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1) Oct 26 City Council meeting

The two dominant features of this meeting were a) the hearing and votes necessary for the City to seek Department of Revenue approval of the FY99 tax rates and b) the hearing requested by Ken Reeves on the "racial climate" in city employment. Lurking behind both hearings were the continued efforts of Councillors Reeves, Triantafillou, and Toomey to put City Manager Robert Healy and his administration into the worst possible light.

There were actually two separate meetings. The early meeting began at 4:30pm and had only one agenda item and a series of votes related to the skewing of residential and commercial tax rates within the limits allowed under state law, approving the residential exemption, and more. The City must approve its budget and all of these parameters, but officially the Department of Revenue sets the tax rate.

Due to dramatic rises in assessed valuation, tax rates were greatly reduced, though individual tax bills will vary depending upon assessment districts and other factors. The residential tax rate dropped from \$13.43 to \$11.05 per thousand and the commercial tax rate dropped from \$35.98 to \$27.25 per thousand. The City Manager reported that 96% of single-family homes, 97.3% of two-family homes, 94.7% of three-family homes, and 88.6% of condos would see a lower tax bill this fall. [My tax bill went up 31% but has been dropping for the last few years, so I can't complain.]

Particularly noteworthy was the announcement by Mr. Healy of the allocation of \$2 million to start an Open Space Acquisition Fund. It is anticipated that an entity similar to the Affordable Housing Trust will be established to determine criteria for acquisition of properties and to administer this fund. Additional funds are anticipated over time.

In response to questions from the councillors, the City Manager spelled out the City administration's commitment, financial and otherwise, to affordable housing, including \$4.5 million this year out of tax revenue this year plus pass-through and leveraged funds.

Councillor Triantafillou alternately advocated for spending more on affordable housing and more for open space in East Cambridge. Councillor Sullivan suggested that the \$2 million for the Open Space Acquisition Fund was "just throwing it in the wind." Nonetheless, the appropriation was unanimously approved.

In response to questions from Councillor Sullivan on the school population, the City Manager reported a net loss of 225 students this

year, primarily at the elementary level, and about 1000 empty seats in the elementary schools. The total school population is about 8000.

In response to inquiries by Councillor Reeves about the gap between the open space allocation and Councillor Toomey's wish that the City take the ComEnergy site by eminent domain, Mr. Healy said, "Sometimes there's a big gap between dreams and the capacity to pay."

In response to questions from Councillor Davis about revenue from new construction, Mr. Healy reported that the rise in the tax levy was eclipsed by this new revenue and that this was a primary reason for most property owners receiving lower tax bills.

It is worth noting that most councillors express simultaneous support for open space acquisition, for affordable housing programs, for holding the line on tax bills, and for controlling development, even though some of these priorities may be in direct conflict. This is one of the short-term political luxuries that comes with good economic times.

Eventually, the vote was unanimous on all of the City Manager's recommendations.

The Regular Meeting

This meeting began with the Council unanimously approving a zoning amendment affecting parcels at Churchill Ave. and Mass. Ave. in North Cambridge. The petition to reduce the allowable density originated with the Planning Board, which later recommended a higher transitional density. The Council voted for the original petition and the lower density, much to the delight of residents in attendance from the Burns Apartments.

Hearing on Race in City Employment

This was perhaps the most hostile setting the Sullivan Chamber has seen since the end of rent control. Councillor Reeves started things with a long account of incidents that have occurred recently, including the situation earlier this year at the Agassiz School and a recent lawsuit by five women alleging discriminatory practices by the City administration. He outlined his objections to equal opportunity data provided by the administration, stressing the question of how someone who supervises no one can be classified as a department head. He took aim at issues of promotion, meaningful responsibilities, and job retention for minority employees.

Councillor Triantafillou followed and detailed the recommendations made by her Civil and Human Rights Committee, suggesting that the administration has failed to respond to a number of these recommendations. She then read at length from an article on "uprooting racism" which detailed a number of ways in which racism should be recognized and addressed.

School Committee member Robin Harris was next and spoke of how she considered resigning her seat in order to pursue a class action suit against the City. She gave three examples of black people who left their jobs in the School Department and their white counterparts who remained. She told of how she has encouraged people to join in lawsuits against the City.

School Committee member Denise Simmons' remarks focused primarily on the lack of leadership opportunities for persons of color. Clare Dalton (professor at Northeastern) added her remarks which chiefly covered the gap between commitment and practice in fighting racism in the workplace.

After Councillor Reeves rounded out the presentation, public testimony was heard - most notably from a number of persons of color

(Leslie Langston, Doreen Wade, John Ute) who either were not able to secure or retain employment with the City of Cambridge. Racheal Seymour from the City Manager's Office offered a different and more positive perspective of the administration's commitment to diversity.

Councillor Galluccio's long soliloquy about class prejudice while growing up in Cambridge and his observations about race was met with a hostile response from Councillor Reeves. "I like you, but there is a level of double-speak that drives me insane! You are the principal supporter of what we have here!...You are the guardian of the status quo more than anybody else here!" Councillor Reeves then attacked the City Manager directly and with fervor, suggesting "criminality." He then tore into School Superintendent Bobbie D'Allessandro.

Councillor Galluccio followed by accusing Councillor Reeves of grandstanding rather than showing any true leadership. "If you're here just to say you don't support the City Manager, you could have done that 3 hours ago...I'm not going to call it leadership. I'm not going to call it productive or dialogue. I'm going to call it grandstanding and I'm going to call it cheap politics and I don't support it."

Councillor Reeves summed up his remarks by likening the City Manager to the Titanic. "Let's sink this one and find one that can float."

City Manager Healy then read a prepared statement outlining the City's efforts in promoting diversity in city employment. It was clear that he was not the least bit pleased with the remarks of Councillor Reeves. The School Superintendent followed with her presentation.

Councillor Triantafyllou pressed the City Manager about how he has responded to the recommendations from the Civil and Human Rights Committee. Mr. Healy described it as a work in progress and went into considerable detail, especially about a recent hire in the Department of Weights and Measures, dispelling rumors spread in recent months.

Councillor Toomey next took on the City Manager, especially in challenging some of the Manager's positions on the now-defunct Residency Ordinance and in a personnel matter in the Police Dept.

Councillor Born suggested that the City should hire "headhunters" in its efforts to bring strong minority and women candidates for City jobs. The City Manager spoke unfavorably about this proposal, recounting stories of how it had been done in the past, that it was expensive, and did not achieve good results. He recommended an alternate process that involved community members and which has worked well in the case of the School Superintendent and the Police Commissioner.

Mayor Duehay ended the hearing with a commitment to address issues of race and class during his tenure as Mayor.

[Editor's comment - Though there were some interesting moments, it was difficult to discern whether this discussion was more about solving a problem or whether it was more about running for office or trying to cast the City Manager in as poor a light as possible. It seems that some people want very much for "race and class" to be a defining theme for local politics as we head into 1999. Of course, there are others who want downzoning and development to be the defining themes. Others want to make affordable housing the big issue. We'll have to see what 1999 brings - what the public will see as a "crisis" or even as a pivotal issue remains to be seen.]

After the Storm

The Council had a discussion about public drunkenness, especially in Central Square. Councillor Reeves told of how he asked this summer to have several benches removed from Central Square because drunks were occupying them all day. He expressed some resentment of the fact that those benches were subsequently restored to the location consistent with the Central Square Urban Design Plan.

Councillor Toomey told a tale in which he suggested that Lyme Properties, the current owner/developer of the ComEnergy site, was involved in shady dealings with the Trust for Public Land (TPL). This led to Councillors Davis and Born recounting how they first came in contact with TPL over the possibility of acquiring additional open space in Cambridgeport.

2) Nov 2 City Council meeting

A presentation to Carl Barron (Putnam Furniture), Macy DeLong (Solutions at Work), and several members of Local 25 for their generosity in providing 100 mattresses for formerly homeless people marked the start of this meeting.

This was followed by extensive public testimony about an incident on Huron Ave. in which a young boy was severely injured by a reckless driver from Madison Ave. Two cars had stopped to let Conor Epsteinkraus cross when this criminal driver passed a car on the right, drove in the bike lane, and struck Conor. His mother is Rozann Kraus, well known for her work with the Dance Complex in Central Square and one of my favorite Cantabrigians. The driver received a \$75 fine.

The testimony of Rozann Kraus was captivating. There was additional testimony from 17 people, some calling for a traffic light, better enforcement, and heavier penalties. Rozann emphasized that what was most important was a change in philosophy - that facilitating automobile traffic should not outweigh the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists or further deteriorate the quality of life in Cambridge.

Council discussion in response to the testimony focused on traffic calming measures and enforcement. Let's face it, enforcement of the law requiring drivers to stop for people in crosswalks is long overdue. If the Cambridge Police were to show the same initiative in this as they have in cracking down on bicycling violations, we'd be getting somewhere.

Hearing on Report of Welfare Reform Task Force

Mayor Duehay and several others presented a report on the status of welfare reform in Massachusetts and what steps the City of Cambridge might do to assist people who are about to lose their benefits. The law puts a cap of 2 years of benefits in any 5 year period and Dec 1 is the date when approximately half of welfare recipients in Cambridge will lose their benefits. This is about 200 residents.

The principal conclusions by the task force are:

- a) Cambridge should put additional effort into education and training for people going off welfare in order that they may qualify for something better than just the bottom-end jobs;
- b) Childcare capacity should be expanded at all ages;
- c) The City should work with the State to secure additional housing vouchers;
- d) Support mechanisms should be established to help these people navigate the various bureaucracies; and
- e) Time spent in training should count toward the work requirement required under the law.

It should be noted that Mayor Duehay dedicated an enormous amount of attention, time, and effort to this matter. He has always been eager to address issues related to any shift of responsibilities from the federal and state governments to municipalities.

3) Elizabeth

Much has been said over the last few decades in Cambridge about the battle between tenants and their landlords. Inevitably the stories cast one group as the bad guys and the other as the good guys. I'd like to tell the true story of what happened with the man who was once my landlord and from whom I purchased my three-family house.

I moved to Cambridge in February 1978, shortly after the roads were finally open from the Blizzard of 78. I found an apartment within a few days with three roommates - graduate students at MIT. What I didn't know at the time was that my apartment was rent-controlled. I didn't even learn what that meant until a few years later. My apartment was on the first floor, another apartment was on the third floor, and the second floor was operated as a rooming house for women - one of whom was named Elizabeth.

Elizabeth had lived there for many years, since before Frank, my landlord, had purchased the building. My principal recollection of Elizabeth is of a chain smoking elderly woman who dyed her hair jet black and who subsisted on white bread and little else. Frank was a roofer and carpenter who bought and maintained several buildings in Cambridge. We got along well and I helped him out with the building when there were late-night emergencies and the like.

Around 1985, Frank was interested in selling the building and asked if I'd be interested in buying it. Due to some of the nuances of rent control, it was much less of a hassle for him to sell it to me and he was willing to sell it for a reasonable price. However, the only way for it to work financially was for me to rent out the two apartments and to occupy and renovate what was the rooming house on the second floor. Though most of the occupants were willing to move, Elizabeth did not wish to do so. I told Frank that I would not put an old lady out and could therefore not buy the building. Though Frank offered to relocate Elizabeth at the same rent, she would have nothing to do with it.

After some weeks or months, Elizabeth said she was willing to move into a condo that Frank owned next to Harvard on Cambridge St. Thus it was that in the late summer of 1985, Elizabeth moved out. Before I signed the purchase and sale papers, I asked for Frank's word that Elizabeth would be properly taken care of, and he gave his word that it would be so. I moved upstairs and spent the next several months making the place habitable. Elizabeth continued to pay her \$25 per week rent to Frank for her condo next to Harvard.

Over the next few years, I would occasionally help Elizabeth by picking up a loaf of bread and whatever else she asked and Frank would regularly pick up groceries for her. Though I fell out of touch with Elizabeth, Frank continued to hold true to his word and visited and assisted Elizabeth every week.

Eventually, Elizabeth's health deteriorated. Frank paid her medical expenses as her life drew to an end. When Elizabeth finally passed away, it was Frank who paid all the expenses.

What I learned only last year is that there was yet another chapter to the story of how this man kept his word. While her health was failing, Elizabeth told Frank that she would like to go back to England after her death. Frank comes from Ireland and has always had a soft spot for the old country, so this was a request that struck a chord with him.

Elizabeth's body was cremated, but Frank wanted to do something in the spirit of Elizabeth's request. And so it was that Frank and a friend built a boat large enough to carry Elizabeth's ashes and sufficiently seaworthy to begin the journey. They took the boat and the ashes to the coast of Maine, to a place where Frank once took me and where he described to me how much it reminded him of the Irish coast. They set the sail on the boat and, with an eastward win, released the boat and watched as it sailed off into the ocean, eventually to be taken by the waves.

There are some people in this world that certainly know what it means to keep their word. I still see Frank occasionally and I remain grateful for all the help that he gave me after I bought my building. I spend my nights in the room that was once Elizabeth's room.

My experiences with this man who was once my landlord have left me with a perspective of what is possible when it comes to landlords

and tenants. It is a perspective I cannot shake, even when I see the other extreme of landlord-tenant relations. It has made it impossible for me to dismiss landlords in the way that all too many tenant activists like to do. The truth is that there are many landlords in Cambridge who are just as honorable and true to their word as Frank was with me and with Elizabeth.

There will always be terrible landlords and terrible tenants as well as good landlords and good tenants. I can only hope that activists on both sides of the relationship bear in mind that there is and always has been room to be reasonable with each other and to be true to your word.

4) Nov 9 City Council meeting

Though there were no major votes before the Council on Nov 9, there were several very interesting communications and reports submitted for this meeting. The real blockbuster was the long-awaited proposal from Eviction Free Zone (EFZ) of an ordinance that would regulate condominium conversion within Cambridge. Not surprisingly, this was the subject of most of the public comment at this meeting.

I was pleased to see a number of forthright, informative responses from the Community Development Department (CDD) in the Manager's Agenda. The tone of these communications was refreshingly direct in response to criticism by various councillors and citizens about such topics as the proposal for bike lanes in the redesign of North Mass. Ave. The basic message: We had an inclusive and exhaustive process that led to good designs and we stand by the process and its conclusions.

What makes this so refreshing is that the CDD has shown hesitancy in many of their reports and documents in recent years. It seemed to me that every proposal had the word "Draft" permanently attached to it, a sign of unwillingness to commit. I thought the Growth Policy Document was a good document that grew out of an inclusive process, yet every copy I've ever seen says "Draft" on it as if to suggest that the "Final" version was not yet written. The same thing was true of the report a few years back on the Alewife area. The report made sense, yet ongoing controversy in that part of town seemed to cause city officials to back away from any clear statements. Instead we saw a long series of zoning petitions, lawsuits, and a facilitated process that never really had any chance of satisfying either side in that battle. It would be easy to point a finger at CDD, but I know how much of a role the City Council plays in this inability to resolve land use policy issues.

Cambridgeport and East Cambridge Development

After a brief period of public comment, the Council used two reports from the Manager and a recent Globe article on the recently passed IPOP as the basis of a discussion about development and whether the City is as hostile to business as the Globe article seemed to suggest. The CDD reports clearly showed that Cambridgeport, with a series of projects now underway at University Park, is the most intense development zone in the City. In addition to 902,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area (GFA) currently occupied, there is an additional 1,172,000 sq. ft. of proposed development - a total of 2.1 million sq. ft. GFA.

Other big development proposals include the ComEnergy proposal with 1.3 million sq. ft. of new development and the MXD District (Kendall Square, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority) with 564,000 sq. ft. of new development (for a total of 2.3 million sq. ft.). For the sake of comparison, the Cambridgeside Galleria has an existing GFA of 468,052 sq. ft. Though much controversy has surrounded proposed development at Alewife, the total amount of new development there under any of the current proposals is only a small fraction of what is being proposed in Cambridgeport, East Cambridge, and Kendall Square.

These realities are fueling current talk of "equity" in development impacts and the call for creating open space in East Cambridge. Councillor Toomey compared the ample supply of open space in West and North Cambridge to the minimal amount in the eastern part of the city, especially East Cambridge. He later suggested a link with "race and class."

Another CDD report on current development projects over 40,000 sq. ft. led to some lively discussion. (The threshold for the IPOP was raised to 50,000 sq. ft. after the request for this report was made.) Several councillors used this topic to criticize the City Manager and the Chamber of Commerce for their comments in the aforementioned Globe article. Councillors Triantafyllou and Reeves were openly critical of the Planning Board and of the local press coverage of the IPOP. Councillor Triantafyllou was insistent that the City Manager should be issuing press statements that are supportive of policies that the City Council has approved.

Councillor Born emphasized the temporary nature of the IPOP. She compared the expiration date in less than a year to the 367 year history of Cambridge, saying that a one-year breather is not cataclysmic. Councillor Russell reminded her colleagues that temporary measures such as the IPOP have been routinely extended and inquired about the schedule of the Citywide Growth Management Advisory Committee (CGMAC). Acting CDD Director Beth Rubenstein responded with estimates that the committee's work would optimistically mesh with the expiration date of the IPOP.

Councillor Galluccio went toe-to-toe with Councillor Toomey about their conflicting perspectives on why the Neville Manor home-rule petition failed in the state legislature. Galluccio pointed the finger at Rep. Marie Parente, the Chair of the Local Affairs Committee. Toomey put the blame on the City Manager and hospital officials.

Councillor Triantafyllou characterized as insulting and patronizing remarks by Councillor Galluccio in which he apologized to the City Manager for remarks made by other councillors. She said of Galluccio, "I don't know if you're liberal or conservative. I don't know where you are in your spectrum of politics. It changes on a daily basis."

In what was one of the low points of the entire year, Councillor Triantafyllou then launched into a verbal assault of this writer for the unspeakable crime of nodding my head in a way that she did not approve. "Mr. Winters, you don't need to make faces at me either from the audience!" When I responded to her that she should get over it, she followed this with the memorable words, "You do that, too. Everybody likes to make faces here. Go right ahead. You can write that in your little newsletter!" Diplomacy at its finest.

Late in the meeting, there was some discussion of the problem of public drunkenness in Central Square (and elsewhere), of outreach by CASPAR, and of how these problems relate to homelessness. Councillor Reeves spoke of how the closing of the Bradford and the Prospect Buffet contribute to public drinking in Central Square. There was consensus that a hearing should occur on these topics, possibly with the Public Safety Committee.

As a person who occasionally has a beer out of doors with friends, I hope this conversation focuses on public drunkenness rather than on the relatively benign act of having a beer or two with friends, legal technicalities notwithstanding.

Some Unsolicited Opinions from the Editor

If you'll pardon the digression, here are a few observations that I made as the development debate unfolded on Nov 9:

- a) It's not fair to equate the eastern and western ends of Cambridge in terms of how much development should be permitted. East Cambridge and Kendall Square have a long history of industrial use, are in close proximity to downtown Boston, and are doubly served

by mass transit. If and when the Urban Ring transit line is built, the eastern end of the city will likely be triply served by mass transit. The western edge of the city borders on Belmont and Arlington, hardly a hot development zone now or at any time in the foreseeable future.

- b) Open space needs in East Cambridge would be better met by acquiring parcels closer to the existing residential neighborhood. This could involve discontinuance of some streets bordering on these parcels in order to create more usable space - an East Cambridge Common, if you will.
- c) I'm getting weary of the term "open space." It suggests to me more of an opposition to buildings than of a positive plan for beneficial use. If you want a park, call it a park. If you want athletic fields or playgrounds, say so. If you want an urban wild or a wetland or a forest or a beach, identify it accordingly. A positive plan for something is preferable to a negative reaction to anything.

5) Nov 16 City Council meeting

There were two major developments at this meeting. First, the Living Wage Campaign presented its proposed ordinance that would mandate a minimum wage of \$10 per hour for all employees of the City as well as any employees of City contractors. Testimony was heard from a number of people (most notably Dave Slaney, Natalie Smith, and Judy Somberg) on the issue. It was noted that 10 individuals and 35 organizations contributed over the past 10 months in shaping this proposal. The matter was referred to the Ordinance Committee for a Dec 1 hearing.

The second major item was the Council's unanimous vote in favor of the PTDM Ordinance (Parking and Transportation Demand Management) after a series of amendments. The basic idea of the ordinance is that it would require that any development proposal be accompanied by a plan to manage the demand for parking and transportation. Large companies would have to submit for approval a comprehensive plan that would shift transportation use away from single occupancy vehicles (SOV's). Small companies would have the option of using an off-the-shelf plan from the City.

Amendments to the original PTDM proposal include an option for a company to correct things when out of compliance, an appeals process, provisions for when a property is sold, a 60 day limit for the City to approve or deny a PTDM plan, and a provision that the ordinance be reviewed and recertified after a three-year period.

Councillor Born pointed out that only 36% of MIT employees have parking spaces and that this indicates that PTDM requirements are not unnecessarily tough on businesses. Beth Rubenstein noted that a reduction in excess of 15% of SOV's would not be an unreasonable expectation for a Cambridge business.

In describing how this ordinance relates to the Interim Parking Freeze that is being phased out, Bob Healy called upon Deputy City Solicitor Don Drisdell, who he called "Mr. Freeze." Mr. Drisdell responded by saying that he's actually a very warm individual.

Just prior to the unanimous approval of the PTDM Ordinance, Councillor Toomey proposed an amendment that would require the PTDM officer to be a Cambridge resident or to become a resident within 6 months of being hired.

Another interesting topic that came up at this meeting began as a discussion about putting up bulletin boards at parks and playgrounds. The City Manager's principal concerns were that there should be a design standard, criteria for what would be acceptable use of the boards, and maintenance of the boards.

Councillor Born expressed satisfaction with the design used in Raymond Park and Councillor Reeves made positive comments about

the signs that the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association (MCNA) uses in that neighborhood. Mayor Duehay suggested that it would be good to have someone from a local neighborhood association be the person responsible for putting up and taking down notices. Councillor Davis responded that not all neighborhoods have such active associations.

[Editor's Note - I have a rather strong opinion about this. I've lived in Mid-Cambridge for over 20 years and have been active in civic matters for over half of that time. I don't feel that I have any input whatsoever in what goes up on those Mid-Cambridge signs. In fact, I feel that all decisions on what can be publicized on them rests with one person, and that person is not a neutral party by any stretch of the imagination. I once had one of those signs in front of my house and took it down because of this. To give authority to any neighborhood association as to what can and cannot be publicized on bulletin boards in a public park would be a terrible idea. We don't need ward bosses in Cambridge.]

Several councillors noted the passing of Bob Simard, a 49 year employee of the Department of Public Works who died unexpectedly.

6) Nov 23 City Council meeting

This meeting opened with the announcement that a son was born to City Councillor Michael Sullivan and his wife Denise on Nov 20. The boy's name is Michael Anthony Sullivan and he weighed in at 6 pounds and 13 ounces. Plans for his first election campaign in the year 2021 were incomplete.

Public comment was dominated by stories of rent increases at several properties in the vicinity of Harvard St. and Inman St. Perhaps the worst tale was of a rent increase from \$600 to \$1400 per month. Residents of another building protested a 20% jump in rents but failed to say what their current rents were. That the owner was a prominent fundraiser for the Democratic Party made for some rather pointed comments from the Council and the public.

After testimony from John Pitkin of a loophole in the IPOP ordinance that could allow for construction of sizable parking garages, the Council referred to the Ordinance Committee an amendment that would require a Special permit for any parking facility in excess of 150 cars during the term of the ordinance.

Councillor Russell submitted an order calling for the City to look into the possibility of using the former site of the North Cambridge VFW for NOCA, a group of North Cambridge artists, for gallery space and arts classes. A number of residents spoke in favor of this.

Perhaps the most informative part of this meeting was the report and subsequent discussion on the financial status of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The City will have expended \$13.25 million for the CityHome Initiative by the end of the current fiscal year, including \$4.5 million this year.

In response to Mayor Duehay's question about how much additional money these funds have leveraged from other sources, the City Manager estimated that the multiplier is about 4. In other words, City expenditures have directly resulted in more than \$50 million toward affordable housing programs within Cambridge plus additional funding from state and federal sources. Roger Herzog of CDD estimated that this translates into about 1500 units of housing being preserved as affordable since the end of rent control through the CityHome, the Home program, and Community Development Block Grants.

There was some discussion of a report from the City Manager describing plans to site a track facility at Danehy Park and a football field and field house at Russell Field. Current plans call for the Russell Field project to be in the FY2000 budget. Funding for the track facility will be listed in the 5-Year Capital Plan in the FY2000 budget. It was a surprise to no one when Councillor Toomey suggested that the

Manager was announcing these plans in order to evade Toomey's proposal to take the ComEnergy site by eminent domain for uses that would include a football/track facility.

In response to a report from the City Manager on how the City has responded to recommendations for the Council's Civil and Human Right Committee, Councillor Reeves again tore into the Manager. Said Reeves, "I don't know how worse you can manipulate actuality. I'm not THAT stupid."

Councillors Davis and Reeves engaged Suzanne Rasmussen of the CDD about the proposed redesign of Lafayette Square (where Columbia St. meets Mass. Ave. and Main St.). It was announced that the State has now acquired the gas station at that location and that the City is now beyond the 75% design stage. The new road alignment connecting Main St. and Sydney St. will pass through the site of the gas station and a plaza will be created. The circuitous connection from Columbia St. to Mass. Ave. may lead to some dissatisfaction from residents and the City is planning on advertising the new design at a number of nearby locations.

The last portion of the meeting featured discussion of a couple or Council orders concerning the exit of Mo Vaughn from the Red Sox and of the New England Patriots from Massachusetts. Councillors Born and Russell expressed disdain for the money lust of major league ballplayers while Councillor Reeves said Mo should get whatever he can. Councillor Galluccio pointed a finger at House Speaker Finneran for the loss of the Patriots, causing Councillor Toomey to Charter Right the order.

The tale of this Council meeting would not be complete without mentioning that Councillor Davis was able to successfully perform the Heimlich maneuver on a choking victim during the meeting. Nice going, Henrietta - above and beyond the call of duty.

Scorecard: Oct 26, Nov 2, 9, 16, 23 City Council Orders

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

Councillor	P	I	R	M	D	C	A	F
Born	4	2	0	4	0	3	1	0
Davis	10	9	0	10	1	7	0	0
Duehay	1	1	0	2	3	14	2	0
Galluccio	9	9	1	5	16	21	2	1
Reeves	10	8	0	4	4	9	5	1
Russell	4	1	1	8	9	8	3	0
Sullivan	4	4	0	6	12	5	4	0
Toomey	3	2	1	3	10	11	5	0
Triantafillou	0	1	0	0	1	3	1	0
Total by category	45	37	3	38	36	77	20	2

These five meetings were more policy oriented than usual, but were repeatedly sullied by interpersonal bickering and strategic undercutting which I can only assume is a prelude to the 1999 election season. The fact that death resolutions were outnumbered by four other categories means that there is a greater focus on policy developing or wonderfully good health breaking out all over Cambridge.

On a comparative basis, I would commend Councillors Davis and Galluccio above all for their considerable focus on policy-related orders and requests for relevant information. Though Councillor Born filed fewer such resolutions, they were generally very significant. Councillor Triantafillou showed her usual zeal in pressing hot buttons, but functionally barely showed up. For a person who so regularly characterizes herself as a policy-maker, she filed a grand total of zero

policy-related resolutions and hardly anything else. And, yes, I will put that in my little newsletter.

7) Yet Another Look at the 1997 Ballots

Not long ago, a CCJ subscriber asked me to look over the 1997 City Council ballots to determine who was named on the most ballots. This reminded me that one of the councillors had asked for this a long time ago. So, without further ado, here's how the nine are ranked in terms of this most basic measure of approval. Bear in mind that if a voter ranked all 19 candidates, then this information would imply as much approval for the 19th choice as the 1st choice. With that caveat, here goes: (There were 17,232 ballots cast)

Frank Duehay	9179	53.3%
Sheila Russell	8926	51.8%
Anthony Galluccio	8890	51.6%
Kathy Born	8737	50.7%
Michael Sullivan	8493	49.3%
Katherine Triantafillou	8374	48.6%
Henrietta Davis	7971	46.3%
Tim Toomey	7435	43.1%
Ken Reeves	7205	41.8%

8) Civic Tidbits

Check out the proposal from CUE (Citizens United for Education) about the Cambridge Teachers Contract at:
<http://people.ne.mediaone.net/richardf/cue/contract.htm>

To those who would suggest that Central Square is not what it used to be, consider the following awards from the Boston Phoenix:

PEARL ARTS - best "googly eyes and doll heads"
 MYSTERY TRAIN (Central) - best used records
 GARMENT DISTRICT - best place to spot a velvet Elvis
 SALVATION ARMY - used furniture
 ECONOMY HARDWARE - best hardware store
 PLOUGH & STARS - best bar for solo lunch
 MARY CHUNG - best place to overhear techies talking about Star Trek and best Chinese food
 LA GROCERIA - best garlic
 MOODY'S FALAFEL PALACE - best falafel
 PHO REPUBLIQUE - best Vietnamese food (unfortunately, it recently burned down - but we are eager for its return)
 MIDDLE EAST - best place to be mistaken for a rock star and best club for rock and best Middle Eastern food
 ASMARA- best African food
 STAR MARKET & TRADER JOE'S - best supermarkets
 HARVEST CO-OP - best natural food store
 GREEN STREET GRILL - best gourmet food/live music combo
 CANTAB LOUNGE- best urban juke joint
 CAMBRIDGE CITY HALL - best historic building
 CENTRAL SQUARE WORLD'S FAIR - best public event

Given these wonderful awards, and mindful of the arrival of Buck-A-Book (in the former Phoenix Coffeehouse space), the Army/Navy Store (replacing Usable Furniture) and Buzzy's Roast Beef (replacing Harvard Donut), how can anyone allege that Central Square is not as funky as ever! Cleaner, maybe, but still funky. --- Bob Boulrice

Calendar:

Tues, Dec 1 5:00pm The **Ordinance Committee** will conduct a public meeting for further consideration of the Planning Board's proposal to amend the Zoning for the area around Linear Park (Frankelton, II). (Sullivan Chamber)

6:00pm The **Ordinance Committee** will conduct a public hearing to consider a petition filed by Peter Jelley, et al to rezone land in the area bounded by Putnam Avenue, Blackstone Street, Western Avenue, and River Street from O-3 to C-1. (Sullivan Chamber)

6:30pm The **City Council** will conduct a public meeting to discuss the Living Wage Ordinance. (Sullivan Chamber)

6:00-8:00pm First and Third Tuesdays of every month is **Tenants Night** at CEOC, 11 Inman Street. Sponsored by the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes and the Cambridge Eviction Free Zone. For more information call 868-2900.

7:30pm **Planning Board** meeting - IPOP hearing on traffic criteria for Special Permit - ComEnergy discussion - Frankelton 2 - possible WR Grace recommendations (City Hall Annex, 3rd floor)

Wed, Dec 2 5:30pm The **Public Safety Committee** will conduct a public meeting to discuss Awaiting Report Item #4 of October 19, 1998 on the status of an ordinance requiring exterior lighting on rental properties. (Sullivan Chamber)

7:00pm **Citywide Growth Management Advisory Committee** (CGMAC) will hold a meeting on Transitional Zoning. This will affect those who live or own property at the edge of a zone next to a higher and denser zone. (Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Mass Ave., next to the YMCA.)

Thurs, Dec 3 8:00am Joint meeting of the **Environmentally Desirable Practices Committee** and the **Recycling Advisory Committee**. (Ackermann Room, City Hall)

Sat, Dec 5 3:30-5:00pm **RALLY FOR HOUSING JUSTICE** - March through Central Square to stop Holiday Evictions and support tenant organizations. Sponsored by the Cambridge Eviction Free Zone and the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes. For information call 868-2900.

Sun, Dec 6 4:00-6:00pm Annual Meeting of the **Harvard Square Defense Fund**, featuring "A Public Discussion" focused on how Harvard Square might be protected by a Harvard Square Historic District. (First Congregational Church in Cambridge, Mason and Garden Streets)

Mon, Dec 7 5:30pm Regular **City Council** meeting (Sullivan Chamber)

Tues, Dec 8 6:00-8:00pm First and Third Tuesdays of every month is **Tenants Night** at CEOC, 11 Inman Street. Sponsored by the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes and the Cambridge Eviction Free Zone. For more information call 868-2900.

Wed, Dec 9 10:30am The **Human Services and Youth Committee** will conduct a round table discussion on the policy issues relating to youth programming. (Ackermann Room)

Mon, Dec 14 5:30pm Regular **City Council** meeting (Sullivan Chamber)

Tues, Dec 15 6:30pm **The Traffic and Transportation Committee** will conduct a public meeting to discuss pedestrian crossings. (Sullivan Chamber)

Thurs, Dec 17 7:00pm **Porter Square Neighbors Association** meeting (Metropolitan Baptist Church, 16 Beech St.)

Mon, Dec 21 5:30pm Regular **City Council** meeting (Sullivan Chamber)

Feb 3, 1999 7:00pm CGMAC will hold a meeting on "The Big Picture." (Cambridge Senior Center)