
Cambridge Civic Journal

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MAYOR, MAYOR, WHO'S GOT THE MAYOR?

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0) Introduction

I distribute the Journal currently in three ways. The principal method is via e-mail, blind copies only to prevent proliferation of spam (electronic junk-mail). If you're not on the list, send e-mail to me at rwinters@abel.math.harvard.edu and I'll include you. The list will remain private. If you prefer not to receive it via e-mail, let me know. If you wish to forward copies to others, no problem. Back issues are available on request.

The second distribution method is as a formatted and printed newsletter. That's my favorite one to produce and all others are derived from it, but I dread having to mail too many of these since I'd like to keep costs to a minimum. Copies are dropped at City Hall, at the Main Library and the Central Sq. library, and at other random locations around Cambridge.

The third method is to post a copy on the Usenet newsgroup "ne.politics". The additional feature there is that people can answer back and forth on that forum. I hope to soon have a web site where I can easily include graphics, back issues, and supplementary materials.

There are many people around Cambridge who have much worth saying about local civic affairs. I invite written contributions, especially from those people who take the time to constructively participate in the various meetings, forums, and working groups that abound in Cambridge. In the words of my friend George Mokray, "publication is up to the erratic discretion of the editor."

1) Dec 22 City Council meeting highlights

a) This meeting wasn't exactly one for the ages, but Mayor Sheila Russell showed the good humor that has characterized her term as Mayor. After a discussion about posting "No Dogs Allowed" signs at City tot lots, Sheila said, "All we have to do now is teach the dogs how to read." Later in the meeting, after a long discussion about whose responsibility it was to clean up the fall leaves after street sweeping was over and whether or not to extend the street cleaning season, Sheila suggested that we should put an Office of Tree Trainer in next year's budget whose responsibility would be to train trees to drop their leaves directly into the barrels. We don't yet know who'll be Mayor this term, but already I'm missing Sheila's way of keeping everyone at ease.

b) During a discussion of the status of "The Tasty" in Harvard Square, it was Frank Duehay who said it best when he pointedly spoke of the Cambridge Savings Bank, owner of the property and in whose hands the fate of The Tasty lies, saying "...how much they will be appreciated, the leadership they will have shown, the gratitude that they will get, the increased deposits that will come

their way as a result of their outstanding commitment to small businesses in Cambridge." Let's hope it all works out for the Tasty. If I were King, I'd mandate that a 24 hour diner be situated in each major Square in my kingdom. I'm a diner guy.

c) In spite of a 33 page report on The Great Fresh Pond Art Controversy and 14 people speaking about it during the public comment portion of the meeting, the City Council didn't say a word. Over the years I've found that (except for one famous exception) City Councillors will usually avoid any discussion about art that might lead someone to accuse them of censorship, so I guess the acceptance of the report without comment is not all that surprising.

d) Frank Duehay took the steps to ensure that any significant Council business from the 96-97 Council will be carried over to the 98-99 Council. Remnants from last year's Citywide Downzoning Petition that are On The Table and the pending inclusionary zoning proposal are examples of major items that will survive to the next Council. Any New Business that was not acted on due to a Councillor exercising his Charter Right at this last meeting must be reintroduced in the new Council.

e) No action was taken on the pending N. Mass. Ave. zoning, so that petition expired. Residents in the area had recommended rejection of the petition or expiration.

f) Councillor Kathleen Born introduced a number of Orders designed to clarify what capacities the City Council might have in helping to maintain and foster small businesses in Cambridge.

City Council Scorecard: Dec 22 meeting

In this issue, I'll list seven categories of Council Orders: (P)policy-related orders; (I)requests for info.; (R)rules and routine procedural items); (M)maintenance orders (potholes, traffic, etc.); (D)death orders; (C)congratulatory orders; and (A)announcements. Here's the approximate tally of orders introduced:

Councillor	P	I	R	M	D	C	A
Born	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
Davis	2	0	0	1	1	4	1
Duehay	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Galluccio	1	0	0	0	2	1	0
Reeves	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
Russell	1	0	0	0	2	5	0
Sullivan	0	0	0	1	4	4	1
Toomey	0	0	0	1	8	0	0
Triantafillou	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total by category	7	1	2	5	16	19	2

Apparently death and congratulations dominated.

2) Showdown at the CCA Corral

The biannual selection of who is to be Mayor is proving to be a battle for the heart and soul of the Cambridge Civic Association. On one side is the "moderate" wing of the CCA as represented by Councillors Frank Duehay, Kathleen Born, and Henrietta Davis. Of these, Duehay and Born have expressed interest in being Mayor and all three are backing Duehay in the early going. The other side is represented by Katherine Triantafillou and former

CCAer Kenneth E. Reeves who currently supports Triantafillou’s bid for the Mayor’s job. Triantafillou was quoted in the Cambridge Chronicle as saying, in reference to Duehay, “I have the fifth vote and he doesn’t.” While she may have her own vote and the fifth vote, she has apparently neglected to pick up the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th votes.

The idea of pulling together for the CCA doesn’t seem to have the same meaning as it did several years ago. The basic drill was that CCA endorsees were required to work cooperatively with each other in the election of the Mayor; in the appointment of the City Manager, the City Clerk, and the City Auditor; and on all “significant” policy matters. I’ve never put much stock in the “all for one and one for all” philosophy that CCA regulars often profess. In a Council elected via proportional representation, this kind of thinking can lead to minority rule. For example, if the CCA had five Councillors and three of their Councillors supported one policy or candidate, this philosophy could be interpreted to mean that all five of their Councillors should vote as a bloc. In a nine member Council, this would then establish the policy or elect the candidate. In other words, three Councillors out of nine would control all important policies and appointments.

There are many voters like myself who mix their votes among CCA and independent candidates. In the absence of a defining issue such as rent control, this mixing of voter preferences will only increase. In this context, the notion that either “party” should deliberate independent of the other on important votes becomes increasingly absurd. The fact that the CCA and the Alliance have been relatively quiet as organizations over the last few years further contributes to the absurdity of this artificial division.

To cloud the waters even more, it seems that the very definition of what a Cambridge “progressive” is may be up for grabs. One side effect of the abolition of rent control is that the percentage of higher income professional people in Cambridge has been rising. Some have suggested that this will not bode well for traditional Independents in Cambridge. This may well prove to be the case. However, as the “CCA vote” grows, it may well bifurcate into factions. I imagine that the CCA will always be associated with “good government”. I expect to see a split between the more liberal faction (spend \$\$ on social programs) and those who are more economically conservative. We are already seeing splits on the issues of economic development and residential and commercial downzoning.

While the focus in the mayoral contest may be on personalities like Duehay, Born Triantafillou, Russell, and Galluccio, the more interesting question is really one of how progressive politics in Cambridge will define itself in the years to come.

3) What Makes a Mayor

Most cities have a directly elected Mayor. Under Plan E, Cambridge elects its City Council via a preferential ballot and proportional representation and the elected Councillors choose among themselves who is to be Mayor. I believe strongly that the City Councillors should make their choice from the perspective of the voting residents of the City and not just on their individual aspirations and on what deals can be struck in exchange for a vote. Even though most authority for running the City is invested in the City Manager, the Mayor still plays a significant role as the symbolic leader of the City, as Chair of the City Council, and as Chair and seventh voting member of the School Committee. It is

vitaly important that the Mayor be someone who is generally favorable to a great majority of residents of the city.

In my opinion, there are two Councillors who are entirely suitable for the job - Frank Duehay and Sheila Russell. Both have the experience and are moderate enough to be widely acceptable to the public. They are both capable of bringing disparate interests together and of promoting consensus and bipartisanship, ideals that are often elusive in a council elected via proportional representation.

In my next tier, I’d put Councillors Kathleen Born and Michael Sullivan. Both have the temperament and public acceptability for the job but might not be ready to hold the reins.

There are some who feel that the Mayor of Cambridge must be a leader in the sense of championing a particular agenda. I would argue that the best seat for advocacy is not the Mayor’s seat. The Mayor has one vote on the City Council, the same as all other councillors, and is obliged to moderate discussion in order to that Council meetings are productive and not chaotic. In fact, there was a sometime tradition, last practiced when Alice Wolf held the job, that whenever the Mayor wanted to speak in advocacy for a particular issue, he or she would give the gavel to the Vice-Mayor and speak from a Council seat. That was a good practice that was largely eradicated during Ken Reeves four years as Mayor. Mayor Russell used her position and her good humor to build consensus and cooperation, but rarely advocated from the Chair. I can only hope that these next two years will see spirited advocacy from the Councillors and moderation and consensus building from whomever is chosen as Mayor.

4) January 5th Inauguration - No mayor for now

Nice ceremony. Two ballots for Mayor and no conclusion. Here’s how the votes went:

Councillor	1st Ballot	2nd Ballot
Born	Duehay	Duehay
Davis	Duehay	Duehay
Duehay	Duehay	Duehay
Galluccio	Sullivan	Galluccio
Reeves	Triantafillou	Triantafillou
Russell	Sullivan	Galluccio
Sullivan	Sullivan	Galluccio
Toomey	Russell	Galluccio
Triantafillou	Triantafillou	Triantafillou

Michael Sullivan will be on his honeymoon for the January 12 Council meeting and the following Monday is a holiday, so we’ll likely not have another mayoral vote until Monday, January 26. Now’s the time for rampant speculation so here goes.

First, since CCA Councillors Frank Duehay and Kathy Born crossed over to elect Independent Sheila Russell last time, it is very unlikely that they’ll be politically willing or able to do this again. Henrietta Davis is even less likely to take this political risk, so I don’t see any way for Sheila to repeat.

The only way that Galluccio could get the job is if Ken Reeves were to give it to him and even then it’s not clear that he’d be the choice of all the other Independents. So I don’t see Anthony getting it.

There’s talk from the CCA that if Duehay doesn’t get it, they’ll give it to Triantafillou. That would be a bizarre outcome since

there are really only two sincere votes for her. There may be some fear of alienating Triantafillou's loyal supporters which, when coupled with Reeves split from the CCA several years ago, could seriously diminish the coalition that was once the CCA.

The threat that Triantafillou could be elected should be enough to get Russell or Sullivan or Galluccio to vote for Duehay. That would put Triantafillou in the position of having to hold out for herself or vote for Duehay. If she were to not vote for Duehay in that situation, this would be as close to an outright resignation from CCA affiliation as I can imagine, so I think she'd give it to Duehay. The Vice-Mayor job would then probably go to her or to the Independent who crossed over.

If Triantafillou were to hold out, I think that eventually two Independents, probably Russell and either Sullivan or Galluccio, would cross over to elect Duehay. Two Independents could cross over for Duehay early and bypass Triantafillou altogether. If not, we may be in for a long wait. That scenario may be the only way that Russell or Born could be elected mayor.

Now it's your turn to speculate.

5) Big Issues for 1998

I recently asked a number of people in the know what they thought the big civic issues for 1998 in Cambridge would be. Here's a list, in no particular order:

a) **Downzoning Detritus** - Last year's citywide downzoning petition led to some changes in the Zoning Ordinance, but most of the petition still lies on the table due to lack of support, better alternatives, or political trepidation. Picking up the pieces of inclusionary zoning, residential downzoning, land use regulations on infill, and other remnants of the petition will be with us for some time. The City Manager's final appointments to the Citywide Rezoning Committee will be announced very soon. There will no doubt be some rough spots ahead in the committee's deliberations and in the endless hot potato juggling act of both the City Council and the Community Development Department.

b) **Drinking from the Quabbin** - The City is going out to bid this month for the demolition and reconstruction of the water filtration and treatment plant at Fresh Pond. It is now anticipated that this work will commence around April 1. That's when we'll say goodbye for the next couple of years to the Hobbs Brook and Stony Brook water that we've depended since last century and start cooking and drinking and showering in MWRA water from the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs. Count on more than a few hours of City Council discussion in response to calls from residents about their water.

c) **Planning for a new Main Library and/or Police Station** - These are two major capital projects that have been anticipated for several years and which may require difficult siting decisions. A consultant is being hired this month to assist in researching possible sites.

d) **Restructuring at the High School, Charter Schools, Shifting Programs, etc.** - This will mark the first full year of the new Superintendent of Schools and four CCA-backed elected members of the School Committee. There will be high expectations for both the Superintendent and the School Committee to show initiative and to devise creative solutions to a number of long-standing issues.

e) **Resolution of the Zoning at Alewife and the WR Grace Site** - With a temporary moratorium on development ending February 1, a pending lawsuit against the City and the City Councillors, facilitators attempting to help the Planning Board to find some resolution, and results of soil tests due soon, it would appear that an actual decision may occur this year. It might not be wise to bet the family fortune on it, however.

f) **The City Manager** - Though Bob Healy's contract has a way to go yet, discussion of how we'll make the transition to post-Bob Cambridge will certainly be a topic for discussion at the City Council and elsewhere.

g) **Affordable Housing** - Now that the City is dedicating significant resources, both financial and administrative, to preserving and developing new opportunities for housing for low and moderate income people, there will inevitably come a day when we'll have to better quantify the need and sort out how this priority stacks up against the many other priorities facing the City.

6) Preview of Jan 12 City Council meeting

Councillor Frank Duehay, the Councillor with the longest service on the Council, will serve as Chair until such time as a Mayor is elected. It is unlikely that a Mayoral vote will occur at the January 12 meeting since Councillor Michael Sullivan is on his honeymoon and will be absent. January 19 is Martin Luther King's birthday, so there will be no meeting that day. Consequently, the next vote for mayor will probably not occur until January 26.

Notable items on the City Manager's Agenda are:

a) a report on what ordinances, regulations, and state laws apply to the granting of building permits and what input the Council as in the process. This was prompted by an Order from Councillor Born.

b) a recommendation from the Planning Board to extend the temporary moratorium on construction in the area of the W.R. Grace site in the Alewife area from Feb 1 to Sept 30. The original moratorium resulted in a lawsuit that is still pending.

City Councillors managed to produce 77 Consent Orders since they last met. Though I generally groan at all the resolutions by Councillors marking deaths of various residents, there is an Order this week marking the death of Mary Preston, an avid supporter of the Cambridge Library and one of the people who worked to bring our Plan E form of government to Cambridge over 50 years ago. That campaign brought us the proportional representation election method that we still use today as well as the change from a strong mayor to a city manager as administrative authority for the City.

Without a doubt, the most interesting Council Orders are those from Councillor Triantafillou calling for either a popularly elected Mayor or a significant change in the current process for selecting a Mayor. Here's the text of Order #62:

COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Law Department to report back to the City Council as follows:

1. Description of the process for charter change for popular election of the Mayor by the residents of the city; and
2. Report as to what changes would be necessary to provide that the Mayor does not serve as a member of the School Committee; and

3. Legal opinion and analysis as to whether the following provisions relating to the election of the Mayor could be enacted by the City Council as an amendment to the City Council rules or the Municipal Ordinance:

a) The Mayor of the City of Cambridge shall be chosen at the first regular meeting of the Council in January.

b) In order to be a candidate for Mayor, a city-councillor-elect must be nominated by a least one other councillor. The nomination petition shall be filed with the clerk on or before November 30th following the election of the city council members. In order to qualify as a candidate for mayor, a councillor-elect must have served at least two full terms on the city council and have reached quota on the first ballot of the general election.

c) On or before December 15th following the general election, the clerk shall preside over a special meeting called for the sole purpose of hearing candidate declarations and/or nominating speeches. Each candidate will be allowed a total of 20 minutes to outline his or her reasons for running for Mayor. Following the presentation, city councillors-elect will be allowed to ask questions of the candidates for an additional ten minutes each. Candidates will then be allowed a three minute closing summary.

d) If no candidate is elected at the first January meeting, then the Mayor shall automatically be the candidate who received the highest number of votes in the general election.

I think that this is a terrible proposal for several reasons. First, there is a good reason why Plan E called for the Mayor to serve on the School Committee. The Mayor should serve as the bridge between the two bodies and at the very least help to keep a watchful eye over that one area where the Council and School Committee intersect, namely the School Department budget.

Second, the proposed requirement that a mayoral candidate must have served two full terms is prejudicial. Ken Reeves would have been ineligible in 1993 under this rule. Anthony Galluccio and Henrietta Davis would be ineligible now. Besides, why not set it at three terms? It makes a difference whose ox is gored.

Third, the proposal calls for deliberations to begin before the new Council is inaugurated. If ever there was a process that should be an official proceeding, this would be it.

Finally, Councillor Triantafillou naively presumes that a preferential ballot used to elect councillors can serve double duty as an election method for Mayor. It cannot. The criteria used by voters in choosing councillors is different that that used in choosing a Mayor. For example, I was very comfortable voting for myself in the 1997 Council election. I would not want someone to interpret this as a vote for me as Mayor. In fact, to take this a little further, if voters widely believed that their #1 votes for Council could affect the choice of Mayor, many more voters would cast their #1 votes for incumbents and especially for those with mayoral aspirations. This proposal is an insult to every potential Council challenger and should be rejected immediately.

There is also an order from Councillor Tim Toomey challenging the practice of having the city councillor with greatest seniority assuming the duties of Mayor in the absence of a duly elected Mayor. He also challenges the appointment powers of the Acting Mayor in this situation.

City Council Scorecard: Jan 12 meeting

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

Councillor	P	I	R	M	D	C	A
Born	1	0	0	2	1	5	0
Davis	1	0	0	1	2	8	0
Duehay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Galluccio	0	0	0	0	8	5	0
Reeves	1	0	0	2	3	4	3
Russell	1	0	0	1	7	2	1
Sullivan	0	0	1	0	11	6	0
Toomey	3	1	1	4	9	3	0
Triantafillou	2	0	1	1	1	1	0
Total by category	9	1	3	10	29	23	4

Death and congratulations dominate again.

Calendar:

Mon, Jan 12

5:30pm City Council meeting (City Hall, Sullivan Chamber)

Tues, Jan 13

7:30pm Planning Board continuation of hearing on application by Holmes Trust for mixed use building in Central Square. Proposal calls for 72 units of housing and 41,560 sq. ft. of retail and/or office use. Special permit needed for building in excess of 55 ft.; waiver of setback requirement for residential use, and waiver of parking requirements. (Senior Center, 806 Mass. Ave.)

Tues, Jan 20

7:30pm Planning Board hearing on Urena petition to limit building heights on east side of Brookline St. south of Franklin St. Proponents seek to force Forest City/University Park to alter master plan to relocate proposed open space closer to Brookline St. (City Hall Annex, 57 Inman St., 3rd floor conference room)

Thurs, Jan 22

7:30pm Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA) meeting on appeal of letter from Inspectional Services concerning issuance of building permits for 45 and 78 Sydney St. This is related to above mentioned Urena petition.

Mon, Jan 26

5:30pm City Council meeting (City Hall, Sullivan Chamber)
Mayoral vote anticipated at this meeting.

Mon, Feb 2

5:30pm City Council meeting (City Hall, Sullivan Chamber)

The Cambridge Civic Journal is produced by Central Square Publications. Guest submissions are welcome, subject to discretion of the editor. For further info, to submit articles, or to get on our electronic mailing list, send e-mail to rwinters@math.harvard.edu or mail to Editor, Central Square Publications, 366 Broadway, Cambridge MA 02139. All items in this edition written by Robert Winters.