- a) an eloquent speech by Councillor Galluccio in support of improved athletic facilities and an endearing personal anecdote from Councillor Born on school sports and its role in her family;
 - b) public hearing on "The Tasty", especially
 - i) historical anecdotes of William Jones
 - ii) Councillor Born's tale of the Tasty and the Apr 1 storm,
 - iii) reaction to a letter from the Harvard Square Business Association regarding the inappropriateness of City Council intervention in private contractual matters, and
 - iv) an interchange regarding the role of high commercial tax rates in displacement of local businesses and Councillor Reeves floating the idea of commercial rent control;
 - c) Reeves questions and Susan Schlesinger's responses about whether the side effects of infrastructure improvements can be measured or predicted, e.g. gentrification and rising rent levels, as in the proposed Porter Square and N. Mass. Ave. work and the recent Central Square project. Particular noteworthy was Reeves flip suggestion that cleaning up an area and adding bicycle lanes was equivalent to the creation of an upscale neighborhood. His words were, "I did not believe that by doing such simple things you could get such tremendous impact."
- Though I find Councillor Reeves words interesting, I find his analysis to be rather shallow, perhaps just the initial rumblings of the next political "Reeves rap." He seems to be implying that the improvement of quality of life necessarily implies gentrification and displacement. While this is probably true if done in one area

only, I doubt its validity if done equitably throughout Cambridge and in nearby communities. If these kinds of investments are not done during good economic times, when and how shall urban areas be revitalized? We have to accept the possibility of *some* negative consequences in the process of attending to these important and neglected tasks. Perhaps the whole matter would be moot if we had been maintaining things all along, but this is what happens with deferred maintenance.

Lost in the whole discussion is the rather obvious fact that the existence of rent control and its subsequent abolition have had demographic consequences that dwarf those related to wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, tree plantings, and other infrastructure improvements.

2) Nov 18 Planning Board meeting - Holmes Project

At long last the proposal for the demolition and reconstruction of the Holmes property in Central Square arrived at the Planning Board. At issue is a request for special permits to reduce parking requirements due to proximity to public transit, to allow a height in excess of 55 feet (they want a 57 ft cornice height), and to grant a waiver of the setback requirement for residential use.

The proposal calls for 72 units of housing (of which 12 would be affordable to lower income residents) and 30,000 sq. ft. of retail and office space on the first two floors of the two proposed buildings. This development will also require variance relief from the Board of Zoning Appeal through separate proceedings.

The hearing brought out the usual cast of characters who are using this proposal as a rallying point for the restoration of rent control and to voice their opposition to what they see as the gentrification of the Central Square area. They seem to believe that by blocking the Holmes proposal they will somehow be able to turn back the clock. The Holmes project is but one of many instances of long overdue investment going into Central Square. This is exactly what one wants to see happen during good economic times. They won't last forever.

From where I sit, the whole controversy boils down to a few basic things. First, there is the display by members of the Eviction Free Zone and the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes (aren't they the same?) to draw attention to their agenda for affordable housing and for the possible reinstitution of rent control. Second, there is the Lucy Parsons Center, a leftist collective or something like that which is threatened with eviction and whose members have been at the center of organizing the protests. Third, there are a couple of characters who are using the controversy as a means of building up their political bases for runs at Alvin Thompson's seat in the State House. Fourth, there are some who believe that approval of this project will lead to gentrification, though it seems pretty clear that demographic changes are continuing in Cambridge regardless of this project. Finally, there are some people associated with the Cambridge Residents for Growth Management who see in this controversy yet another opportunity to build their coalition.

In attendance at the Planning Board meeting was a contingent from labor unions supportive of this project and the jobs it would provide. This made for great political dynamics as leftists were confronted with diehard labor unionists whose opinion was quite their opposite. Personally, I began this whole process with some

deep reservations about the Holmes proposal and I've seen most of my concerns dealt with constructively and expeditiously. While there may be some unresolved details, especially around the matter of opportunities for the current tenants of the property, it certainly appears to be the case that the proposal is heading toward approval in a form not too far from what is now on the table. The Planning Board will have its next hearing on the proposal on January 13.

3) Nov 24 City Council meeting highlights

a) Numerous people spoke in favor of the Urena petition to alter the zoning along Brookline St. and to force Forest City to alter their design of University Park so as to move the proposed Common closer to the residential neighborhood. The tone of the comments ran from "it would be a better design" to "if you don't do this, women's safety will be jeopardized". I have to admit that I'm not so sure about this one. People whom I respect have argued in favor of moving the park, but it seems a bit late to be bringing this up after the design and partial construction of University Park was based on a concept that located this open space in a place where many of its buildings faced onto the proposed common. At some point, one has to agree that a deal is a deal and that you cannot continue to change the rules once the game is well underway. I understand that the proposed zoning change would also necessitate a reduction in the number of new affordable housing units being planned along Brookline Street.

b) I spoke in response to an Order from Frank Duehay calling for a reduction in the speed limit along Brattle St. and Mt. Auburn St. in West Cambridge to 25 mph. I argued that if this was to be the rule for Brattle St., then it should also be the rule for my street (Broadway) which has three schools along it and which runs through a more densely populated neighborhood. My point was simply that changes in speed limits should not be based on political considerations, but apparently this point went right over the heads of some councillors who responded that they would move to get Broadway reduced to 25 mph as well. Perhaps I should stop trying to be so subtle. The Councillors later discussed the Order, but the discussion mainly focused on particular councillors trying to change particular streets. Oh, well.

c) The City Council voted 9-0 to eliminate the "open space bonus" from the zoning ordinance which allowed developers to build to higher density when in proximity to open space. They also voted 9-0 to alter the regulations that apply to hotels and motels operating in the Residential C zoning districts. I believe this change came about in response to a change in use that occurred on Harvard St. in Mid-Cambridge where a rooming house was converted into a Bed & Breakfast.

d) There was a lengthy discussion about an ongoing program by the City to eliminate illegal sewer connections, typically in which a sewer line in a building is hooked into a storm drain. Some of these illegal connections may date back 100 years to the days when little concern was given to sewer separation. Of 1200 buildings tested so far, 100 had problems. Though the program is initially focusing on areas where worse cases are expected, the indications are that there could potentially be as many as 1600 buildings with illegal connections. The main issue at the Council meeting was that of who should bear the costs of correcting these problems. As it stands, the cost is to be borne entirely by property

owners, though the City is negotiating to get the best possible deals.

The bottom line is that these problems must be corrected if we want to see cleaner and healthier receiving waters, i.e. the Charles River, the Alewife Brook and Mystic River, and Boston Harbor.

e) The comic highlight occurred when an Order came up congratulating Councillor Ken Reeves on his upcoming guest appearance in "The Nutcracker" at CRLS. Sheila Russell commented that "I usually do old-fashioned melodramas myself. The last one I was in was 'The Scheme of the Shiftless Drifter'". You just gotta love Sheila.

I've combined the "scorecard" of Council Orders from this meeting with those of the meeting of Dec 15.

4) Dec 1 Ceremony at Carl Barron Plaza

In what has to go down as the ultimate example of mean spiritedness, an innocent holiday lighting event and rededication of CB Plaza was made the scene of a protest by a group of people associated with the group "Save Central Square!". The scheduled event marked the official completion of the Central Square improvement project that brought wider sidewalks, new multicolored bus shelters, a multitude of benches, new trees and lighting, reconfigured traffic patterns, and an art installation in CB Plaza. The highlight of the event was artist Ross Miller's holiday lights of dancing figures that stretch in five nets across Mass. Ave. Though the snow was falling and the wind was blowing, one couldn't help but love the experience of drinking hot chocolate in CB Plaza with dozens of people who had worked so hard in bringing about these improvements in long-neglected Central Square. Not even the crazies could bring down everyone's good spirits. Not even the protester who exclaimed, in reference to the adjacent Holmes property, "We oughta get guns and assassinate them all!" I guess that's one dude who'll not be having such a Merry Christmas.

5) Dec 2 Central Square Advisory Committee meeting

The purpose of this meeting was to make any necessary revisions to the report to the Planning Board on the Holmes proposal in light of all the modifications that were made to the original proposal. There's not much to comment about except to note the inability of the committee to grasp the ever-vague concept of "sustainability". Committee members dwelt on such things as insulation and accommodation of recycling containers and bicycle parking in the proposed development, but made no reference at all to the fact that this proposal with a significant housing component is practically on top of a public transit node. Locating housing in proximity to transit is one of the most fundamental principles of sustainable development.

6) Dec 3 CRGM "Hotspots" Forum

This meeting organized by the Cambridge Residents for Growth Management was a mixed bag at best. Many of those who spoke seemed quite willing to play fast and loose with facts as they aired their gripes. The tone of the meeting suggested that major new construction was happening on every block of every neighborhood of Cambridge. While I would agree that there are some "hotspots" where current zoning is inadequate, I do not subscribe to the Chicken Little view that the sky is falling just because there's a

noticeable increase in new construction in Cambridge. Just a few short years ago, new investment was at a standstill.

I had the opportunity to speak on the history of disinvestment and development in Central Square over the last several decades. I had the distinction of being heckled by some of the resident crazies when I suggested that recent investment by property owners in Central Square was a good thing. This incident brought to mind a curious philosophy that was rampant in Cambridge several years ago, namely decommodification. As best as I've ever been able to understand it, this philosophy looks upon most investment in property as fundamentally dangerous in that it leads to higher real estate values and possibly higher rents. Government regulations should make private property ownership so onerous that the only thing left to do is to sell your property to either the government or a nonprofit agency or to develop something like a limited equity co-op where no "owner" is permitted to build up any significant equity in his or her property. In the context of Central Square, we are to look upon any improvements to quality of life as dangerous.

I'm doing my best to keep an open mind in regard to the CRGM agenda, but I fear that we are as a city being drawn ever closer to the brand of NIMBYism that one usually finds in places like Weston rather than in the good old People's Republic of Cambridge. A recent Boston Globe article (Dec 7) detailed Maryland's "Smart Growth Initiative" which focused on growth management that limits suburban sprawl by denying funding for projects that encourage sprawl and which rewards local governments that invest in urban areas. This sounds a lot more like the idea of sustainable development of which I am familiar. The CRGM approach seems quite different.

Here's the basic outline of my remarks on Central Square:

The larger problem in Central Square in recent decades has been disinvestment and not overdevelopment. One needs only to look at City-sponsored efforts like the Facade Improvement Program to see how much effort has gone into trying to get Central Square landlords to invest in their properties. Several years ago when this program was offered, there was only one taker. This time around there was significant demand to participate in the program. The recent streetscape improvements certainly had as one goal to leverage private money by getting property owners to respond and catch up on years of deferred maintenance. The MIT/Forest City properties lay dormant for years. Empty storefronts and offices in Central Square have been common. Several decades ago, property owners even went so far as to remove the upper floors of their buildings in order to save on their tax bills. The Holmes property is an example of a building which is only half its former self.

Another problem has been the inability to economically sustain businesses in the Square. There was a day when Central Square supported multiple movie theaters and served as a destination for shoppers from all over Cambridge. Competition from suburban malls and other factors caused enough of an economic collapse that consumer choice suffered greatly. Today, most people in the neighborhoods around Central Square do most or all of their shopping elsewhere.

The retail mix in Central Square has been a poor match for its population for some time. We have been left with the lowest common denominators, e.g. video stores, liquor stores, clubs, restaurants, and bars. I don't mean to denigrate these businesses.

It's just that there once were affordable clothing stores, book stores, an army/navy store, and a wide range of stores that would draw people out of the neighborhoods and "up to the Avenue". At the Lafayette Square end, we now have office space, medical labs, and parking lots where there used to be hardware stores and other outlets for everyday needs.

In terms of current development, clearly the two big ones are Forest City and the Holmes project. Regarding Forest City, our two biggest concerns have perhaps been traffic generation and competition with existing businesses in Central Square. Zoning regulations that govern the development of University Park fortunately address these issues. There is a limit on retail and a permit process that ensures that retail in Univ. Park will not unfairly draw business away from the heart of Central Square. The Central Square Overlay District with its advisory committee and design review process seems to be working well in helping to shape the Holmes proposal into something that is more widely acceptable to the public. We have these provisions in our zoning. Other Squares in the City should have similar mechanisms in place. These can be very beneficial in dealing with tradeoffs such as granting additional height or density in exchange for the provision of affordable housing.

What people need to understand is just how much "headroom" exists in the Central Square area. There are many properties which are significantly less dense than what the current zoning allows. There are the parking lots at Prospect and Bishop Allen, the building at that same corner on the east side of Prospect, numerous buildings near Lafayette Square with FAR in the 1.0 range, numerous properties on Green Street from Sydney St. to Pleasant St., and several properties along Main St. The Central Square Action Plan (1987) has a map showing "soft areas" where existing buildings are underbuilt in terms of what is allowable under the zoning code. While so much attention is being paid to the Holmes proposal, few of us are looking at the larger picture of potential development in Central Square.

7) Dec 4 Recycling Advisory Committee meeting

Cambridge now contracts with the local company F.W. Russell & Sons for the curbside collection of recyclables. Now that KTI of Maine has finalized the takeover of Prins and the operation of the Charlestown materials recovery facility (MRF), Cambridge has signed a four year contract with KTI to receive our recyclables. The new contract allows for a variable pricing mechanism. For example, with a fixed processing fee of \$36 per ton of newspapers and magazines and the current market price of \$32.50 for this material, Cambridge pays \$3.50 per ton plus collection costs to recycle newspaper.

The principal item discussed at the meeting was how to better establish recycling systems in all of the public schools of Cambridge. The presence and commitments of Edwina Macchio-Orsi from Management Services in the School Department and the fact that we have a new School Superintendent left us feeling encouraged that we would finally see some movement in this area. Not surprisingly, the biggest step in making things work is getting the custodial staff on board as willing participants in shaping and maintaining recycling systems in their buildings. It is generally felt that while it's a great idea to get students fully involved in this effort, the battle will be lost unless we can get the custodians to buy in.

We also had an opportunity to hear from Mike Young, Science Curriculum Developer. Mike showed us plans for the new Fitzgerald School. They already have kids operating compost bins and worm bins and are actively weaving recycling and composting into their curriculum.

8) Dec 8 Harvard Square Defense Fund Annual meeting: The Squares of Cambridge

I have to admit that I've never really understood what the Harvard Square Defense Fund was. Several people I know asked how they would go about joining and never received an answer. There was a day that I might have thought this a terrible thing, but no longer. Neighborhood associations in Cambridge inevitably become unrepresentative cliques with narrow agendas. I find myself respecting HSDF for not dilly-dallying about this. They come right out and say they are exclusive and that they are more effective as a result. Groups like the Mid-Cambr. Neighborhood Association, the Ward Five Democratic Committee, and the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee are effectively just as exclusive in that dominant cliques eventually drive away anyone with a fundamentally different perspective.

After the formal meeting was conducted in record time, the panel discussion began. Featured were George Thrush of Smart Architecture in Central Square and Head of the Architecture Program at Northeastern University; Paul Myers, President of the Porter Square Neighbors Association; Craig Whitaker, architect and resident of Inman Square; Ken Reeves, Cambridge City Councillor; and moderator Alex Krieger, Director of the Urban Design Program of the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

I felt sure that I'd hear little more than usual obstructionism. This was not the case. George Thrush referred to "the animus behind the desire for the downzoning petition" and promoted the idea that we should encourage more density near transit facilities and not suppress density along the Mass. Ave. corridor. While I can't say that I entirely agree with Mr. Thrush, it was refreshing to hear someone offer an opinion that challenged some of the prevailing notions. He opined that the association of low density with character may be a false perception. He also suggested that higher density generally allows for more income diversity.

Craig Whitaker gave some excellent examples of what Jane Jacobs refers to as "genuine differences" in the architecture of Inman Square. This refers to the situation where some buildings are taller, some shorter and where there is a variety of textures and styles. He suggested that zoning height limitations can produce a sameness that is not particularly desirable. Craig was not dismissing the need for height limitations, but was suggesting that some flexibility could yield more beneficial results.

Ken Reeves noted the difference between a place like Detroit where "downtown is where all the action is" and Cambridge where there is no single downtown and where the Squares take on this role in some measure. He stated that he was "embarrassed" by the improvements in Central Square and was very critical of City planners. He again invoked the theme that improvements lead to other, less desirable changes.

Alex Krieger pointed out that few communities are like Cambridge. In many communities, mixed use buildings and higher density are zoned away. The virtues of cities are only now

becoming again appreciated. He suggested that we look to popular TV shows as an indication of this. The suburbs of Ward and June Cleaver have given way to the city apartments of *Must See TV*. Mr. Krieger asserted that Cambridge has bucked the trend for over a century and that while we may be facing the beginning of a new siege, we are in an ideal position to help shape "the new urbanism."

9) Dec 9 Fresh Pond Art meeting

The controversy over a proposed art installation on the Fresh Pond Reservation continues. This meeting was an opportunity for artist Mags Harries, Water Dept. officials, Deputy City Manager Rich Rossi, Cambridge Arts Council members, proponents and opponents to present their current proposals and concerns, and to hear each other out.

Cambridge is on the eve of a multiyear reconstruction of its 1922 water treatment facility at Fresh Pond. The project will cost us about \$60 million and will take upwards of two years to complete during which residents will be using MWRA water which will enter into the city water mains at three connections - at the Cambridge Common, adjacent to the Porter Square T Station, and near the corner of Norfolk St. and Broadway.

As in all capital projects conducted by the City, about 1% of the costs associated with all publicly accessible portions of the project will be spent on an artistic component of the project. One part of the proposal at hand calls for the "daylighting" of the water as it enters Fresh Pond. When the aqueduct that delivers water from the Stony Brook Reservoir in Waltham was originally built last century, water arrived in dramatic fashion in the form of a waterspout. In later years, a weir structure was built which allowed incoming water to be directed either into Fresh Pond or into the filtration plant. Under normal conditions, the water passes virtually unseen directly into the Pond via a pipe extending from the weir structure to point a short distance into the Pond. The shore in the vicinity of the inlet pipe has erosion, drainage, and other problems that have the potential to affect water quality. During reconstruction of the treatment plant, this area will see a transformation as a small wetland buffer is created. The current plans call for a short open channel where incoming water would cascade over granite and marble as it tumbles into the pond. At the head of the channel would be an arched structure within which a visitor may look out over the channel and the pond. The reconfiguration requires alterations to the fence line and the path. Opponents of the project prefer to have as natural a setting as possible and object to the arch. Earlier objections based on very significant changes to the size of the open area (which people now are calling the "weir meadow") and the fence line appear to have been largely addressed by a reduction in the length of the channel. The attendees at this meeting were nearly evenly divided between proponents and opponents. A countercampaign by the artist and the Arts Council clearly helped to draw proponents to this meeting. Perhaps the more significant issue raised as a result of the controversy is that of how public art projects are approved, how the artist is selected, and to what degree the artist is required to be responsive to concerns of the public after being selected. Opponents of the project claim that the Cambridge Arts Council has been elitist and dismissive of their concerns. This is not the first time that such criticism has been levied against the Arts

Council. There is a widely held belief among opponents of this project that once the Arts Council has come to an agreement with an artist there is nothing that can be done to alter the course of events. It is ironic that in Cambridge, where we generally process things to death, this is a situation where process is viewed as unacceptable. The mere suggestion that an artist be *required* to respond to concerns of the public is anathema to the Arts Council.

It is perhaps unfair to draw a parallel between this situation and that of the Hans Evers installation of models of his genitalia at City Hall Annex several years back (that one made it to Saturday Night Live!), but it does often seem that what the artist wants the artist gets. One irony of the situation at Fresh Pond is that it was the same artist, Mags Harries, who was so vociferous in her opposition to the Irish Famine Memorial that was installed earlier this year on the Cambridge Common because of how certain characters were portrayed in the sculpture. Perhaps we should all declare ourselves to be artists. Then nobody will be permitted to criticize our criticism.

For what it's worth, I'm pretty satisfied with the current proposal for the artwork and daylighting of the inlet at Fresh Pond. The City Council has now cast a shadow over the proposal by asking the City Manager to allow nothing to proceed until a complete Master Plan for the Fresh Pond Reservation is established.

10) Dec 10 Election Commission meeting

I attended this meeting with the goal of obtaining the complete ballot data from the recent municipal elections. Cambridge is the only municipality in the United States that uses the Single Transferable Vote (STV) method to proportionally elect its City Council and School Committee via a preferential ballot. New York City uses this method in its local school board elections. Those familiar with the Cambridge elections, which have used this system since 1943, know that the great majority of ballots are cast for candidates who eventually win and that relatively few of these ballots will be transferred to secondary choices. Consequently, we've not really had the opportunity to get a good view of how voters rank their preferred candidates. Now that we have computerized the elections, ballot information exists not only on the original paper ballots that were fed into the scanning machines, but in computer files that can be analyzed by those like myself who are eternally curious about how people vote. This information is very useful in explaining to proportional representation (PR) advocates around the country about the reality of how real voters vote in a PR election. To date, I have had to rely on data from the 1991 Council election that was obtained by manual data entry as part of the feasibility study for the system which has now been adopted.

I'm wearing several hats in this endeavor. I was a member of the Technical Working Committee which worked in conjunction with the Election Commission to computerize the elections. I have been a City Council candidate several times, including this most recent election, so my name appears on the ballots. I'm a member of the national Center for Voting and Democracy (CVD) and the Fair Ballot Alliance of Massachusetts (FBAM) which advocate for fair voting systems including PR. I'm also a mathematician that can easily forego sleep when I have an interesting problem to study. I want that data!!

The election commissioners made clear that it is their wish to release the ballot data. The only thing holding it up is an opinion

from the Law Department on whether releasing the data is consistent with Chapter 54A of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the chapter that deals with the election mechanism which only Cambridge continues to use. I'm pretty sure that things will go my way on this one, but just to make clear where I stand on this, I informed the commissioners in a friendly way that if the information is not released, I will seek to obtain it via the Freedom of Information Act. The only problem now is that the wheels of government can grind very slowly at times. I had hoped that the legal opinion would be issued at the following week's meeting. It wasn't. I'm still waiting.

11) Dec 15 City Council meeting highlights

a) The Council asked the City Manager to not allow the Fresh Pond art proposal to proceed until the Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan is complete.

b) The City Manager's proposed Citywide Rezoning Committee was sent back due to questions about representation from all parts of the City and whether or not the committee should be able to choose its own Chair. Councillor Triantafyllou and City Manager Bob Healy had quite the showdown over his authority to make these appointments. The motion to send it back to the Manager passed on a 6-3 vote, but it's not at all clear to me that this is what the majority had really intended to do. There was definitely some miscommunication among councillors on this one.

c) I needled the Council about their pattern of trying to decide speed limits and other traffic-related questions during Council meetings. Later in the meeting, the Council seemed to have gotten the point and Councillor Duehay even took the bold step of suggesting that residents take their complaints and suggestions to the City Manager and the city departments rather than to City Councillors. Hallelujah!

d) Several hours were dedicated to a discussion of the goals and objectives of the Council and the City Manager. A very informative 50 page report was made available which qualitatively and quantitatively outlined what the City is doing in such areas as housing, capital projects, traffic management, and more. There were a number of tense moments during the hearing in which Ken Reeves ridiculed the Manager about holiday lights and flower plantings and Katherine Triantafyllou seemed to challenge what his authority is under the City Charter.

Community Development Director Susan Schlesinger was very informative in describing all the affordable housing initiatives currently underway and repeated her pitch for the Council to approve the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance now before the Council. I was particularly interested in an exchange initiated by Kathy Born on the prospects and costs of producing affordable housing units in areas not generally known for this. Insofar as the City wants to produce the most units with available funds, there is the distinct possibility that real estate factors will cause almost all these units may be concentrated into just a few areas.

There seemed to be a question brewing about the priorities of affordable housing vs. capital projects such as a new Main Library and a new Police Station. I expect this issue to shift back and forth over the next year.

A huge amount of time was dedicated to talking about traffic and trucks in the city. My feeling about this is that when most things are going well, the fraction of time dedicated to mundane things

like traffic rises dramatically. We should probably use this as a barometer of how well things are going otherwise. Councillor Triantafillou estimated that 30-50 resolutions per week are traffic-related. I did appreciate the words of Deputy City Manager Rich Rossi describing the role that bicycle lanes play in traffic calming and reduction of traffic volume. He acknowledged that the City has a way to go in better articulating what it's up to in this area. Councillor Frank Duehay correctly pointed out that the overall plan for traffic calming is a huge undertaking and will not be cheap. Bob Healy commented that the greatest challenges in this regard will be not only expense but acceptance by the public.

e) The City Manager informed the Council that he will shortly be proposing an ordinance change that will shift to the City much of the responsibility for costs incurred for correcting illegal sewer connections. What this really means is that these costs would be spread out over all ratepayers, a significant policy change.

City Council Scorecard: Nov 24 and Dec 15

There are basically six categories of Council Orders:

(A)announcements; (C)congratulatory orders; (M)maintenance orders (potholes, etc.); (D)death orders; (I)requests for info.; and (P)policy-related orders. Here's the approximate tally:

Councillor	A	C	M	D	I	P
Born	0	3	8	1	2	4
Davis	0	2	6	0	1	3
Duehay	0	2	5	2	0	1
Galluccio	0	6	3	8	3	5
Reeves	0	10	3	1	1	1
Russell	0	8	6	3	0	2
Sullivan	1	3	1	10	1	1
Toomey	1	3	5	12	1	1
Triantafillou	0	3	4	0	4	2

Feel free to draw your own conclusions.

12) Dec 16 Planning Board meeting

I attended two hearings - one on the Inclusionary Zoning proposal and the other on the never-ending tale of what is to happen in the vicinity of the Alewife T Station, especially the WR Grace site.

a) Roger Herzog from Community Development explained the rationale for mandating the inclusion of affordable housing units in all new projects of ten or more units and for offering a density bonus that would allow an additional 20% of density (2 more units in what would have been a 10 unit development) as long as one of the additional units would be affordable for the useful life of the building. There was discussion about whether or not a clause should be included that allowed a waiver in some circumstances in exchange for either a cash payment to the Affordable Housing Trust or construction of affordable units at another location. There was also discussion about the idea of comparability of units, i.e. not having a situation where all the affordable units are located in undesirable parts of the development. This proposal would be mandatory and would apply to both rental property and units intended for sale as condominiums. Representatives from the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes stressed that the greater goal is the production of affordable units and that comparability was a lesser priority. They urged that the required percentages be increased, a risky idea in that it could cause potential developers to build only projects with fewer than ten

units or take their business elsewhere. There may also be legal issues regarding whether this would constitute a "taking".

b) The hearing concerning the WR Grace rezoning was a classic. Earlier this year the Planning Board brought in "facilitators" to try to focus the issues surrounding development proposals and opposition from a very vocal and tenacious neighborhood group. When the facilitation plan was proposed and funded I predicted that it would go absolutely nowhere and that the City might as well just put the money in a pile and light it on fire. The situation is that there is a moratorium on development scheduled to expire on Feb 1. When the moratorium was initially established, the developer sued the City Council and the City. That lawsuit is still pending. If the moratorium is extended, there is no doubt in my mind that the legal action will accelerate and that the City will probably lose. Members of the Planning Board suggested that the situation today had not progressed from where it stood a year ago. Even the facilitators seemed to be acknowledging this.

There are only two possible outcomes that I foresee happening here. First, the Planning Board and City Council could act decisively either to rezone the area and clarify issues of land use or to declare that the current zoning is acceptable. Somehow, I think this unlikely due to politics as usual. Otherwise, the whole thing will be decided in the courts.

Calendar:

Mon, Dec 22

5:30pm City Council Meeting (Sullivan Chamber)

Mon, Jan 5

Inauguration of 1998-99 City Council and Vote for Mayor

Inauguration of School Committee

Coming Soon:

Report on the Computerized PR Election

The Color Green - Using environmentalism to promote hamburgers, the death penalty, suburban sprawl, and just about anything your heart desires.

Law and Sausages - Cambridge chooses a Mayor

Duehay and Triantafillou: Showdown at the CCA Corral

The People's Republic meets the License Commission

PR rumblings in SF, Eugene, Denver

Council Report, Updates, Calendar

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