
Cambridge Civic Journal

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MEMORIAL DAY ISSUE

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0) Foreword

It's been a few weeks since the last issue of this Journal. So it goes for activist citizens who are employed. For me it has been academic duties associated with the end of the semester at Harvard - office hours, writing exams, giving exams, grading exams, assigning course grades. The inviolable rule is: Work comes first.

Recently, the ballot data from the 1997 municipal elections was publicly released. I've been having a grand old time working with this data in a variety of ways. In this issue, I'll tell of two tales of the ballots - who would replace any given councillor should the seat be vacated for any reason and who would be chosen as mayor if we were to use the same procedure that is used to elect the City Council but where we elect only one candidate. In the next Journal issue (which will come out soon after this one), I'll give some results derived from the ballots, specifically measures of general popularity and distribution of #2 choices behind any given candidate's #1 votes. This entire business is a bit strange for me due to the multiple hats that I wear - reporter, candidate, replacement, analyst, and member of the committee that advised on how to computerize the Count.

My latest experiment in publishing has been to put this Journal on the web site in Adobe Acrobat format. This format preserves all the features as I initially lay them out and will enable me to soon incorporate some simple graphics. If you get a chance, check it out at <http://www.math.harvard.edu/~rwinters/ccj.html>. Suggestions (and assistance) are most welcome. I would also gratefully welcome articles for the Journal, either features or reports.

1) Apr 27 City Council Meeting Highlights

Unionization of Somerville Hospital workers was the lead-off issue at this meeting with one union representative asking the City Council to press Cambridge Hospital officials to allow a vote. It was later disclosed that there are three different unions competing to represent these workers. The Council chose to take the matter under consideration but took no action due to the circumstances.

Several individuals spoke in favor of the Privatization Ordinance, first proposed by Councillor Toomey, which would guarantee that any service of the City which was privatized would have to meet wage and benefit standards comparable to City workers. State representative Alice Wolf spoke in favor of the ordinance, comparing it to the Pacheco bill passed at the state level. The City Council later unanimously ordained this ordinance without allowing the City Manager or his staff to present their views on the matter.

Several prospective residents of the Cornerstone cohousing project proposed for Harvey St. in North Cambridge voiced their opposition to a downzoning proposal for the Linear Park area that would severely restrict their ability to build this housing.

Human Services Director Jill Herold and School Superintendent Bobbie D'Allessandro engaged in a lengthy discussion with several councillors about funding for a proposal for "analysis and assessment to develop a comprehensive plan for extended day planning". My limited understanding of this matter is that it concerns greater utilization of the community schools, youth centers, and nonprofits in a comprehensive plan to provide much broader after-school and evening opportunities for the young people of Cambridge. That the discussion was so lengthy and contentious was confusing to me. It would appear that there are some turf issues between the Kids Council, Councillor Reeves' Council subcommittee on Human Services and Youth, and possibly other parties. Nonetheless it was great to see such a cooperative effort between Human Services and the School Department being undertaken on an initiative with such enormous potential. The appropriation passed unanimously.

There was a predictably long discussion about issues related to the Polaroid/Spaulding and Slye development on Memorial Drive. Environmental toxicologist Sam Lipson addressed the technical and legal issues associated with past industrial uses on the site.

Councillor Russell read the text of an Order commemorating the years of service given the City by Peter Helwig who very recently retired after nearly 30 years of service to the City Of Cambridge in the Community Development Department, the Assessing Department, and the Revaluation Department. By all accounts Peter Helwig has been an exemplary city employee and a largely unsung hero whose handiwork can be found in a remarkably broad range of City projects ranging from open space planning to property tax assessment to authoring the City publication on property taxes sent out to every property owner in the city. I once went to Peter for advice on real world examples for a mathematics class I was teaching at Harvard whose principal audience was economics students. He was always willing to help anyone.

The Council unanimously passed an ordinance banning smoking in all City parks. It was surprising to see this pass with essentially no discussion or controversy. Only one member of the public spoke in opposition.

The Council unanimously passed an amendment to the Noise Ordinance that allows for the disabling of car alarms and the towing of cars when alarms do not automatically shut off within ten minutes as required by the Noise Ordinance.

A discussion among councillors about the relative merits of supposedly self-cleaning public toilets took place in response to a communication from Central Square Business Association president Carl Barron concerning public urination. Councillors Reeves and Triantafyllou heartily recommended these facilities. Councillors Born and Davis expressed some reservations about them. Councillor Russell volunteered to go to Paris on a fact-finding mission.

Councillors Born and Russell introduced an Order asking the City Manager to look into the possibility of taxing profitable properties owned by the universities. Councillor Born argued that the classification of these properties as educational is getting really muddy. This promises to be an interesting issue later this year.

2) April 29 City Council Budget Hearing

This hearing began with public comment featuring Ann Strong, Geneva Malenfant, and Decia Goodwin who advocated for establishing a capital reserve trust fund for acquiring land for neighborhood playing fields. Attention was drawn to the fact that most playing fields are in the western part of the city and that this has led to lower participation in sports by residents in the eastern part of the city.

Bill Marcotte questioned the accuracy of budget figures associated with the City’s commitment to affordable housing. He advocated for dramatic increases in spending for affordable housing. Bill Cavallini was less accusatory in his remarks but also argued for additional funding while a window of opportunity still exists.

During the Community Development Department portion of the Budget Hearing, Susan Schlesinger and Roger Herzog of CDD and the City Manager gave detailed accounts of the City’s efforts over this past year and what is projected for the next fiscal year. The fact that 257 affordable housing units were produced this past year through new construction, rehabilitation, or purchase and that another 255 units are projected for next year was impressive. The recently passed Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance is one more tool that will be used to produce affordable units.

Councillor Born asked questions focusing on how much of city-controlled funds were used in the production of these housing units. Based on the Manager’s responses, depending on whether you include the units sold at discount to the City by Harvard and associate changes to their in-lieu-of-tax payments, I calculate that the City cost to deliver each unit is either about \$24,100 or \$31,300.

Other departments whose budgets were discussed were Cable TV, Tourism, Public Works, Library, and Human Services. Richard Rossi gave every indication that we may soon see some kind of city-run shuttle system to support the youth centers and to ensure access for children in all parts of the city.

3) April 30 Library Siting Meeting - 18 sites considered

Sasaki Associates presented their list of sites that made the preliminary cut for consideration for the new Main Library. Each site was rated based on a range of criteria that included availability, accessibility, centrality, program suitability, parcel size, and the potential to form a “civic heart”. Of 30 sites given serious consideration, 18 sites were listed as first tier sites. Further analysis and evaluation will focus on some of the more difficult issues of availability, regulatory constraints, parking, and cost. This analysis is expected to yield three to five sites of which one will be identified as a preferred alternative.

Half of the first tier sites are in the Central Square area including the top five ranked sites. Of course, cost and availability are likely to alter the rankings considerably. Notable sites were the Prospect St. parking lot at Bishop Allen Drive (NW corner), the Naggar Block (Mass. Ave and Norfolk St.), the 7-Eleven block (Mass. Ave. and Pleasant St.), the TAD-Dangle properties (Mass Ave. and Essex St., wrapping around onto Bishop Allen), the Central Sq. Post Office, the YMCA, the Police Station block, the Cambridge Gas and Light building (including the YWCA pool and one-story structure next door on Mass. Ave.), the Comm. Energy site in Kendall Square, the Sears Building in Porter Square, and the existing Main Library.

The final public meeting with Sasaki Associates will be on June 10 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the Sakey Lecture Hall of the Main Library.

4) The Replacements

Much speculation was in the air last fall about what would happen in the event that City Councillor Michael Sullivan was elected as District Attorney of Middlesex County. It was suggested that he might be forced to resign his Council seat and that a challenger in the 1997 City Council race might want to target his campaign in such a way that he might be Councillor Sullivan’s replacement after the 1998 DA race. Local pundits called this the 10th councillor strategy.

It has always been possible for a citizen to determine who would replace any given councillor in the event of a vacancy. This is exactly what happened in 1994 when James McSweeney paid the fee and was able to see and record the information on those ballots that were used to elect then City Councillor William Walsh. Under our election system, a vacancy is filled by using the ballots that were counted toward the election of the person whose seat is vacated to determine his replacement. A “mini-Count” is conducted using exactly the same rules as were used in the regular Council election except that only one person is to be elected.

Now that the ballot data is available for computer analysis, there is very little effort required to determine who would fill a given Council vacancy. Rather than focus on Michael Sullivan, especially since it is not at all certain that he would even be required to vacate his seat, here is the list of replacements for all nine of the current city councillors:

The Replacements	
Kathleen Born -->	Robert Winters (81 votes over Cunningham)
Henrietta Davis -->	Robert Winters (67 votes over Cunningham)
Francis Duehay -->	Robert Winters (72 votes over Cunningham)
Anthony Galluccio -->	Don Harding (49 votes over Trumbull)
Kenneth Reeves -->	Don Harding (248 votes over Cunningham)
Sheila Russell -->	Don Harding (93 votes over Trumbull)
Michael Sullivan -->	Don Harding (59 votes over Winters)
Timothy Toomey -->	Don Harding (136 votes over Trumbull)
Katherine Triantafillou -->	Bill Cunningham (15 votes over Winters)

5) Mayoral Runoff, Drugan Style

Earlier this year, amid the momentary controversy surrounding the election of Frank Duehay as Mayor, we had the opportunity to hear a number of proposals for how a mayor might be chosen in a manner consistent with our Council election methods and the Plan E Charter. One suggestion from Election Commissioner Rusty Drugan called for using the same preferential ballots that were used in electing the Council to determine the Mayor. Instead of electing nine people, one would only need to change the rule so as to elect one individual. The Election Quota would then be 8440. I’ll refer to this as the Drugan Method, though it is now popularly referred to as Instant Run-off. (Popular is clearly a relative term.)

If we start at the 13th Count, here’s how the horse race proceeds:

13th Count:	Galluccio 4135, Sullivan 3594, Duehay 2850, Triantafillou 2779, Born 2340
14th Count:	Galluccio 4347, Duehay 3823, Sullivan 3735, Triantafillou 3594
15th Count:	Duehay 6035, Galluccio 4699, Sullivan 3986
16th Count:	Duehay 6813, Galluccio 6649
17th Count:	Duehay 8440 Elected

One conclusion that we can draw from this is that the actual selection of the Mayor and Vice-Mayor was consistent with the choice of the voters as measured by the Drugan Method. There are

other instruments for measuring social choice that could be used and which one could argue might be more appropriate for a city-wide position such as Mayor. I will detail some of those in the next issue of this Journal.

6) May 4 City Council Meeting highlights

Several presentations marked the beginning of this meeting. First, Councillor Triantafillou presented awards to a number of individuals as part of Mediation Week. This was followed by a presentation by Mayor Duehay to Pres. Kevin Fitzgerald of Cambridge Savings Bank in honor of the bank's commitment to supporting affordable housing initiatives in Cambridge, most notably its partnership with Just-A-Start. The last presentation was delivered by Suzanne Pearce in recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Items featured during the public comment portion of the meeting were the Gregory Petition for a zoning change along Broadway in Area 4, the Polaroid/Spaulding & Slye development on Memorial Drive, the proposal to change the zoning along the Linear Park in North Cambridge and its effect on a proposed cohousing project, questionable real estate practices associated with two properties on Norfolk St. and on Porter Rd., the Baker Petition that calls for a revocation of the Planning Board's ability to grant setback waivers in East Harvard Square, a proposal to have the Planning Board be popularly elected or appointed by the City Council, the Armenian Genocide, the history of the Nazis, and trees on North Mass. Ave.

Councillor Born gave an excellent account of the need for the City to take up the question of including rooftop mechanicals in the Zoning Code. She offered several examples of buildings where the resulting buildings were less than desirable, including the recent addition to Harvard's Memorial Hall.

The City Council unanimously passed an extension of the development moratorium for the PUD-IC zone in North Cambridge, generally known as the W.R. Grace site.

On the matter of fostering small businesses

Councillor Born gave an excellent account of the issues discussed at a recent hearing of the Housing and Community Development Committee concerning steps that the City could take to maintain and foster small businesses. Principal issues are the competition between national chains and locally owned stores, the size of floor plates in buildings, and the conflicting ideals of fostering small businesses and providing low consumer prices. Particular attention was given to the need to work closely with existing property owners to achieve desirable goals. [RW - I attended and participated in that subcommittee meeting. It was one of the best I've attended in the sense that competing issues were addressed in an intelligent and nonprejudicial way. The historical role that some chains have played, e.g. Woolworth's, was acknowledged rather than dismissed.] A related Council Order called for a market survey to be undertaken, starting with the Central square area, to more accurately determine what needs are not currently being met. Councillor Davis pointed out that this could be helpful to existing business in deciding to expand their businesses to better meet the needs of residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. Many of these businesses are in no position to undertake such a market survey on their own.

On the report on the impacts of the termination of rent control

There was a long discussion about different interpretations of the recently released survey that studied the effects of the end of rent control. Councillor Born listed the major concerns expressed at a recent hearing on this matter and what other steps might next be taken, including a further look at the matter of rental units being converted into condominiums. There are conflicting accounts on this

matter. The strong rental market provides an incentive to retain units as rentals but decontrolled buildings now have the freedom to be divided and sold as condos. Councillor Galluccio pointed out that the threat of future condominium conversion restrictions could lead to a rush to file for condo conversions. He suggested that any restrictions should be phased. Coun. Galluccio also drew attention to the survey results that 25% of non-whites now occupy decontrolled units vs. 13% prior to decontrol [RW - this is not broken down among Black, Hispanic, Asian, etc. so it is difficult to draw any clear conclusions from this statistic]; and a 6% drop in households with children. He argued strongly for the need to immediately address the problem of tenants with Section 8 certificates being unable to secure housing in Cambridge. He proposed using leverage associated with tax agreements as an incentive for property owners of buildings such as the Fresh Pond Apartments, Walden Square, and 362 and 364 Rindge Ave. to house Section 8 tenants.

Councillor Galluccio also discussed the question of the universities providing housing for their graduate students. The recent survey indicated that groups of students are occupying additional housing units that were previously occupied by families and that the current economics will only contribute further to this. Councillor Reeves pointed out that this phenomenon was one of the original justifications for adopting rent control 30 years ago.

Councillor Born questioned the accuracy of the survey in its conclusion that 62% of "sitting tenants" remained in their apartments after the end of rent control. She also drew attention to the plight of those tenants who are now paying in excess of half their income on rent. [RW - I suspect that using percentages may not be the best measure of hardship and that net income after rent might be the better measure. The matter of people with income that is largely "off the books" is another issue that can never be properly measured with surveys such as this.]

Councillor Triantafillou, responding to the suggestion by Coun. Galluccio that the universities should provide more housing for their students, warned that this is a two-edged sword. Encroachment into adjacent neighborhoods is a possible consequence. She also told the tale of a Harvard student living in Harvard subsidized housing being able to save enough money to buy a condo which he now rents to four graduate students who are "going on to gentrify our neighborhoods".

Councillor Galluccio responded by saying that now that the City's housing policy is no longer dependent on a single program, there will inevitably be the need for some tradeoffs and sacrifices. He pointed to the recently passed Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance as an example of such a trade-off.

Councillor Born highlighted the recent trend of retired people moving to Cambridge after their children are grown, naming some of the Charles River buildings, Mid-Cambridge, Cambridgeport, and North Cambridge in particular.

Kendall, Central, Harvard, Porter, Davis, Alewife

There was an entertaining discussion late in the meeting about the recent trend of naming T stations after businesses and in ways that Cambridge residents might not prefer. Councillor Born called for the retention of all the old names and in a related vein bemoaned the fact that the Boston Garden has been superseded by the Fleet Center. She especially delighted in the way the subway stations are pronounced with a local accent.

Councillor Russell provided the biggest smiles of the evening when, in referring to a VFW parking lot on N. Mass. Ave., had some fun by giving as neutral and non-Boston a pronunciation as she could

muster to the words “park” and “parking” and then referred to it as a “vehicle storage area”.

Other significant items of this meeting were:

- a) The Planning Board recommended against the Baker Petition for East Harvard Square, suggesting that further refinement of the conditions under which the Planning Board could grant setback waivers would be the preferable thing to do. The Council took no action.
- b) Councillor Born submitted an Order calling for the establishment of an Open Space Acquisition Fund to be used for acquiring land for neighborhood playing fields, especially in the eastern part of Cambridge.

Scorecard: Apr 27 and May 4 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	7	0	1	2	0	2	7
Davis	4	7	1	6	0	6	1
Duehay	1	0	1	0	0	6	2
Galluccio	7	1	1	2	14	8	3
Reeves	0	0	1	0	1	5	2
Russell	1	1	1	6	2	6	1
Sullivan	6	1	1	1	7	11	7
Toomey	1	0	1	4	3	12	5
Triantafillou	1	1	0	1	4	5	3
Total by category	27	8	3	23	26	52	22

Calendar:

Wed, May 27

4:30pm The **Government Operations Committee** will conduct a public meeting to discuss the appointment of the City Clerk and the City Auditor, the fall City Council goals discussion, possible changes to the structure of the City Council meetings to enhance deliberation and a report from the City Solicitor regarding Charter Reform to change the way the Mayor is elected. (Ackermann Room)

6:30pm The **Traffic and Transportation Committee** will conduct a public meeting to continue discussions on the two reports submitted by the City Manager’s Truck Traffic Advisory Committee. (Sullivan Chamber)

Thurs, May 28

9:30am - 3:30pm **Seminar on the Environmental Implications of Utility Restructuring** featuring: Trudy Coxe, Secretary MA DEP; David O’Connor, MA Division of Energy Resources; Janet Gail Besser, Chair Department of Telecommunications and Energy; David B. Struhs, Commissioner MA DEP

Topics include: Generation Performance Standards; Conservation and Renewable Energy; Uniform Labeling Regulations; Facility Siting Requirements

(MA Department of Environmental Protection, One Winter Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Boston, MA)

For more information call Helena Boccadoro 617-292-5915
<http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/dep>

Mon, June 1

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

5:30 - 6:00pm Presentation on Transportation for Senior Citizens.

7:00 - 8:00pm Discussion of City Council goals to broaden citizen involvement and participation in city government.

Tues, June 2

6:00 - 8:30pm The **Cambridge Watershed Advisory Committee** will host a tour of the watershed for Cambridge’s public drinking water supply. Following a brief presentation on watershed protection, a bus tour of the Hobbs Brook Reservoir will take place. The tour will meet at 167 Trapelo Rd. in Waltham, a building owned by the City of Cambridge. Call the Charles River Watershed Association for details at 965-5975x231

[I called them and was placed on a wait list. Since I’ve taken (and given) similar tours before, I would be willing to take some people who could not get in on this tour in my VW Van for a comparable tour. - RW]

Wed, June 3

7:30am The **Economic Development Committee** will conduct a public meeting to discuss how to increase apprenticeship opportunities for Cambridge residents. (Sullivan Chamber)

Sun, June 7

9am to 1pm **Household Hazardous Waste collection** at cul-de-sac at end of CambridgePark Drive near the Alewife T Station. Call the Dept. of Public Works at 349-4800 for more info. (This service is restricted to Cambridge residents.)

Mon, June 8

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

Mon, June 15

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

Mon, June 22

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

Mon, July 27

5:30pm Special **City Council** Meeting (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 e-mail subscription list, send e-mail to rwinters@math.harvard.edu or mail to Editor, Central Square Publications, 366 Broadway, Cambridge MA 02139. All items are written by Robert Winters unless otherwise noted. For browser readable and downloadable versions of this and past issues, go to either the PSNA web page (<http://www.channel1.com/users/psna>) or my own embryonic effort at learning about html and all that stuff (<http://www.math.harvard.edu/~rwinters/ccj.html>).