
Cambridge Civic Journal

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ALMOST SPRING ISSUE

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0) Foreword

I suppose it's this way in most places, certainly in much of New England. I'm talking about the situation of moving to a city or town other than where you were born and raised and never quite feeling like one of the crowd. My birthplace was Astoria, a part of New York City, and I grew up in Whitestone, north of Flushing, in Queens County in NYC. On Valentine's Day, I quietly celebrated the 20th anniversary of my residency in Cambridge. To some, I just arrived.

The way I see it, I've lived here longer than every student at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School. I've participated in civic affairs at all levels. I own a house in Cambridge. I've run for political office here. Yet in some circles, I just arrived.

I wonder if there is anything that one can do, an initiation rite of some sort, that will allow a neo-Cantabrigian to become a true Cantabrigian? Describe the tests of physical and mental stamina that are required and I'll begin training. Perhaps a physical competition with someone named Sullivan, Greenidge, or Koocher. I am willing to attend all Sullivan "times" for the next decade, a small inconvenience in exchange for the right to be called a true Cantabrigian.

A former reporter for the Cambridge Chronicle once wrote an article describing the difference between a native of Cambridge or Somerville and a non-native. He said that if you ask a non-native what school he went to, he tells you the name of his college or colleges. When you ask a native, he tells you his high school, even if he has a college degree.

Robert Winters, Flushing High School, Class of '73

1) Feb 23 City Council Meeting

This meeting began with a presentation by the parents of Jeffrey Curley of plaques to those who assisted them following the tragic murder of their son last fall. Robert Curley offered a passionate plea to all in attendance to have no tolerance for pedophiles and child molesters. Mr. Curley made very clear how proud he was to be a citizen of Cambridge.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Library 21 Co-Chair Nancy Woods and others spoke in support of an \$84,000 appropriation request for a consultant (Sasaki Associates) to conduct a siting search and analysis for a new main library building. Councillors Toomey, Reeves, and Triantafillou seized the opportunity to question why the Community Development Department (CDD) could not with its \$3 million budget have done an in-house search and analysis. Implicit in the questioning was a continued challenge to the City Manager and the way he manages the city departments.

Public comments on inclusionary zoning

There were many citizens who spoke in favor of the inclusionary zoning proposal before the Council. Mixed in with this support were a number of people active with the Cambridge Residents for Growth Management (CRGM), notably Karen Carmean and John Pitkin who expressed reservations about the proposal, suggesting that it would cause developers to tear down existing buildings, replace them with more dense developments, and cause overall less affordability and higher density in residential areas. Mr. Pitkin argued that inclusionary zoning must work as a package along with other initiatives such as land use controls or downzoning. Bill Cunningham asserted that the proposal would produce almost no affordable housing and argued that rent control is the only solution. The Chamber of Commerce went on record in support of inclusionary zoning, calling it a win-win proposal. The stage was clearly being set for a showdown between affordable housing activists and downzoning activists - a significant policy dilemma.

Of boycotts and obstructionism

In response to a communication asking the City Council to go on record in support of a boycott of the Starbucks in Central Square, I facetiously suggested that if the Council were to support that boycott, they should support a boycott of other "chains" like MacDonald's, Pearl Art, Woolworth's (now gone), CVS, Dunkin Donuts, Carberry's (now with a Davis Square location), Sears, Star Market, etc. The Starbucks boycott group is really the same group that is orchestrating the protest of the Holmes proposal for Central Square. In a related communication, they called for starting the entire process of the Holmes proposal from the beginning, perhaps the ultimate example of obstructionism. There have been dozens of meetings on this issue over the last 12 months and the issue is expected to be settled at the March 17 meeting of the Planning Board.

On the siting of a new main library

The regular business portion of the Council meeting began with a discussion of an appropriation request for a consultant firm to research and evaluate possible sites for a new main library. Counc. Sullivan asked why the site selection of a new police station was not part of the proposal. City Mgr. Robert Healy assured the Council that information derived from the analysis would be useful for other projects, including the police station, and that the consultant would be apprised of this. Counc. Toomey argued that "everybody has looked at the sites" and said he would not support the appropriation. He suggested that it would be the City Council that would choose the library site. Both Healy and Deputy City Manager and Library 21 Co-Chair Richard Rossi clarified the decision-making process by saying that the City Manager would propose the site along with an appropriation order. If the Council disapproves of the proposed site, they can defeat the appropriation and force the Manager to come up with another proposal and possibly another site.

Councillor Triantafillou again pursued the point that the CDD budget and staff should have been able to do the site selection and analysis. Mr. Rossi argued otherwise. Counc. Reeves expressed his strong desire that the library be sited and built soon. Mr. Healy responded that a proposal was before the Council almost two years ago (the "J-Scheme" at the current Broadway site) and

that the Council was not then willing to support it. He said that if there are six votes tonight for that site and that plan, he'd bring in a loan order next week for the Council's approval. In response to questions about the inherent difficulty in siting any project in Cambridge, Healy said, "For crying out loud, we can't site 3500 sq. ft. of art without controversy. How are we going to site a library?"

Councillors Davis and Born argued that a professional job would likely make the process faster and yield a result that few would regret years down the road. Council Born argued that \$84,000 represented only one-third of one percent of the probable design cost and that this was money well spent. Council Toomey proposed that the Council be bound to the preferred site chosen by the consultant. He was reminded by Council Russell and Mayor Duehay that the Council could not dispense such authority. Council Born amended Toomey's proposal to say that the Council should give "most serious deliberation" to the consultant's preferred alternative and that the role of public process and the Library 21 Committee must also be valued. Council Reeves argued that the consultants should produce a short list of sites because with more sites there will be more constituencies with whom to deal. Eventually the appropriation was approved on an 8-1 vote with Toomey dissenting.

Who reads the papers?

The next order of business was a discussion of the costs of legal advertising in local newspapers. The City principally advertises in the Cambridge Chronicle, but deadlines and legal requirements often require that ads go into the Tab, especially those of the Planning Board. The Boston Globe is considerably more expensive. The highlight of the discussion occurred when Council Russell asked why we wouldn't use the Herald since some people never read the Globe. Ken Reeves asserted that some people never read the Chronicle, a clear reference to past differences he's had with the Chronicle. Council Russell responded by saying, "Some people say they never read it but they know every word that was there." Everyone laughed.

The role of city staff in advisory committees

There was a long discussion of the problem of there being two reports that came out of the Truck Committee, a citizen-staff committee that was, by all accounts, one of the most contentious committees in memory. The end product of the committee's efforts were separate reports with very different conclusions and recommendations. The majority report (endorsed by Paul Myers, Dan Kanstroom, Geneva Malenfant, Yvonne Gittens, Scott Lewis, Brian Toomey (Star Market), and city staff Richard Rossi, Susan Clippinger, Don Drisdell, and Liz Epstein) is called Report A. The minority report, which argues that it was endorsed by the majority of the citizen appointees (Thomas Bracken, Vici Casana, Robert Johnson, Douglass Lee, Susan Miller-Havens, and Robert Travers), is called Report B. The latter report was accompanied by a letter of transmittal that accused city staff of stacking the deck in favor of the conclusions of Report A, of diminution of public process, and of outright violations of law.

At the heart of the Council discussion, initiated by Council Triantafillou, was the issue of the appropriateness of city staff being voting members on such committees. When asked about the accusations in the transmittal letter, Mr. Rossi said he would not address that letter directly but disagreed strongly with its content. He referred to several other processes where city staff had

participated very well. Council Triantafillou suggested that residents were browbeaten by city staff and otherwise dismissed and disrespected. Mr. Rossi argued that the letter was offensive both to staff and other resident members of the committee and that its tone speaks for itself. He said that this really came down to two very distinct and possibly irreconcilable philosophies, but that there was nonetheless much in common between the reports.

Council Davis moved that both reports be referred to the Traffic and Transportation Committee which she chairs and that the Council would be the final arbiters. Council Sullivan asked the Manager to produce a "commonality report" and to lay out the disagreements. Council Born, who called the original hearing in 1995 that led to this committee, said that although this was a painful process she was glad that we did it. She and Council Russell reminded the Council of how flocks of sheep in roads in Ireland could serve as an effective traffic-calming tool. [Yes, they were joking.] Council Galluccio pointed out that at the root of the disagreement is the interpretation of how sweeping the "Plaistow Decision" is in terms of allowing local communities to enact nighttime truck bans. He asked that city staff attorneys clarify whether this really is a landmark decision. Councillor Born moved that such a report be prepared before this issue is taken up in committee.

Mr. Healy closed the discussion by characterizing the criticism of Mr. Rossi as unfair. He said that the fact that there are two reports indicates that there are no simple answers to complex problems. Even in the Supreme Court there are dissenting opinions.

Affordable Housing vs. Downzoning - Round One

The last significant item of the meeting was the discussion of the Inclusionary Zoning proposal that would grant additional allowable density in residential developments of ten or more units in exchange for the mandatory provision that between 10% and 15% of all units be affordable according to definitions in the proposed ordinance and marketed according to standards contained therein. Height, setback, parking, and open space requirements would be unaffected by the proposed ordinance change. The ordinance would apply to new construction and to housing produced by a change in use. It would not apply to major rehabilitation of existing residential buildings.

Asst. City Mgr. for Community Development Susan Schlesinger made very clear that there was an important policy issue at the heart of this proposal - allowing higher density in exchange for the mandatory requirement of affordable housing. She explained that a provision for a waiver based on financial constraints was removed in the final draft and that only physical hardships such as height and setback limitations would qualify for a possible waiver in exchange for a cash payment to the Affordable Housing Trust.

There was discussion about whether this proposal would encourage the creation of family-sized units. Ms. Schlesinger made clear that the proposal could only guarantee that affordable units comparable to others in a given development would be produced but that many of the typical units being built and marketed in Cambridge today would be called family-size by the City's standards. There was discussion of how long affordability would be guaranteed and of who would control tenant selection in the affordable rental units. Ms. Schlesinger and Deputy City Solicitor Don Drisdell made clear that the City would have as

much control of this as could be possible under existing laws but that since the City would not own these units there could be no absolute guarantees. Several councillors expressed concern that any units produced be directed toward Cambridge residents to the maximum extent possible under the law. They were assured that this would be the case.

There was some discussion of the issue raised by downzoning proponents that this ordinance could provide an incentive for a developer to demolish one or more buildings in order to build to higher density. Ms. Schlesinger argued that the financial incentive to do this did not exist. The proposal was structured in such a way that it would not affect the bottom line for any development. There was also a discussion of the appropriateness of having the ordinance apply in all zoning districts. Ms. Schlesinger said that this was based on legal analysis, that it had to be done consistently, and that this was how it was done elsewhere. The question was tabled until next week with the question of the percentage requirements left open (10% affordable, 20% density bonus vs. 15% affordable, 30% density bonus).

Councillor Triantafillou's order calling for "a general discussion of development issues in the city" was briefly discussed before Council. Russell exercised her charter right to delay discussion to the next meeting. There was also a cryptic discussion late in the meeting initiated by Council. Reeves about troubles at the Agassiz School involving conflicts between some parents and the Principal of the school.

2) City Council Subcommittees for the 1998-99 term

Each City Council committee is staffed by either City Clerk D. Margaret Drury (D) or Deputy City Clerk Donna Lopez (L) or both. The Ordinance and Finance Committees are the only committees of the whole.

Ordinance: Davis (Chair), Born, Duehay, Galluccio, Reeves, Russell, Sullivan, Toomey, Triantafillou (D,L)

Finance: Sullivan (Chair), Born, Davis, Duehay, Galluccio, Reeves, Russell, Toomey, Triantafillou (D,L)

Rules: Davis (Chair), Galluccio, Triantafillou (D)

Gov't Operations: Russell (Chair), Davis, Sullivan (D)

Health and Hospitals: Triantafillou (Chair), Born, Reeves, Russell, Sullivan (D)

Environment: Born (Chair), Davis, Russell (L)

Housing and Community Development: Born (Chair), Davis, Galluccio, Russell, Triantafillou (D)

Economic Development, Training, and Employment: Galluccio (Chair), Born, Reeves, Russell, Sullivan (D)

Public Safety: Sullivan (Chair), Davis, Triantafillou (D)

Human Services and Youth: Reeves (Chair), Davis, Galluccio (D)

Civil and Human Rights: Triantafillou (Chair), Galluccio, Reeves (L)

Elder Affairs: Russell (Chair), Born, Sullivan (L)

Public Service: Born (Chair), Galluccio, Sullivan (D)

Claims: Galluccio (Chair), Davis, Toomey (L)

Traffic and Transportation: Davis (Chair), Born, Russell (L)

Cable TV and Communications: Galluccio (Chair), Born, Triantafillou (L)

Veterans: Galluccio (Chair), Russell, Triantafillou (L)

Sister Cities: Russell (Chair), Sullivan, Reeves (L)

Food Policy: Reeves (Chair), Born, Galluccio (L)

3) Report of Mar 2 City Council Meeting

Though the public comment portion of this meeting went on forever, this was one of the better City Council meetings in recent memory. Every councillor was a contributor, there were no clashing egos, and important policy was established in the face of difficult votes and enormous political pressure. If all City Council meetings were conducted as this one (though hopefully not as long), I would feel very satisfied with my local government.

There were many residents who asked the Council to delay the vote on the Carroll Petition for rezoning the area near where Market St. meets Broadway in Area IV. Negotiations between property owners and residents appear to be in high gear and heading toward some sort of resolution. The petition expires if not acted upon at this City Council meeting.

Public commentary on the Inclusionary Zoning proposal before the Council was extensive. There was an unusually diverse group of residents who spoke in favor of the 15% affordability, 30% density bonus alternative. This contingent included people from the Eviction Free Zone, a.k.a. Campaign to Save 2000 Homes (Louise Dunlap, Dan Bouchard, Bill Cavallini, Bill Marcotte), the Area IV Neighborhood Coalition (Lee Farris, Julia Gregory), a real estate agent (Louise Olsen), Laity and Clergy for Affordable Housing (Susan Mello, Robert Tobin), a housing developer (David Aposhian), and individuals Decia Goodwin, Waddie Taylor, Carolyn Kelly, Dennis Cooney, and Robert Winters. Developer Arthur Klipfel voiced support for the 10% affordable, 20% density bonus option.

Bill Cunningham expressed half-hearted support for the proposal while chiming in with his usual rhetoric about how "development is the cause of the affordable housing crisis" and how rent control is the only solution. He also called for a moratorium on all new development in Cambridge. He suggested that this proposal would scatter the affordable housing around Cambridge and argued that this would not help to build communities, seemingly arguing in favor of economic segregation.

Speaking in both cautious and outright opposition to the proposal were activists associated with the Cambridge Residents for Growth Management (Karen Carmean, Patrick Mehr, Marilyn Wellons, Ellin Sarot, John Pitkin), and the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee (Joe Joseph, Peter Cignetti). Save Central Square/Stop the Demolition activists (Michael Eisenberg, Jon Bekken, James Williamson, David Hoicka) seemed to suggest that developers should be compelled to provide anywhere from 25% to 100% affordable housing with neither density bonuses nor compensation. Robert LaTremouille dismissed the inclusionary zoning proposal as disgraceful and shameful. Joe Joseph referred to the proposal as foolishness and argued for downzoning. Real estate developer Guy Aseph also spoke in opposition to the proposal.

In what has become almost routine at City Council and other civic meetings of late, one speaker (Elie Yardin) seemed to cross the line from commentary to slander in referring to the actions of the Holmes Realty Trust in Central Square as "an ugly example facing me every day of racist crime in the City of Cambridge."

The regular business of the meeting commenced with a discussion of development plans by Just-A-Start for 2525 Mass. Ave. in North Cambridge. The sticky issues concern the overall density of the project as well as inadequate communication with the neighborhood.

Affordable Housing vs. Downzoning - Round Two and a Vote

Nearly two hours of discussion was devoted to the Inclusionary Zoning Proposal. All of the city councillors had been bombarded with telephone calls, e-mail messages, and more during the days and weeks leading up to this meeting and the vote on the proposal. Especially significant was the scenario painted by downzoning activists that this proposal might create an incentive for property owners to tear down existing buildings with moderate rental units in order to build high rent/high cost units with higher density. Susan Schlesinger explained that property owners could tear a building down now to replace it with a high end building and that any density bonus for affordable housing would be revenue neutral. She further pointed out that it is often the case that existing buildings already have a higher density than current zoning allows.

There were numerous concerns expressed about the voluntary provisions in this ordinance for developments of less than ten units. Public comments suggested scenarios where projects of twice the current density or more could result in residential areas through a Special Permit process. CDD representatives explained that the Planning Board could not issue a Special Permit for any proposal that was not consistent with existing heights, densities, and setbacks in the vicinity any proposed development.

Councillor Galluccio focused on the fact that the mandatory provisions of this ordinance would only apply to projects of ten units or more and that this would lead to minimal impacts in the traditional Residential A, B, and C zones. Ms. Schlesinger said that this was precisely the reason for deciding on the ten unit minimum. A significant moment occurred when Counc. Galluccio announced that he would be supporting the 15% affordability requirement and was applauded by affordable housing activists in the audience.

Councillor Reeves said that while there were bound to be some unintended consequences, it was necessary to proceed. He pointed out that we are trying to use zoning incentives to alter behavior in asking people to do the right thing. While suggesting that we not give away the store, he said we should not be so draconian that housing developers simply walk away. He said that he could not understand the argument that if we support affordable housing we should not do this. He said that now is the time "to put up or shut up."

Ms. Schlesinger offered that this proposal serves dual policy goals. Its intent is not only to produce affordable housing but to create mixed income areas throughout the city.

There were some concerns expressed about the possibility that smaller units and fewer family-size units could result. Les Barber of CDD clarified that the language of the ordinance called for a reduction in lot size per unit and that there was minimal chance that unit size would be adversely affected.

Councillor Toomey argued forcefully for an absolute preference for Cambridge residents in any affordable units produced via this ordinance. Ms. Schlesinger assured him and other councillors that this would be the case "to the highest degree allowable by law."

Councillor Born explored many of the more technical aspects of the proposed ordinance, making good use of her experience as an architect. She delved into specific examples of the possible effects of the voluntary provisions for such things as three-family houses with the potential to add another unit or deep lots on Cushing St. It was during Counc. Born's questions that Roger Herzog of CDD told of how a comparable ordinance in Montgomery County, MD had produced 9000 affordable units since the 1970's. Counc. Born ended her remarks by describing how much her perspective had changed since the day she first joined the City Council. She said that her focus was primarily on urban design when she started and that she now sees the provision of affordable housing as crucial.

Councillor Triantafillou was clear and direct in addressing what she called "the horns of a classic dilemma" in having to vote in favor of this affordable housing initiative even if it conflicted with recent downzoning initiatives. She seemed genuinely satisfied with explanations from CDD that there were plenty of brakes on excess development, including existing safeguards in overlay districts; height, setback, and parking requirements; the continued applicability of the Townhouse Ordinance; and the Special Permit process associated with the voluntary portion of this proposed ordinance. She expressed concern about whether anyone would take advantage of the density bonuses. She said that she was willing to accept any risks and acknowledged that she would be disappointing some of her most fervent supporters in voting for this ordinance. In response to claims that this would lead to existing buildings being torn down, she said she was not convinced that such a "parade of horrors" would take place. The speech by Counc. Triantafillou was clearly one of the highlights of the entire meeting.

Counc. Galluccio moved that the 15% affordability requirement and 30% density bonus be inserted into the proposal. The motion passed with 6 votes, with Russell and Toomey voting no and Sullivan voting present. (Counc. Russell favored 10% and 20%.)

The main motion then passed on a 7-2 vote with Born, Davis, Galluccio, Reeves, Russell, Triantafillou and Duehay voting for the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance and Sullivan and Toomey voting against it.

The last significant discussion of the meeting concerned the order by Councillors Toomey and Triantafillou calling for greater utilization of the City Auditor by the City Council. The Auditor is one of just three appointees of the City Council as specified in the Plan E Charter, the other two being the City Manager and the City Clerk (though I believe the Deputy City Clerk also fits into this category). Councillor Russell moved that the matter be referred to the Gov't Operations Committee. After some concern about delay were expressed, the matter was referred to committee.

Here's what the Charter says about the role of the City Auditor: M.G.L Chap. 43: Sec 18, par. 44. The council in any city adopting Plan D or E shall, by a majority vote, elect a city auditor to hold office for three years and until his successor is qualified. He shall keep and have charge of the accounts of the city and from time to time audit the books and accounts of all departments, commissions, boards and offices of the city, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as the council may prescribe, in addition to such duties as may be prescribed by law.

Scorecard: Feb 23 and Mar 2 Council Orders

P = policy-related; **I** = requests for info.;

R = rules and routine procedural items;

M = maintenance (potholes, traffic, etc.);

D = deaths; **C** = congratulatory orders; **A** = announcements

Here's the approximate tally of orders introduced:

Councillor	P	I	R	M	D	C	A
Born	3	1	0	0	4	5	0
Davis	1	1	0	1	1	9	0
Duehay	1	0	1	0	1	15	0
Galluccio	2	2	2	7	12	15	0
Reeves	2	3	0	2	0	8	1
Russell	2	0	0	3	3	1	1
Sullivan	2	1	0	0	15	9	0
Toomey	2	0	1	4	5	15	5
Triantafillou	4	0	2	0	1	4	3
Total by category	16	8	4	15	30	78	9

4) March 3 Planning Board meeting

In what will certainly rank high on my list of civic meetings with a remarkable lack of civility, the principal item on the agenda for this meeting was the Special Permit application by the Holmes Realty Trust for their proposal for Central Square at Carl Barron Plaza. The parcel in question extends along Mass. Ave., CB Plaza, Magazine St. near the bus area, and wraps around the block along Green St. There have been numerous significant design changes and dozens of public meetings since the proposal was first made about one year ago.

The early part of the meeting featured Roger Boothe of CDD who described how the current proposal was largely in harmony with the guidelines established in the Central Square Action Plan and the Central Square Overlay District in terms of affordable housing, historic fabric, active streetscape, compatibility with existing uses, and improvement to the physical environment.

Dennis Carlone followed with a step-by-step description of the architectural aspects of the proposed building. He is an architect consulting for the Planning Board and working to ensure that concerns of the Planning Board are properly addressed by the architects for the property owners. Notable in his comments was how recent iterations of the proposal had tried to do too much in trying to respond to all the public reaction. He described the current proposal as a hybrid of two common building types in the area - commercial use on the two lower floors as is typical in Central Square and courtyard residential buildings as can be found along Mass. Ave., Dana and Center St., and Memorial Dr. He described the overall massing and height as reasonable and responsive. The previous proposal's maximum height of 77 ft. is now down to 67 ft. at Mass. Ave. and 55 ft. along Magazine St. and Green St. Issues of sunlight and shadow have been addressed by the break between sections of the building at CB Plaza.

Mr. Carlone emphasized that refinements were ongoing, including enhancement of facade treatments, further setbacks to create wider sidewalks, strengthening of the entry court, and more. Indeed, in the days since March 3 there has been a steady stream of modifications in response to suggestions from Planning Board members and the public.

Project architect Michael Liu followed with further details of the project including materials used, preservation of the Greco facade on the building now occupied by CVS, the entry court, and the massing of the building along Mass. Ave. and Green St.

Central Square Advisory Committee member Wendy Landman asked about the use of second floor retail space, suggesting that any such retail should have a first floor presence and that an interior "mall" should not be encouraged. Assurances were given that her concerns were shared by the owners and the architects.

The public comment portion of the meeting was characterized by poor manners and incivility. The time limits established by the Chair were not respected and not enforced. Though this portion of the meeting began at 8:30pm, it ran until approximately 1:30am.

Some principal points of those who spoke in favor were the provision of affordable housing, the degree of attention being given to details in the facade, the responsiveness to concerns about height, massing, sunlight, and setbacks, the desirability of mixed use buildings in the Square, the "rhythm" of the proposed building, the desirability of replacing a run-down building with an attractive one, and the prospects for a family-style clothing store and a bookstore.

Some principal points of those who spoke in opposition to the proposal were fear of gentrification, claims that this building would cause surrounding rents to rise, demands for a higher percentage of affordable units, the undesirability of having people live at this location because of possible limitations to street performers, concerns about increased traffic, and the desire that existing businesses in this block remain in their current locations.

A particularly unsavory moment was when Ian MacKinnon ripped into Kathy Born's recent proposal for a "quality of life" hotline as elitist, though few in the audience knew what bearing this had on the Holmes proposal. Laurie Taymor-Barry could have taken top honors for cluelessness with her references to black-owned "indigenous" businesses in Central Square. Counc. Reeves walked out in disgust at that point. She later made reference to "continuing this continuum." Much of her remarks seemed centered on the Lucy Parsons Center and Cambridgeport activism over the years.

Arguably the most distasteful moment of the meeting occurred when one opponent (Ellen Al-Wequayan) threw the microphone at the speaker who followed her (Geneva Malenfant) with the microphone cord interceding to prevent an assault and the only injury being the breakage of the microphone.

This is serious business when citizen-activists at City Council and elsewhere engage in either slander and physically threatening behavior. Elected and appointed bodies of the City have an obligation to ensure that civic affairs never degenerate to this point. We all appreciate the enormous amount of public participation we enjoy in political and civic affairs in Cambridge. However, there must be some limitations established in the name of civility and common courtesy.

It is expected that the Planning Board will vote on the Special Permit application at its March 17 meeting.

5) Civic Tidbits

A tip of the hat to Allison Woodman of West St. for doing a fabulous job of graffiti obliteration in her neighborhood. She rendered invisible the graffiti on a brick wall by painting the violated bricks in varying shades of brick color, mixing the paint a

little differently as she worked her way around the wall. As the differing hues were applied randomly, the graffiti seemed to disappear and the brick again looked the way it was intended.

Advocates for increasing the use proportional representation election systems in Massachusetts met at the offices of Common Cause in Boston on Feb 19. The group will meet again at the same location on Wed., March 18, 7:00pm.

At the March 5 meeting of the Recycling Advisory Committee, we learned that Cambridge will receive a total of \$13,894 in DEP grants for its recycling and home composting programs. We also learned the following information about current end markets and revenues for recyclable materials collected in Cambridge, as reported by KTI, the firm that operates the materials recovery facility in Charlestown who markets these materials:

#8 Newspaper - Korea - \$35.00 per ton
Mixed paper - US/Georgia - \$5.00 per ton
Corrugated - US/Georgia - \$65.00 per ton
Plastic - US/Alabama - \$220.00 per ton
Tin (steel) - US/Pennsylvania - \$70.00 per ton
Glass - US/Connecticut - \$2.50 per ton
Aggregate (what's left) - US/Mass. - cost of \$7.00 per ton

Nominations are being sought for the City's Annual Recycling Awards. Categories: a) outstanding individual, b) extraordinary business, c) impressive large building (13+ units), d) exceptional commercial building maintenance staff, e) notable citizen volunteer, and f) best City building or school program. Send nominations to Cambridge Recycling Program, 147 Hampshire St., Cambridge 02139. Include the award category of the nomination, your name, and daytime telephone number. Only Cambridge residents, businesses, employees of Cambridge businesses or large buildings are eligible. Nominations must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, March 31. For more info, call Jan Aceti, Director of Recycling, at 349-4866.

Contact Robert Winters at 617-661-9230 or via e-mail at rwinters@math.harvard.edu about any of the above items.

Calendar:

Tues, Mar 10

4:00pm New Charles River Basin Citizens Advisory Committee (MDC) Presentation and discussion of latest plans for pedestrian bridges at the North Point Inlet, the lock channel of the old Charles River Dam (Museum of Science), and Leverett Circle; current designs for North Point Park. (MDC, One Ashburton Pl., Boston, 21st Floor Conference Room)

Wed, Mar 11

5:30pm The **Ordinance Committee** will hold a public hearing on the Alewife Petition submitted by the Planning Board to amend the Zoning Ordinance to extend the effective date of the Industry C and Planned Unit Development IC Districts Temporary Moratorium, Section 3.13. (Sullivan Chamber)

6:30pm The **Ordinance Committee** will hold a public hearing on the Harvard Square Defense Fund petition to amend the Zoning Ordinance to eliminate the provisions for a special permit waiver of yard requirements in Article 11.50, Harvard Square Overlay. (Sullivan Chamber)

Thurs, Mar 12

5:30pm Informal meeting of **City Council & School Committee** for presentation and discussion of the Agenda for Children and the extended day initiative. (Media Cafeteria, Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School)

Mon, Mar 16

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

7:00pm City Council will hold a meeting to discuss the City's Goals and Objectives. Topic for this session will be workforce development. (Sullivan Chamber)

Tues, Mar 17

5:30pm **Planning Board** meeting (Senior Center)

Wed, Mar 18

5:30pm The **Ordinance Committee** will conduct a public hearing to discuss proposed amendments to the Municipal Code of the City of Cambridge in Chapter 8.28 entitled "Restrictions on Youth Access to Tobacco Products and Smoking in Workplace and Public Places" (Sullivan Chamber)

6:30pm The **Ordinance Committee** will conduct a public hearing to discuss proposed amendments to the Municipal Code of the City of Cambridge in Section 8.16.080 (J)(3) of the Noise Control Ordinance regarding car alarms.

Mon, Mar 23

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

Tues, Mar 24

5:00pm The **Public Service Committee** will hold a public meeting on plans for maintenance of the City's parks. (Sullivan Chamber)

Wed, Mar 25

5:30pm The **Ordinance Committee** will conduct a public hearing to discuss a proposed amendment to the Municipal Code by adding a new Chapter 2.113 entitled "Privatization of City Services." (Sullivan Chamber)

Mon, Mar 30

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

7:00pm City Council discussion of development in Cambridge.

Wed, Apr 15

11:00am The **Finance Committee** will conduct a public hearing to discuss the Fiscal Year 1999 Budget. (Sullivan Chamber)

Wed, Apr 29

11:00am The **Finance Committee** will conduct a public hearing to discuss the Fiscal Year 1999 Budget. (Sullivan Chamber)

6:00pm The **Finance Committee** will conduct a public hearing to discuss the Fiscal Year 1999 School Department Budget. (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 written by Robert Winters, unless otherwise noted.