
Cambridge Civic Journal

Issue 22

July 14, 2000

BACK TO BASICS- PART ONE

The *Cambridge Civic Journal* is produced by Central Square Publications, 366 Broadway, Cambridge MA 02139. All items in this issue are written by Robert Winters. Submit articles and comments to Editor@rwinters.com.

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0) Foreword

After many false starts and distractions, here's CCJ Issue #22. This is one of several issues published in rapid succession and covering events in and around City Hall during the first half of this year. Though most of the words were written some time ago, lack of inspiration and more than a little civic cynicism left them unedited until very recently. If you're looking for late-breaking news, please skip ahead a few issues.

When I started producing this publication, I saw it primarily as an extension of what I had been doing for more than a decade - going to City Hall and paying attention to my local government. Since then there has been a new twist. With the explosive growth of the Internet and new and better search engines, it turns out that this publication has become something of a "paper of record" regarding civic affairs in Cambridge. Try typing in a name or word having to do with civic life in Cambridge into www.google.com or another good search engine and you'll see. This is a scary responsibility to bear.

Regarding my civic cynicism, rest assured this is a temporary condition brought on by geese and councillors. Monday nights at the City Council just aren't as much fun as they used to be. You'd think that conspiracy theorists, goose-fanatics, and a fair share of lunatics would be enough to keep a person entertained. Even the twisted monologues of "National Officer in Charge" Peter Valentine or the inevitable Robert LaTremouille no longer do it for me. I'm still waiting for the real deal.

I thought I'd get some satisfaction when the controversy over Council and School Committee pay raises came up. Instead, the contempt for the public shown by some city councillors during the process made me want to walk away. The contempt for city councillors shown by some members of the public compounded this. There really were some important issues worth discussing related to the salaries and the responsibilities of Cambridge city councillors under our Plan E Charter. It was all some of could

do just to force the councillors to make statements before voting. There was never any opportunity for meaningful discussion. Being permitted to step up to the microphone for three minutes of griping is a poor substitute for analysis and discussion.

Enough rambling for now. Several civic matters of consequence lay ahead this year - the City Manager's contract, a proposal to give councillors personal staff to use or abuse, and a possible resolution of some of the citywide zoning controversies of the last few years. I guess I'll stick around. The search engines are waiting.

Robert Winters, CCJ Editor

1) Reports and more at the CCJ website

The website of the Cambridge Civic Journal (www.rwinters.com) has become a repository of numerous reports that you may find useful. These reports are also available on request via e-mail and US Mail. For example, campaign finance report summaries for all 1999 local candidates are available, as are extensive analyses of the 1999 and 1997 ballots for City Council and School Committee. You can also get copies of every issue of this Journal since its inception in November 1997. For those who like to follow what's happening at the City Council, succinct guides to each meeting are available several days prior to each meeting. Between issues of the Journal, you can often find brief reports on matters of current interest.

If there's something of a civic nature that you would like posted at the CCJ website, ask and it shall be given you. Links to other civic sites will be added on request. One major part of the CCJ mission is to fill in the gaps in City government and the local papers. Thankfully, both the City administration and the Cambridge Chronicle are doing a much better job with public information these days, so the gaps are fewer.

One area in which you may find the Journal and the CCJ website lacking is in coverage of the Cambridge public schools. This is not for lack of interest. It's just that it's very much an insider's game and this writer is just not much of an insider when it comes to the School Department. It is probably the one City department that warrants the most scrutiny at \$16,000 per student and questionable academic performance. If you'd like to be a CCJ staff reporter covering the Cambridge schools, the job is waiting for you. The salary is nonexistent, but freedom and satisfaction is plentiful.

If you'd like to cover the schools or other civic matters for the CCJ, or if you'd just like to submit an occasional feature article, send e-mail to Editor@rwinters.com. - RW

2) Under Cambridge

There has been some controversy over the past few years about a proposed redesign of Massachusetts Ave. through North

Cambridge. The surface improvements coincide with major sewer work in that part of Cambridge. While the focus among advocates has been on the removal of portions of the existing median (along with the addition of new crosswalks, bike lanes, and other amenities), an interesting story lies underground. The project has been delayed because new information has led to dramatic increases in cost estimates for improvements - from an initial estimate of \$12.1 million in the 1994 MWRA plan (adjusted to \$14.8 million in March 1998) to as high as \$72 million. Since much of the cost is to be borne by the MWRA, the Authority and the City of Cambridge have had to take another look at the costs and benefits of these infrastructure improvements.

A March 1998 MWRA report noted the discovery of a previously unknown combined sewer overflow (CSO) tributary to Alewife Brook not included in the Authority's CSO plan. By August 1998, it was discovered that actual sewer and drain system conditions differed significantly from the plans provided to the MWRA during the Authority's planning efforts. Areas originally believed to contain separate storm and sanitary systems in fact were found to have combined sewers. Areas tributary to each outfall and the flow patterns within the tributary areas were different than were assumed during the planning phase. As a result of this new information, the MWRA and the City of Cambridge agreed in 1999 to reassess whether sewer separation was still cost-effective relative to the other alternatives by using up-to-date cost estimates, results of flow metering, and revised sewer system and receiving water modeling.

Each combined sewer outfall in the region is assigned a code. By May 2000, the revised plan called for complete sewer separation in the CAM 004 tributary area, separation in the CAM 400 tributary area, relief of dry weather connections to the interceptor system at CAM 002, CAM 401B and SOM 001A and relief of an existing siphon at MWR 003. It also recommended no further sewer separation in the CAM 002 tributary area. [Maps and descriptions available on request.]

On May 24, 2000, the MWRA's Board of Directors approved the revised recommended plan and funding approach for CSO control in Alewife Brook. The Board also authorized MWRA staff to submit the revised plan to federal and state regulatory agencies for approval and to enter into discussions with EPA and DEP regarding the plan and potential schedule. The MWRA and Cambridge were to discuss the recommended plan and schedule with EPA and DEP at a meeting scheduled for July 14, 2000. The MWRA anticipates that it will be necessary to prepare a Notice of Project Change (NPC) to submit for MEPA review and expects to conduct a public meeting in the Alewife Brook area during the NPC comment.

3) January at the Council

Jan 10 City Council meeting

One of the first items at this meeting was Mayoral Ballot #2, moved by Councillor Decker. The result was identical to that of Inauguration Day:

Councillor	Choice for Mayor
Kathleen Born	Born
Jim Braude	Born
Henrietta Davis	Born
Marjorie Decker	Born
Anthony Galluccio	Galluccio
David Maher	Sullivan
Ken Reeves	Sullivan
Michael Sullivan	Sullivan
Timothy Toomey	Galluccio

Public Comment was dominated by advocates for the Larkin petition (construction moratorium in a large area of eastern Cambridge and a concurrent planning study) and those trying to block a curb cut on Kinnaird St. Ralph Yoder referred to "an orgy of development on the Alewife floodplain" in his protest of Oaktree Development's residential project in that area.

Kathy Born spoke about the MDC granting permission to allow new owners of the AD Little property (O'Neill Properties), who are leasing back to ADL, to continue to use a parking lot on MDC land. [A petition campaign has subsequently been organized calling for this approval to be rescinded.]

Councillor Davis spoke about the status of the proposed condo conversion ordinance. [This was the subject of a May 24 meeting of the Ordinance Committee at which was discussed some of the legal problems that led to the invalidation of Boston's version of the ordinance.]

Councillor Galluccio spoke on Kathy Born's order for "assistance to the city councillors to better serve constituents and do research and the like." This matter remains at the Gov't Operations Committee where several alternative strategies have been discussed ranging from personal staff to a research pool. [It must be noted that when Council salary increases were approved in May and June, there was a noticeable decrease in the cries for additional staff.]

Because a Mayor had not been elected at this time, the matter of whether pivotal committees could meet was a topic of discussion on a number of occasions at this meeting and the next. Appointments to Council Committees are made by the mayor. The Ordinance and Finance Committees are committees of the whole and could meet with date, agenda, and interim chair determined by majority vote of the Council. Several people, including myself, have focused on the need to form Council committees as the principal reason why it is imperative that a mayor be elected very early in the Council term.

Jan 24, 2000 City Council meeting

In addition to a third mayoral ballot, the highlight of this meeting was the passage of a version of the Larkin Petition after some unusual amendments of which no one on the City Council could be proud. On the bright side, the City Manager notified the Council that he would be making a substantial \$500,000-\$600,000 budget request for a planning study for eastern Cambridge to be done in conjunction with the 18-month moratorium period of the petition.

Public comment was dominated by the Larkin Petition, the Kinnaird St. curb cut, and several people protesting rent hikes. In what has become typical this term, the Council's new "ten minute recess" after Public Comment and before the City Manager's Agenda lasted 30 minutes.

The Council action on the Larkin Petition for an 18-month construction moratorium in a large area of eastern Cambridge occurred in two segments with a period of time between segments for councillors, the Law Department, proponents, and affected property owners and developers to hash out some of the details.

First, the Planning Board recommendations were substituted. These were sensible recommendations that allowed for conversion of existing commercial buildings to housing use as long as there was no more than a 10% increase in the bulk of the building. The proposed threshold of 20,000 sq ft or 20 housing units remained except for such conversions. There were two changes to the boundaries of the affected area designed to accommodate a Southern Energy facility (environmental and economic benefits) and another property that had already gone through an extensive review process and had received an IPOP Special Permit.

Freshman Councillor Jim Braude gave his first indications of the legal acumen that will likely characterize his service on the Council when he focused on the legal implications of granting these exemptions. He continued in this vein when Councillor Galluccio introduced an amendment that would grant a significant exemption to a few parcels in a manner that could constitute illegal spot zoning. [Reverse spot zoning means singling out one or more parcels for unfavorable treatment.] Councillor Reeves raised some similar legal questions about zoning with respect to "named entities".

Deputy City Solicitor Don Drisdell detailed what is considered in determining whether a zoning amendment could be considered spot zoning: (a) benefit and detriment to the property owner and the public, (b) size of the classified area, (c) character of the area adjacent, and (d) whether the change is the result of community planning. The Planning Board took these into consideration in recommending their two exemptions. A moratorium is viewed differently than a permanent zoning change in that all the benefits of community planning are likely not available in that case. "The notion of rational planning objectives is something to keep in mind," said Mr. Drisdell.

There was some discussion of the desirability of mixed-use districts and of possible hindrances to housing under the Larkin moratorium.

Councillor Galluccio's cryptically titled "Telecommunications Amendment" was introduced. This exempts a two-block area in which one or more "Telecom Hotels" are proposed. It was understood by all that the Larkin Petition would fail without Galluccio's vote unless this exemption was made. These telecommunications facilities generate little traffic and few jobs. They also add very little vitality to the streets on which they are located. Les Barber did note, however, that if the economy were

to change, these buildings could be converted to office buildings.

Councillor Braude was very incisive when he asked whether the Galluccio amendment specifically addressed telecommunications use or did nothing more than exempt a plot of land from the Larkin petition with no mandate that it be for telecommunications. Mr. Drisdell acknowledged that this was indeed the case.

Councillor Galluccio defended his amendment by arguing that these uses were targeted for this area because of its proximity to the ATT switching station. Councillor Braude asked why the amendment did not specifically name telecommunication uses. To this Councillor Galluccio countered that if telecommunications use was generally exempted rather than just in these particular parcels, then everyone would seek exemption by proposing telecommunication use. Councillor Davis noted that naming telecommunication use would be cleaner but to allow it throughout the area would not be good. She did suggest that the amendment as proposed suggested spot zoning.

Councillor Born noted that a premium of desirability was being placed on telecommunications use in this amendment, this had never been expressed as a desired goal of the Council. She listed housing, particularly affordable housing, and neighborhood-based retail as expressed goals. "The low traffic is the only benefit. There are no jobs. It takes up space where 20 families could live. This is not the use I would single out as most desirable. This is a tiny piece in the middle of a very large donut. I'm completely baffled why we choose these particular parcels to exempt. It fulfills no rational planning goal."

Councillor Decker stated that she would most likely support the amendment in order to get the necessary seven votes to pass the Larkin petition. "If this is what it takes, and petitioners can accept it, I'll vote for it." She then asked whether this would preclude housing being built there. Mr. Drisdell noted that housing would be restricted to the 20 unit cap, but that no housing was permitted in that two-block area under the current zoning. To this Beth Rubenstein pointed out that this is one district in which housing as a permitted use is being contemplated. [Note: The zoning change to allow this was ordained at the June 19 meeting.]

At this point there was another ten-minute recess that lasted 50 minutes. Upon returning, Councillor Sullivan introduced his amendment that would have exempted a larger area, but which would have been legally more defensible and which exempted an area which was for the most part already built out.

The Council disposed of some other business while the language was worked out. In particular, the disposition of the Kendall Square Fire Station was finally settled. Councillor Sullivan proposed that the \$1.35 million from the sale be designated for open space projects in East Cambridge, such as doubling the size of Ahearn Field.

To this, City Manager Healy committed to assigning the proceeds of the sale to the Open Space Acquisition Fund with the understanding that it would be used in the abutting

neighborhoods. Councillor Toomey asked for clarification of this to which the Manager indicated that the money would be used in East Cambridge, Area 4, and the Wellington-Harrington neighborhood. Mr. Healy further indicated that since there have been recent purchases of the Squirrel Brand properties and land adjacent to the Maynard School in Area 4, he expected the money would go north of Binney Street and in east Cambridge "however you define it."

Councillor Reeves remarked on his resolution on the upcoming marriage of former City Councillor Bill Walsh to Mary Hayes of County Cork, calling it "the miracle of love."

During a brief discussion about possibly balloting for mayor, Councillor Braude remarked, "Several colleagues have suggested putting the vote off until the next meeting. I intended to vote tonight. What would be worse would be to vote at 11:35 at night who is to chair the City Council and to be a voting member of the School Committee. If we do not vote on the mayoral issue tonight, I would urge that we take it up early next meeting rather than put it off to midnight. It's far too important for the public. Bring it up in the light of day or at least early in the meeting." [Note: The final election of the mayor took place in the wee hours of February 15 at about 1:20am with virtually no one from the public present or watching the meeting on TV.]

Discussion on amendments to the Larkin petition resumed with Councillor Decker introducing a substitute amendment that would allow Galluccio's exemptions but which would mandate that no less than 20 units of housing be built on said land. This led to questions from Councillor Born on the ownership of the parcels. Don Drisdell noted that, as drafted, any one of the owners who constructed a building of 100,000 sq ft or more would have to build the housing. He further noted that the amendment would only require the housing if a project exceeded 100,000 sq ft. If subdivision led to a project of less than 100,000 sq ft, then no housing would be required.

Councillor Braude pointed out that there are jurisdictions where if an employer attempts to circumvent the law by pushing employees an hour below a threshold at which they qualify for benefits, that they cannot get away with it. He asked if there was an analogous law in this circumstance. As an example, he asked what would happen if a 120,000 sq ft project became two 60,000 sq ft projects. Mr. Drisdell suggested that there was language in the zoning ordinance that could accomplish this goal. To this, Braude proposed a friendly amendment to Decker's substitute along the lines of Mr. Drisdell's suggestion.

Following more than a few accusations back and forth among councillors and another recess (to chill out), Councillor Sullivan's proposed amendment was defeated 3-6 with Born, Maher, and Sullivan voting YES.

Decker's amendment as amended by Braude passed 7-2 with Maher and Sullivan opposed. The Larkin petition as amended by the Planning Board recommendations and the Galluccio-Decker-Braude amendment was then ordained on a 7-2 vote with Maher and Sullivan opposed.

Councillor Davis followed with a late order calling for a zoning amendment to allow housing in Industrial Districts in the city. [This was eventually passed on June 19.]

4) February 14 City Council meeting

Galluccio elected mayor - Cornerstone Cohousing gets OK

There was a very large agenda for this meeting, primarily due to the cancellation of the meeting a week before due to the death of former Mayor Thomas Danehy. Two very significant events occurred at the meeting - resolution of the Frankelton-Brown-Linear Park zoning fiasco and the election of Anthony Galluccio as Mayor of Cambridge.

Public comment was extensive, dominated by a very impressive turnout by supporters and future residents of Cornerstone Cohousing on Harvey Street. Special Permit approval by the Planning Board two years earlier spurred conservative forces in North Cambridge to file zoning petitions and lawsuits in a failed attempt to prevent this housing from being built. Future residents were made to bear significant costs due in large part to mixed messages sent by the City Council during the course of multiple filings and expirations of zoning petitions. Resident efforts actually began seven years earlier.

The recitation was consistent throughout - "I support the Planning Board recommendations to the original petition and the proposed Cornerstone compromise agreement." Michael Muehe and others were especially powerful in their testimony in support of the accessibility and visitability of this housing for persons with disabilities.

Like a bad movie, the Kinnaird St.-Putnam Ave. curb cut fiasco had yet another airing. Fortunately, after much discussion about shrubbery, fences, and grades, the matter was finally put to rest in accordance with the original recommendations from the Traffic Department. Finis.

Several people, including myself, urged the Council to elect a mayor so that Council committees could be formed. Those who stayed until 1:30am got our wish when Anthony Galluccio was elected on a 6-3 vote and David Maher was elected Vice-Mayor.

After public comment and a recess, Mayoral Ballot #3:

Councillor	Choice for Mayor
Kathleen Born	Born
Jim Braude	Born
Henrietta Davis	Born
Marjorie Decker	Reeves
Anthony Galluccio	Galluccio
David Maher	Sullivan
Ken Reeves	Reeves
Michael Sullivan	Sullivan
Timothy Toomey	Galluccio

In discussing an appropriation for real estate appraisals and design services related to library siting, there was a very funny interchange between Michael Sullivan and Bob Healy. Councillor Sullivan said "It's been four years. I've been elected twice, met someone, got married, have one kid and another on the way. Hopefully before they're of reading age....." To this, Mr. Healy wryly responded "You've made great progress."

There was much mayoral wrangling going on in Council office, the Ackermann Room and elsewhere. The tension was palpable. In contrast, Councillor Reeves' chatty manner suggested he had no further role to play in the mayoral vote. Councillor Braude seemed almost oblivious to the tension. It was clear that it was only a matter of time.

At 10:56pm, Toomey moved to Mayoral Ballot #4:

Councillor	Choice for Mayor
Kathleen Born	Born
Jim Braude	Reeves
Henrietta Davis	Born
Marjorie Decker	Reeves
Anthony Galluccio	Galluccio
David Maher	Sullivan
Ken Reeves	Reeves
Michael Sullivan	Sullivan
Timothy Toomey	Galluccio

My sense was that this ballot exhausted all prior commitments and set the stage for final election of a mayor. Councillor Reeves joked that the mayoral vote was taken "in order to keep our audience".

Final discussions on the Frankelton Petition resumed in fits and starts as several "five minute" recesses each lasted about 45 minutes while amendments were considered simultaneous with last-minute mayoral vote-wrangling.

In the end, an amended Frankelton petition was passed which gave the petitioners some of the downzoning they sought and which left the Cornerstone Cohousing people basically free and clear. [They'll soon be breaking ground.]

At about 1:18am, the decisive Mayoral Ballot #5:

Councillor	Choice for Mayor
Kathleen Born	Born
Jim Braude	Galluccio
Henrietta Davis	Galluccio
Marjorie Decker	Born
Anthony Galluccio	Galluccio
David Maher	Galluccio
Ken Reeves	Born
Michael Sullivan	Galluccio
Timothy Toomey	Galluccio

Anthony Galluccio took the oath of office with his voice cracking and near tears. In his brief speech after the oath, he said, "Mom, I love you more than anything else in the world. If you are up right now, then you're as sick as I am. I thank those who stuck by me through thick and thin. I thank the entire Council. I promise each and every one of you that you'll not regret electing me mayor. My door will be open to all. I look forward to serving for you as your colleague and friend."

The Vice Mayoral Ballot went as follows:

Councillor	Choice for Vice-Mayor
Kathleen Born	Born
Jim Braude	Davis
Henrietta Davis	Davis
Marjorie Decker	Maher
Anthony Galluccio	Davis
David Maher	Maher
Ken Reeves	Maher
Michael Sullivan	Maher
Timothy Toomey	Davis, changed to Maher

When Toomey changed his vote to Maher, the election was cinched and Councillor Born moved to make the vote unanimous for David Maher.

Political junkies have played and replayed various accounts of what happened in this election, but the entire matter will barely make a footnote in local political history. The only thing that ultimately matters is whether this City Council with this Chair and Vice-Chair can act cooperatively and productively.

5) March at the Council

March 6, 2000 City Council meeting

This was the first regular meeting of the City Council following the election of Anthony Galluccio as mayor. [There was a Roundtable meeting (no votes or Cable TV) on February 28.] Notification of Council committee appointments was made at this meeting. A table of the committees is included at the end of this issue. Featured attractions during Public Comment were:

- Stash Horowitz and Elie Yardin argued in favor of the IPO extension to Oct 2 as unanimously recommended by the Planning Board.
- Jason Adkins spoke on the potential community impacts of the conversion of the Cambridgeport Bank and public stock offering.
- One disgruntled neighbor from The Great Kinnaird Street Curb Cut Fiasco accused Mayor Galluccio of having a conflict of interest in the vote based on significant political contributions by the developer to the Galluccio campaign.

There was a tense discussion on a Manager's Agenda item on the costs for job advertising and outreach. In the hot seat was Personnel Director Michael Gardner. Councillors Reeves and Toomey were exceptionally hostile in their remarks. Deputy City Manager Rossi and Mr. Gardner explained some of the difficulties in recruiting and retaining people in the current economy.

During a discussion about acquiring new equipment for the Municipal Channel, Councillor Braude asked if there had ever been an assessment of who the TV audience was for Council meetings and other productions on the Municipal Channel. Councillor Sullivan followed by joking about "the ratings of this show and whether we would get cancelled next season."

There was some classic political posturing during a discussion on several communications about a proposed

CASCAP housing redevelopment at 8 Bigelow St. Councillor Davis asked for a report on the distribution of affordable housing projects in Cambridge. The principal basis of concern among neighbors has to do with problematic residents, i.e. residents of social service agencies that are almost exclusively located in the Central Square area. Nonetheless, the response from some councillors focused on affordable housing.

Councillor Decker said, "I would love to see Brattle St. and Lexington Ave. with affordable housing projects. We should embrace it wherever it is developed." She expressed resentment about "what some people perceive to be social services projects."

Councillor Reeves followed with "It would be interesting if there was a movement when there were too many affordable units in an area. I'm trying to save those moments when I am incensed.... Don't treat affordable housing residents as though they are there at the largesse of the community. I don't see how distribution info will help in this."

Councillor Born noted that she has taken to reading the Globe real estate section. She told of an ad for a 14 room "lodging house" with a great location near Inman Square. The ad boasted that the gross annual income at \$94,000 a year is greatly under the market, the implication being that a new owner could raise the rents. She called this "the death knell for those tenants." She spoke of another ad for a 3-unit building "condo documents all ready to go." The expectation is that it would be purchased by a developer who would then sell at a large profit.

During remarks on the closing of The Fishery in Central Square and of its owner Harry Katis, Councillor Reeves remarked of Mr. Katis, "Despite being a Republican, he has many friends on the left. He hosts events for both the CCA and the Republican Party. Maybe there's a message in this." [This is one of a number of occasions this year where Councillor Reeves has tried to associate the CCA with the Republican Party. Indeed, Mr. Reeves has elevated fundamental attribution error and guilt by proximity to an art form.]

Late in the meeting, Councillor Braude spoke at length on the matter of the stock offering by Port Financial Corporation, i.e. the Cambridgeport Bank. Noting that there are now over 10,000 Cambridge depositors at the bank, he suggested that after conversion the principal responsibility of the bank would be to its stockholders and that there were potential impacts on affordable housing and lending. He gave examples of bank conversions like this that have lead to being swallowed by a non-local bank. He made reference to the 194 pages of documents sent to depositors by the bank "that would need a battery of lawyers to understand what the documents mean." He reported that he stood outside the bank and spoke to 37 depositors and only two knew about the conversion and stock offering.

March 20, 2000 City Council meeting

Public Comment was dominated by advocates for the North Charles Community Eruv and by tenants of several buildings on Dana St. with rapidly escalating rents.

Peter Valentine ("National Officer in Charge") ranted about his lack of opportunity to be heard at City Council meetings. He

called Roundtable meetings a violation of state law. He claimed to have asked police to be present to protect his right to speak and that the City Manager told them to keep out of it. He then claimed that unmarked military planes were attacking the people. [It is pathetically ironic how Valentine was allowed to rant at length at this meeting about his inability to speak.] Valentine made reference to the Council's incompetence and charged them with treason. He then complimented Mayor's Office Chief of Staff Terry Smith, something that Mayor Galluccio will surely never let Terry live down.

Fellow club member Roy Bercaw followed with remarks on the City purchase of thermal imaging devices. He claimed that these would be used for police surveillance to look through walls to see what people are doing in their homes, a violation of the 4th Amendment.

After a "ten-minute recess" that lasted 24 minutes, the Council passed the order approving the North Charles Eruv and moved on to the approval of the water and sewer rates for the next year.

Consumers will see a 7.6% combined increase in their water and sewer rates for the coming year. This is a result of a 12% increase in the water rate and a 5% increase in the sewer rate. Water rates are projected to increase about 7% each year for the next five years. Sewer rates are expected to increase each year somewhere between 6% and 10% for the next five years.

City Manager Healy pointed out that water usage is less today than it was 10 or 15 years ago. The City continues to promote conservation. Though there are enormous capital costs due to the construction of the new water treatment plant, water costs are mostly fixed. Consequently, conservation causes rates to rise. Sewer costs for can be lowered through conservation and diversion of storm water away from treatment can also yield savings.

Information provided by the City Manager showed that the average single-family water/sewer bill is projected to be \$661. The two-family average is \$805 and the three-family average is \$1190.

Councillor Davis asked whether the Water Department tipped off owners of small buildings that received huge bills due to possible problems. City Treasurer Jim Maloney expressed his belief that this was done now. [A leaky toilet can cause water/sewer bills to rise a thousand dollars or more.]

Sam Corda, Managing Director of the Water Department who started on March 6, was introduced at the Council. Sam worked from 1991 to 1997 as Manager of Engineering and Program Development for the Cambridge Water Department and has worked in the development of a sewer program in Holliston since 1997.

Councillor Born asked about the option that property owners have to install separate water service for outside irrigation. This service is not subject to any sewer charges. Mr. Healy said there was a charge for the installation of separate meter but that this cost would be recouped in savings over time. Jim Maloney added that there is a permit fee for this option.

Councillor Sullivan drew attention to the fact that the major cause of increase in the water rate is new water treatment plant. He noted that this plant is expected to last for at least a hundred years and that MWRA water is more expensive and of lesser quality. Mr. Healy reminded the Council that the new water treatment plant is largest capital improvement project in the City's history. He said the City has built up a reserve in the water fund in recent years and that this is now being drawn down to minimize the financial impact of the project. Water treatment plant now more visible, quite attractive. He added that the year after next the debt service from Payson Park will drop off. This can be used to mitigate rate increases or to invest in the distribution system.

Councillor Sullivan asked whether we looked into the possibility of using any excess capacity to sell water to the MWRA. Mr. Healy responded that though they have not closed the door on this possibility, the MWRA has not had the need.

Another look under Cambridge

On another infrastructure matter, Mayor Galluccio asked about sewer separation in relation to Alewife Brook. He said that somebody had called to say we were dumping into the Alewife Brook. Mr. Healy pointed out that we are ahead of Arlington in addressing the CSO problem. He said that Cambridge is well ahead of the curve in addressing this, that the design work is complete, and that the project can now go forward. Deputy City Manager Rossi said that Cambridge was positioning itself for MWRA grants and that "we are right on target, right where we want to be."

Mayor Galluccio whether there would be improvements in the capacity of the sewer system in the Alewife area and was assured by Mr. Rossi that this would be the case. Mayor Galluccio asked how much of the costs would be borne by the MWRA. To this, Mr. Healy explained that there are two separate issues. There is MWRA reimbursement for major projects to allow rainwater to flow from street to the river. He said that there is no MWRA reimbursement for correcting illicit connections (by private contractor). He noted that we are 90% complete on correcting the illicit connections in the city.

Councillor Born asked whether it was the case that before we commenced sewer separation in North Cambridge there was household sewage flowing into Alewife Brook. Mr Healy responded that in early days, the solution to pollution was dilution and that we are now paying for this. "We cannot use rivers and streams as repositories for sewage."

Councillor Born further inquired if when we are finished storm drains will continue to flow into Alewife and if all the sewers under North Mass. Ave. empty into the Alewife Brook. Mr. Healy responded that storm drains will continue to flow to the Alewife Brook and that sewage would be separated.

The other end of town

Councillor Davis asked about funding for Lafayette Square improvements and the Cambridgeport Roadways Project. Mr. Healy reported that the TIP funding for the C-Port part of project has been subsumed by Big Dig and that he was trying to get Lafayette Square prioritized to be funded out of the local

monies. It was one of the Central Artery's commitments to Cambridge.

Councillor Davis further inquired about the possibility of burying utility wires in projects like this. To this Mr. Healy said that the utility companies have the law on their side here. They have right to add surcharges whenever they are made to bury these lines. It's a PERMANENT surcharge. He said that while we are looking into shared conduit agreements, he expects that those utilities that are above ground will stay above ground.

In regard to a communication from the Manager regarding MIT giving \$3 million toward an \$8.5 million sewer project in and around Mass. Ave. near MIT, Councillor Toomey contended that the project would benefit MIT exclusively. He noted that the amount of money coming into university is unbelievable and that we should send a message to MIT to pay more. Councillor Reeves inquired about who bears the costs of water and sewer improvements for large developments such as Forest City. Mr. Healy noted that in the case of Forest City, we had a 1/3 - 1/3 - 1/3 agreement with MIT, Forest City, and the City of Cambridge. He said that in that case the proposed development could not be handled by the existing infrastructure. On Cambridgepark Drive, the City paid for the road and the developer paid for the water and sewer infrastructure.

Councillor Reeves asked whether the City was obligated to pay for infrastructure for new developments. Mr. Healy replied that this was probably not the case, but in many poor communities it's not an issue. Regarding the MIT sewer contribution, Mr. Healy said that on the basis of volume, \$3 million out of \$8.5 million is probably to our advantage since their fraction is likely less than 3/8 of the total volume. He noted that there still is a "betterment assessment" provision on the books under which the City could charge by linear frontage, but that this was more appropriate for suburban subdivisions and that it was more of a nuisance and a political nightmare.

There was some additional discussion about the impacts of this project on the affordable housing on Brookline Street and on the need for infrastructure improvements in Area Four. Mr. Healy said that this was the end of the pipeline. If clogged it backs up to Cherry and Pine Streets, so this will help them.

Councillor Toomey asked the Manager to relay the Council's concerns on MIT's share of the funding in light of recent gifts to the universities. To this Mr. Healy pointed out that all of the large gifts to these institutions are tied to specific purposes. "The donor intends this for brain research, not sewer construction."

It was noted with sadness by several councillors that Oscar Cyr, father of former city councillor Ed Cyr had passed away. A resolution had been introduced at this meeting in recognition of his 50th wedding anniversary.

David Maher noted the birth of Paul George Sullivan, the second son born to City Councillor Michael Sullivan and his wife Denise. Councillor Sullivan noted that shortly after he was born, the census form arrived. He said that both of his sons are better campaigners than he is.

Speaking on his policy order calling on the City consider depositing its funds with a bank other than Fleet Bank, Councillor Braude noted, "The average CEO at the start of the 90's made 150 times the average worker. This has grown to 430 times the average worker. Fleet Bank fired 4000 people as part of its \$13 billion merger. The next day they filed a statement that the CEO would be taking home \$20 million for that year and \$15 million for its president. The bank says this is the industry norm and what it takes to be competitive. If they were to take only \$1 million each, they could hire back 750-1000 workers. The City should not be supporting these institutions." The vast majority of the operating funds of City of Cambridge are deposited with Fleet Bank.

Councillor Decker spoke of the housing troubles of tenants on Fairfield Street and Dana Street. "If I was not on the City Council, I'd probably be looking elsewhere to buy a place. Most of us on the Council are priced out. I talked to someone who bought 20 years ago and who charges \$350 and \$550 for rents. Just because you can charge a lot doesn't mean that you should. I will be periodically asking people not to gouge your rents."

Councillor Braude, speaking on the same subject said, "Sitting here and listening to these tenants and of their fear is quite sobering. When facts are as compelling as they are, we

have to do far more than sign letters and place phone calls. If we can establish a track record as standing up as nine on confiscatory rents, landlords may think twice. All nine of us have an obligation to get in to these as deeply as we can."

Councillor Reeves urged everyone to attend a March 29 hearing at the State House on S2048, enabling legislation that would allow Cambridge to continue offering full employee benefits to domestic partners of city employees. Cambridge was one of the first cities in Massachusetts to enact this and a great number of corporations have followed suit. He noted that this was a good way to attract topflight employees.

There was a small squabble at the end of this meeting over a late order from Councillor Davis asking the City Manager to direct staff to monitor implementation of the City Manager's goals and for the monitoring of City Council priorities. Councillor Decker vehemently asserted that it was the Council's job to do this and that staff should be used for other purposes. Councillor Born explained that this was consistent with the plan developed last term for referring goals to specific committees. Councillor Davis noted that this was a reorganization of how Council does its business and a change in culture.

The proof, as they say, will be in the pudding.

City Council Committees 2000-2001

Committee	Members	Staff	Meeting Dates (as of July 14)
Ordinance	Born (Co-chair), Maher (Co-chair), committee of the whole	Drury, Lopez	April 13, May 10, May 24, June 5, June 7, June 12 (11 hearings)
Finance	Sullivan (Chair), committee of the whole	Drury, Lopez	March 23, March 29(2), April 26, May 3, May 9 (6 hearings)
Government Operations, Rules, and Claims	Braude (Chair), Davis, Maher, Sullivan, Toomey	Drury	May 2, May 17, May 25(2), June 14, June 21(2) (7 hearings)
Health and Environment	Davis (Chair), Born, Braude	Lopez	April 26, May 11 (2 hearings)
Neighborhood and Long-term Planning	Decker (Chair), Born, Maher	Drury	March 21* (1 joint hearing)
Housing	Braude (Chair), Born, Davis, Decker, Maher	Drury	March 21 *, May 16(2) (3 hearings, one joint)
Economic Development, Training, and Employment	Davis (Chair), Decker, Maher	Drury	June 15 (1 hearing)
Public Safety	Sullivan (Chair), Davis, Decker	Lopez	No hearings
Human Services	Reeves (Chair), Decker, Maher	Drury	No hearings
Civic Unity	Decker (Chair), Born, Reeves	Lopez	No hearings
Public Facilities, Art, and Celebrations	Born (Chair), Davis, Sullivan	Drury	June 7(2) (2 hearings)
Transportation, Traffic, and Parking	Davis (Chair), Braude, Toomey	Lopez	April 4, April 6 (2 hearings)
Cable TV, Telecommunications, and Public Utilities	Maher (Chair), Reeves, Sullivan	Lopez	June 22 (1 hearing)
Veterans Committee	Toomey (Chair), Decker, Maher	Lopez	No hearings