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# Cambridge Civic Journal

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## SPRING AND SUMMER 2000

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### Foreword: Long time gone

It's been a very long time since the last issue of this Journal appeared. Call it a vacation or what you will, but do cut some slack to the freelance civic guy who does it for nothing and has a job and a life. That said, here it is: The Return of the Cambridge Civic Journal.

Though neither the press nor the City website has paid much attention to it, one of the most significant milestones in the City's history occurred at 6:30pm on Friday, March 9, 2001. That's when the last of the three interconnections between the MWRA water distribution system and Cambridge's own water system was closed and the high water mark of a public investment in excess of \$70 million and the restoration of a quality water system was reached. Early tests showed the water to be of superb quality, ten times the clarity of MWRA water and not a trace of trihalomethanes.

Another item that did not receive much media attention was the end of the Cable TV show "Cambridge InsideOut," hosted by Glenn Koocher, Sandra Graham, Marty Foster, Barbara Ackermann, and Tom Rafferty. This program ran for 12 years and was, arguably, the only credible Cable TV program covering local politics and civic affairs. The only other option for the program was to go to CCTV, but the costs and time demands for arranging crews every week were not practical. Besides, CCTV has rarely been able to rise above the "Be Live" standard more appropriate to forgettable characters like Bob LaTremouille, Vince Dixon, Roy Bercaw, Ralph Lopez, and those WWF guys.

On these pages I have generally offered detailed accounts of City Council and other civic meetings and an occasional dose of analysis of civic affairs. This and the next several issues will be more synopsis than analysis simply because so much time has elapsed since the last issue. I hope to get back into greater detail in the future, but the Readers Digest condensed versions will have to suffice this time.

Though I would characterize much of what has transpired at City Hall over the last year or so as quite boring, there have been some major decisions such as the siting decision for Main Library and most of the Citywide Rezoning. There were significant pay raises for councillors and school committee members that went almost unnoticed by the public. It's now an election year, so I offer the following accounts as some sort of imperfect record to consider as November approaches.

*Robert Winters, CCJ editor*

### 1) April 5, 2000 Special City Council meeting (Library)

This was one of several special meetings in 2000 on the siting of the Main Library. It featured a brief history of the Library 21 process, the recommendation of a facility of 90-100,000 sq. ft. from the Sasaki Report, an overview by Roger Boothe of CDD on the siting, and presentations by four architects of conceptual designs for these sites. Dennis Carlone presented a new conceptual design for the Broadway site; George Metzger described a plan for the "7-11 site" diagonally across Mass. Ave. from City Hall; Eric Pfeufer presented a design concept for the Prospect Street site at the corner of Bishop Allen Drive; and Hubert Murray described a design and complex implementation plan involving the YMCA and the Central Square Post Office that he calls the "Civic Heart" option.

City Manager Robert Healy estimated that building the expanded Main Library on the current Broadway site had a cost of \$24,950,000, including funding for temporary placement of library functions. The 7-11 site had an estimated cost of \$32,800,000, but there was not a willing seller. Estimates for the Prospect St. site ranged between \$36,500,000 and \$38,800,000. The architect for the YMCA/Post Office proposal gave a figure of \$34,900,000 but acknowledged that there may be other factors to be considered.

Post Office official Tom Russell, responsible for properties in New England and New York, said he was willing to listen, but that he had only just learned of this meeting that morning. He expressed significant concerns about cost. Mayor Galluccio joked, "So an outright donation is out of the question, I guess?"

Public Comment was extensive. James Roosevelt opened and spoke on behalf of the Board of Library Trustees. He was followed by Fran Wirta, Nancy Woods, Nancy Nyhan, Francis Spinks, Phyllis Stefanov-Wagner, Sara Mae Berman, George Despotos, George Metzger, David Szlag, Ed DeAngelo, John

Gintell, Elie Yardin, Bob Richards, Jane Richards, Geneva Malenfant, Julia Gregory, Vince Dixon, Paul Schlaver, Decia Goodwin, Bill Jones, James Williamson, Albert Puell, and Katherine Dooley. A number of those testifying served on the Library 21 Committee.

Councillor Sullivan raised the question of whether zoning relief would be necessary at all of the sites. He would later bring in a motion to amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit a library to be built in all zones. That amendment was approved Sept 5, 2000.

Councillor Braude asked about relocation of the Library during construction, of expansion possibilities, and of traffic comparisons among all the proposed sites. Councillor Maher asked about possible impacts on existing housing units at two of the proposed sites. Mayor Galluccio appeared to be lobbying to keep the YMCA/Post Office site on the table in spite of its cost and seeming complexity. He also spoke of the absurdity of not sharing auditoriums and other resources at the Broadway site, calling it an insult to taxpayers.

## 2) April 27, 2000 Special City Council meeting (Library)

This was a working meeting without public comment. It opened with an update from the City Manager. Regarding the YMCA proposal, he reported on meetings with representatives from the YMCA. The largest issue involved "Central House," consisting of 128 single-room occupancies (SRO's) that are tied to tax credits and will need to stay in the Y until 2008 or else a \$4.5 million penalty must be paid. Reconstructing those units would cost an additional \$8-10 million and, according to Mr. Healy, would not be feasible to move prior to 2008. He said the SRO's were not in one isolated part of the building and that it would not be possible to construct the Post Office in the Y building without moving the SRO's. "In my opinion," he said, "though we respect what the Y does, tying it into this project with all the complications does not appear to be feasible."

Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi reported on meetings with the owners of 65 Prospect Street, East/West Enterprises. The City made an offer to them for dialogue and discussion, to see if there would be interest. They were very interested and would accept an offer, a scenario where the City would buy the property for \$3 million and pay the replacement cost for parking for 173 vehicles, estimated at an additional \$5.2 million. They also own the other parking lot across Prospect St. Their plan is to develop that as a parking facility with ground floor retail. They would partner with the City in this venture. Principal problems to overcome would be constructability, environmental issues, and parking during construction. A joint feasibility study would be necessary and the property owner would be willing to pay a share. This would not be an adversarial land-taking.

Councillor Braude raised the issue of how wedded the City was to the number of parking spaces in each of the proposals. Councillor Davis also noted the inconsistency between the number of parking spaces at the different proposed sites. Mr. Rossi answered that the parking requirements were not the same at the various sites. Councillor Born added that parking

was not the only criteria and that there could be a difference in operating costs between the Prospect St. and Mid-Cambridge sites. Mr. Healy suggested that operating costs would vary possibly 10% up or down.

Councillor Born remarked that these two sites were about \$10.5 million apart, a lot of money, and that it might be different if the difference were only \$5 or \$6 million. Councillor Braude suggested that if an adjustment were made to require the same number of parking spaces and if renovation costs were factored in, the gap might be down to \$8 million.

The Council then went into Executive Session for about 40 minutes. At its conclusion, the Council reconvened briefly and took two significant actions.

First, Councillor Sullivan moved to have the City Manager draft a zoning amendment to allow for municipal library use in every zoning district and to allow that any required dimensional relief could be obtained through a Special Permit from the Planning Board.

On this motion, Councillor Born emphasized that although she would vote for this language to be drafted, "this in no way implies my support for any particular zoning amendment or any particular site. It is not fair to allow this amendment to tip the scales in favor of any one site."

Councillor Sullivan's amendment passed on a voice vote. He then moved to take the "7-11 site" out of further consideration. This passed on a voice vote and the meeting was adjourned.

## 3) May 1, 2000 City Council meeting

This was a very brief meeting, expedited by the desire of councillors to attend former State Rep. Alvin Thompson's wake at St. Bartholomew's. Though the discussion was brief, several significant matters did take place: (1) An Ordinance Committee report on a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to include housing as an allowed use by special permit in industrial districts was passed to a 2nd Reading. [This was ordained on June 19.]

(2) The proposed IPOP extension was passed to a 2nd Reading. [This was ordained on May 15.]

(3) The proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance for a Historic District in Harvard Square were passed to a 2nd Reading, but the issue remained in the Ordinance Committee. [This matter later failed to get the required votes for ordination, but an alternate proposal to create a Neighborhood Conservation District in this area eventually did pass.]

Councillor Davis had an order proposing to give access to the Hanson System by the public and a telephone number to call in their complaints. The Hanson system is what is used internally by the City to track routine maintenance items. [My prediction is that most people would still call city councillors for this stuff and councillors would be happy to deal with them (and take credit for all repairs). A handful of other residents would clog the system with hundreds on complaints, real and imagined.]

#### 4) May 2, 2000 Government Operations Committee meeting

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss staffing and other administrative needs of the City Council. It seemed very unusual that all nine councillors attended this meeting considering how sparse the attendance generally is at Council subcommittee meetings.

The estimates given for City Council staff were as follows:

- (1) \$390,250 for a low-level, bare bones proposal.
- (2) \$157,450 for 8 part-time staff, no benefits.
- (3) \$72,300 for one legislative research assistant.

Mr. Rossi said this was tried briefly about 10 years ago with interns.

Michael Sullivan voiced concern about keeping in touch personally with his constituents and getting enough things for this person to do for 37.5 hours per week. He said he prefers to take a closer look at what the existing staff do. Jim Braude expressed concern about legal support for councillors. Council staff would formally be working for councillors rather than for the Manager, a fundamental deviation from the Plan E Charter.

Bob Healy noted that under the Charter, the Mayor or five councillors today can request a legal opinion directly of the City Solicitor. He gave examples where this was done regarding the Billboard Ordinance and in matters related to the Big Dig. He noted that he has not seen much conflict in this. He emphasized that this form of government is deliberate. The Council is strong as a deliberative body, but not as individuals. He said that the Charter does not envision City department heads acting as staff to the city councillors.

Mr. Rossi noted that there was once a Clerk of Committees and that such a position could take care of policy research for the Council committees. Michael Sullivan suggested that first the five employees of the City Council be looked at. He suggested that the City Clerk's Office could support the Council committees, but that a part-time person a few days per week might be helpful. He bemoaned the fact that the City Auditor has never taken on the responsibilities laid out in the City Charter.

Henrietta Davis focused on the paperwork load and how there's not enough time to answer the mail. Marjorie Decker spoke defiantly as she recounted her time as a legislative aide in the State House. She said it was absolutely clear that there's a need for staff for the Council, arguing that, "every order that I do puts a burden on staff" and "this is a no-brainer."

Mayor Galluccio, who had a personal staff assistant as Vice-Mayor, the cause of some controversy, said that the Council would be better served if they each had a dedicated staff person. He sang the old song of the "non-independently wealthy councillors" and said that 95% of the time is taken up responding to calls and letters. He proposed that all councillors and staff be given their own office space and said, "I'm very committed to the idea of full-time staff."

Tim Toomey said he supported part-time staff at a minimum and that ideally he would want a full-time staff person. He said he was insulted at the suggestion that there would be a conflict of interest at election time, saying, "people would have us at

the Ethics Commission in an instant." [Note - From this observer's point of view, it is absolutely clear that personal staff for councillors would directly or indirectly be working on behalf of the reelection of councillors. This is exactly what happens at the State House.] Ken Reeves said, "When I visit Toomey at the State House, there are 500 persons working for him." He called it "cute to say that we don't need staff when they don't know what the job is" and said the only question was when he could get additional staff and space.

Jim Braude spoke in support of additional staff, saying he had "disrespected scores of people" due to not responding to calls. David Maher said "the jury is still out, slightly." Michael Sullivan agreed that there is an issue of space for councillors.

On the issue of space, Rich Rossi suggested making use of the Assessor's Office and the Retirement Board space. Kathy Born said that if she found her job to be too much, she could hire her own staff person, only she would have to pay for it out of after-tax money, unlike an employee of a business. She suggested higher Council pay with the option of paying for a staff person out of this additional pay. The option would remain for a councillor to act as a "full-time councillor" without staff. Jim Braude said that a councillor could lend his or her campaign the money for the staff person.

Henrietta Davis expressed her desire for additional support in the Council office and in the City Clerk's office. She said that "people feel disrespected by us." She made reference to a former councillor "who had a law office and staff to return letters, etc." Ken Reeves said that when he first joined the Council he was paid \$30,000 and that he took \$20,000 of that to pay someone to be his staff. He added, "I would like the flexibility of having someone after hours. I have three phones. One had 83 calls on it. People call me on all three phones." He reiterated that he would like someone "who could work at home with you."

#### 5) May 8, 2000 City Council meeting

It was at this meeting that the proposal for substantial City Council and School Committee pay raises arrived in the form of an innocuous communication from the City Manager that made no reference to the pay raises in its description.

Public comment featured:

Joe Joseph spoke in opposition to the proposal to allow housing as an allowed use in industrial districts. He asked, "Any idea what this would mean if this went to full build?"

The inevitable Robert LaTremouille talked about destruction of the habitat of white geese at and near Magazine Beach. "This is outrageous! These are the most beautiful assets that this City has on the Charles River." [No, he wasn't joking. These white geese have been the subject of much public comment since, and the whole matter has become a conspiracy theorist's dream.]

Robert Winters (that's me) asked that the proposed pay raises be delayed until the matter could be researched and a hearing held. [The hearing never happened.]

John Gintell spoke in favor of the allocation of funds to fully assess the Prospect Street site for the library. On the pay raises,

he said that a public hearing is definitely needed and questioned the wisdom of the Council changing its own salary. "Any change should be applied to the next Council. Before raises are awarded, you should look at comparables."

Elie Yardin said he was not opposed to pay increases if it meant getting good government. He suggested a deliberate attempt to keep the public misinformed and that the Manager may have proposed the salary salaries out of fear that he may become superfluous if councillors started assuming more of their duties. "It is this cynicism that produces apathy with the public," he said.

There was some discussion of an \$80,000 appropriation for additional studies on the Prospect Street alternative for siting the Main Library. Councillor Sullivan commented on the feasibility of the Prospect St. site for other municipal uses. Councillor Born compared some of the costs between the Broadway and Prospect St. alternatives.

City Manager Healy talked about a possible \$1.5 million relocation cost during construction should the existing site be chosen. He also talked about other possible uses for the current Main Library building were it not to be the Main Library, such as a repository for archives or School Department headquarters.

Councillor Braude said that he had received calls referring to extensive use of the Broadway site by high school students, but that he found there to be virtually no such use.

Councillor Reeves said, "I have no secret position on what I think should happen with the Library. I've heard statements that 'I haven't enough information' or 'I'll never have enough information.'" He called the "Civic Heart" proposal silly (the YMCA-Post Office alternative). "I have more than enough information than we'll ever need just to decide where to site a damn library. Then we'll be debating whether the mayor should have a liaison with the School Department. I have never seen a greater effort by people who must have their way to defeat logic to have their way. I will not vote for the money. Some people just don't want to vote. That is the timing. It's like a treatment situation. We had a study. Sasaki gave us 25 sites. We see the same sites over and over again. The only thing that differs is who organizes this week's e-mail campaign out of the same group of people. If we're going to spend \$80,000, why can't we have a new school? The only people who have benefited are Central Square architects. We are wasting money openly. How can it be justified? Somebody is going to have to be told NO."

Mr. Healy estimated that the assessment would take three months but that the information would be transferable to either a library or police station. Councillor Davis said that, though she supports this allocation to look into either a library or police station use, she did not want this to be interpreted as endorsement of the site as a police station. Councillor Toomey voiced his displeasure about the allocation, but said he'd vote for it. "I'm tired of reading David Warsh criticizing us every day in the Globe for our delay."

The introduction of the pay raise proposal was a comedy of arrogance and errors. Councillor Braude began by proposing

that the matter be referred to the Ordinance Committee for a public hearing. Councillor Sullivan moved to have the proposal corrected to reflect a start date of July 2000 rather than July 2001, as per a late communication from the Manager.

On having a public hearing, only Councillors Born, Braude, and Davis voted in favor. Councillor Toomey quickly moved the salary proposal to a 2nd Reading. Only Councillors Born and Braude opposed this rush job. Councillor Sullivan then moved "reconsideration hoping the same will not prevail" in order to prevent any councillor from filing reconsideration of the vote. This was followed by a Point of Order from Councillor Braude on whether the roll call had been properly taken. Councillor Reeves argued that Councillor Born had voted, so the Roll Call had begun and could not be interrupted. The roll call on suspension passed 7-2 with Born and Braude voting NO. The City Clerk, in response to an inquiry from Councillor Braude, said that the matter would be advertised for ten days and that the vote would happen in two weeks. [It was ordained on June 5.] Councillor Braude then asked to have his vote on suspension changed from NO to YES, though this made no difference at all.

Councillor Reeves and Mayor Galluccio commended Councillor Decker for her remarks at the Harvard Living Wage Rally, noting that "she had Matt Damon and Ben Affleck eating out of her hand." On Harvard's recommendations, Galluccio said that they should be embarrassed that they were not already happening. Councillor Decker said, "Matt Damon and Ben Affleck are asked to do hundreds of things each day. They wanted to be a part of this rally. Ben's father and stepmother were custodians at Harvard who made less than \$10 per hour, and Matt Damon was a student there. They've done their homework. They've asked how they can continue to be a part of this in the future." She quoted from the Women's Educational and Industrial Union report that a single mother with a child in day-care needs to make \$17.42 per hour to live in Cambridge. A family of four with two wage earners requires both of them to earn \$11.41. "The minimum wage doesn't even attempt to allow someone to live here. I hope there's a journalist out there who'll write about this. Certainly David Warsh didn't do a good job. The living wage level is based on hard, cold reality." This was quite an impassioned speech, probably Councillor Decker's greatest strength.

#### 6) May 15, 2000 City Council meeting

The big item for this meeting was the approval of the FY2001 budget. Before getting down to that important business, public comment at this meeting focused on salaries and geese.

Robert Hall said that even if the Council was deserving of a 23% pay raise, it should have to stand up to public scrutiny. Elie Yardin said, "I am suffering from an attack of cognitive dissonance. Most working people are aware of the relationship between wage increases and productivity. If productivity rises by 5 or 6%, responsible employers will raise salaries by 2 or 3%. In the case of the City Council or any bureaucratic

structure, it is proper to reverse this. If there is a 23% increase in salary, one could expect an 11% increase in productivity. Supervision of your employed manager could be scrutinized more carefully.” Commenting on the inadequate notice of the pay raises, he added “Mill spoke not of freedom of speech but of freedom of discussion. You cannot have a discussion if it's a done deal. My objection is that there is no discussion of the merits of the idea.”

Michael Brandon took a confrontational position on the pay raises for Council and School Committee. Saying there was no effort to involve the public, he quoted Council rules requiring that matters of policy be referred to appropriate committees. He called it inappropriate and unethical for the Council to vote on any pay raise that will apply to the current Council.

A Loan Order for \$19,721,495 for water pollution abatement facilities passed unanimously.

The General Fund Budget of \$274,024,685, the Water Fund Budget of \$14,744,610, and the Public Investment Fund of \$22,532,925 all were unanimously approved without discussion.

Councillor Reeves expressed concerns about planning a coherent school system and of the importance of involving the City Treasurer and City Manager not as the tail but as the head. He suggested that some of the facility decisions make no sense. “Something should drive decisions on closure other than comfort zones. So little is based on statistical data on measures of success of our students. Some buildings don't work and others do. Sometimes the school culture is one that does not produce a successful product. I, for one, look forward to your asking some hard questions and to not continue to support mediocrity. Why do we continue to support what doesn't work. There is a need for some ‘break the mold’ thinking. We send over a lot of money, and we don't expect MCAS scores in the 200's. It's not the only indicator, but they do give some sort of comparator. The expectation is that if we send over what you ask for, you will produce a result better than was previously produced.”

The extension of the IPOP (not the last!) passed 9-0.

There was a prolonged discussion about what constitutes a “green building”, i.e. an environmentally-friendly building. Councillor Born said that people use words like “natural”, “sustainable”, “contextual”, and now “green”, but that no one has ever figured out what these terms mean. “I bristle at terms like ‘sustainable’ and ‘green’. It's just common sense - maximizing light and air.”

### **7) June 5, 2000 City Council meeting (and the vote on Council and School Committee salary increases)**

Public Comment again featured pay raises and geese. In fact, 14 people quacked in favor of the geese. On the pay raise issue, William Cobham noted that the Council received pay raises of 18% in 1996, 4% in 1997, and 3.5% in 1998 for total increase of 25.5% in three years. This would be an additional 23% increase. In contrast, he noted that police officers and schoolteachers receive no more than a 4% increase. He also questioned whether a city councillor's job is really a full-time job, noting that some councillors hold other jobs.

Joe Joseph again spoke about asbestos at the WR Grace site, saying “Perini workers were exposed to 600,000 and 1.2 million pounds of asbestos fibers.” He bemoaned the fact that because Sam Lipson of the Cambridge Public Health Dept. says there was no exposure, no action will be taken. Mr. Joseph also argued that if there is to be a Council pay raise, there ought to be a quid pro quo. He advocated for changing the City Charter, saying that “Plan E does not work.”

Elie Yardin said of the pay raise, “I'm not opposed to the idea of people earning a good living. Why 23%? How was this negotiated? It's a prime number, but there are other prime numbers above and below. The School Committee deserves 23% because they were able to hold teacher salaries to 2% thereby ensuring demoralization. This Council wants to be known as the 23% Council.”

Richard Cleary said of the pay raise, “The City Manager said the Council deserved the raise because their duties are similar to executives in City administration. This is inconsistent with Plan E. The role of the Council is severely limited under Plan E. The vivid difference was illustrated last week when Harvard announced a giant dormitory across river. Mayor Menino told them to go back to the drawing board. Here, when a stupid proposal is made, it lives on forever because there's no one to stop it. The median on N. Mass. Ave. is stupid. There's no one to stop Oaktree Development at Alewife. Citizens are left on their own. Last fall one candidate ran on a platform of creating an elected mayor. The pay raise is a step backwards. I fear a continuation of this obsolete form of government.”

Robert Winters said of the pay raise, “Though it will be decided tonight, I am opposed to a permanent change in the salary structure. I am not in favor of the impoverishment of elected officials. The proposed change is inconsistent with the intent of the City Charter, as I understand it. There are probably 7 votes in favor of this large increase, and possibly six votes to close debate. I am interested to see if there are the votes to shut up discussion like was done last time.”

Michael Brandon spoke for nearly 15 minutes on the pay raise and gained no friends in doing so. He suggested that this action was “a violation of state law, the Ethics Ordinance, and Council rules.”

The Council had its annual discussion of the propriety of transferring appropriations from available balances prior to closing of the books for FY00. Mr. Healy noted that this has been for 23 years now and detailed the adjustments. Included were \$2.3 million to the Police Department for 3 years worth of retroactive payments as part of this year's contract settlement.

### **Councillors' statements on the 23% salary increase**

**Kathy Born** - “I will not be supporting the salary increases. I do not question my work or that of my colleagues. I would have considered it if it was effective next term. I cannot support this given the amount of the raise and questions raised by the public about scale.”

**Tim Toomey** - “This is not a pleasant or happy vote, but I support it. I respect my colleague's opinion but you have to

question the sincerity of it all. Others voted against it last time and didn't take it. I don't relish saying what we all do. I continue to donate a substantial part of the raise to charity. I probably will introduce an order calling on councillors and candidates to release their income tax forms to the public. People like to sit back and throw stones. I get paid damn well by two public paychecks. I ran when I did not have considerable support. The records are at the Cambridge Election Commission. I have donated over \$40,000 of my own money to my campaign over the years. That's some money that I'll probably never see to get back. This job is very demanding and it entails a lot. A lot of people will not have resources. It takes a lot of hours and commitment. It's easy to throw the pot shots. Anyone has the right to run. I don't plan to throw the potshots. I know how hard we all work and those on the School Committee. I don't want to see this Council be a body of nine very white, wealthy individuals representing this city. I want this body to be representative of all and that they can afford to run and stay on the Council. I appreciate the smugness of some as they sit here and throw the potshots. The voters spoke in November. Respect when they go to the polls. They can register their opinion. I represent all those in the City, not just those with the luxury of being here every Monday night. My constituents cannot do this. It really bothers me when the self-righteousness comes through. It's important that this body not be held to ridicule."

**Michael Sullivan** - "This never has been an easy vote, but it's the only mechanism to do it. Councillors have done it before since 1942 under Plan E. We run the risk that the diversity that we have will no longer exist. It's not possible to hold a full-time job other than this, not any more. Some had the luxury of owning their own business. The demands being placed on this body have increased. The calls don't just come 9-5, Monday to Friday. That's the job that nine of us ran for. At a recent hearing, I recalled filling in for my father. Two of us had to fill in for him. This is not a part-time job. It's beyond full-time. A number of members of this body do not have trust funds to live on. There have been some who have run for this seat who appear to have no means of supporting themselves other than growing it in their backyard. To do this effectively, we need to support ourselves and our families. I will not shy away from this vote. I have received little if any phone calls on this. The issue has been publicized. I will grant that it was not properly advertised at first. People had the opportunity to comment on it over three meetings, the Monday night season-ticket-holders. The right to come to the microphone exists every Monday."

**Ken Reeves** - "I had the pleasure of not giving much opinion on this pay raise. It stuns me to read in the paper whether I have another job or not. They never called me. I don't talk to the Cambridge Chronicle. It's as likely wrong as not. I resent that people assume they know what you do. I see the job as the elected official not to argue with the voters, but to listen to what they have to say. Even if shrill, it's still your job to listen. This is the minimum standard of an elected official. I listen to everyone. If they take two hours, I'll listen for two hours. This job has been remuneratively a disaster to

me. I got overpaid \$30,000 by the City Manager unbeknownst to me and was made to pay it back out of the \$40,000 I was supposedly being paid. Because that was in the paper, the FBI investigated me and that cost me \$20,000 to a lawyer to find out if I arranged my overpayment. I don't know how much you could pay me just to get even. I'll probably leave here with a negative income. I had the time and desire to run. It's an honor to serve and I give it all that I possibly got. A month ago, I just collapsed at a meeting. People who come before you without a job, on trust funds... New lawyers make \$140,000 the first day with no training at all. The arguments are difficult to listen to. If you're against being paid for your work, there's the next utopian community. Some feel it's illegal to vote for a raise you yourself will receive. Maybe this exists in the congressional something or other. It's a peculiar way in which the way this was advertised fits in with the ordinance. I didn't negotiate with the Manager. There was no odd complicity. There was plenty of discussion. Not one constituent has called me on this. It seems like the CCA and the Republican Party have combined on this. I'm not a member of the Republican Party or the CCA. I'm not disparaging them, but if that's what they believe up on Brattle St. and Coolidge Hill, good for them. One man from the CCA wrote a long article on what we do. He didn't ask any of the councillors. I try to fight efforts at grandstanding. Cheapshot artists are not people that most people like. I go to Veterans Day, graduations, budget meetings. I'm here for every meeting we have. For people to write long treatises who aren't here, there's a professional dishonesty in that. When people don't like the government, they vote the bums out. Yesterday, I had three meetings before 10 o'clock, then church, then meeting with someone from Brooklyn, then the World's Fair from 12 to 6. It was great, 150,000 people. Part of my job is to make sure the people of Cambridge have a good time. I got in the middle of a fight between two 13-year-old girls. I jump in the middle of fights. There were no incidents yesterday because I'm the bouncer too. We do whatever it takes to make the city run. Someone said we had not impacted the quality of life. You do the best you can. When this head hits the pillow, it has no more energy to do anything else. There is no more wonderful an opportunity. I don't apologize for being paid for it. Thank God I have other income-earning possibilities. The next time the Chronicle calls..."

**David Maher** - "This is truly an uncomfortable topic. I support this ordinance change. I may be new to this body but I have served 8 years on School Committee. It's an extraordinary amount of time that I and my colleagues have spent on issues facing the schools and the city in general. It's uncomfortable to have to do this in such a fashion. I believe that because of this change we won't have to visit this again. The issue was raised about referral to a subcommittee. I voted against that. The reason was that I thought it would be a more thorough discussion in front of the City Council. This has been a full airing. There has not been a huge outcry, but I don't know what that says. It made the front page of the Chronicle and the Globe, so you can't say that's not a thorough airing. At least two of three new councillors work for nonprofit agencies.

Money has never been a driving force in my career. I'm not going to get rich here. I am humbled and honored to have been chosen to represent the people. I have investigated this thoroughly and will support this. It's a necessary thing. I hope that no further Council will have to visit this."

**Henrietta Davis** - "This is awkward, one of most self-serving things that we do. I intend to support the proposal. I'm sorry we did not hold a public hearing. It means a lot to some to have time set aside for this. I voted for a hearing and it was defeated. I would have brought it up tonight, as many of my colleagues know. It would have shown respect for the public. I think it's fair and I've researched it. State legislators earn \$46,000 plus \$7,500 for a chairmanship plus per diems. I support the provision that builds in a small annual pay increase. It will make it unnecessary to go through this in the future. We are judged every two years quite well by the electorate. People will get the opportunity to say whether we're worth the money. My family finds it extremely time-consuming. Any time, any day, any holiday, people feel we should be accessible. The analysis left out all of the communication. With an average 15 minutes per person's call, the whole day is gone."

**Jim Braude** - "I will be voting no on the pay raise. I don't oppose a pay raise, just this pay raise. There are three principles to consider: (1) Is the raise deserved on the merits?; (2) Has there been a full opportunity for public hearing and discussion?; and (3) I don't believe any elected official should ever vote to raise his or her pay. A good case can be made for a very significant pay raise based on 'the immensity of the responsibility and the quantity of time.' Very few people have contacted me on this issue. However, the notion that we should not listen to every single person who had the decency to contact us undercuts the basics of democracy. We should have had a hearing, even though there has been plenty of attention today. I have never believed elected officials should vote for their own pay. It should be effective at the beginning of the next term. What has received no attention is the proposal that after this initial bump, all future increases are to be tied to the CPI. This is a positive thing. The perverse benefit of this discussion is that we have begun an exercise that I consider to be a critical one, about what it is that we do to earn their dollars. While we may be somewhat divided, I hope we are in unanimity about the ongoing effort to communicate to the public about what the job is. My voting NO has nothing to do with criticism of some that this job is not as large as it is."

**Marjorie Decker** - "This is a lousy process. It's the least of what I want to be spending my energy on. I ran on affordable housing, long-term planning. I am working closely with staff. It's easy to write a policy order, but it takes a lot to get it done, to follow-up. We scrutinize the Manager, work with City staff. It's an honor and a privilege. I am supporting this pay raise. It's the right thing to do. There are some who have served without a serious pay raise, receiving only a small cost-of-living increase a few years ago. I will never ask somebody to call me back next week, or to not participate in committee meetings because I've already put in the 20 hours per week. One person who comes here also says that the Charter says it's

a part-time job. It's a full-time job. I work to advocate for access to legal services for battered women. I led a campaign for \$1.5 million to benefit these women. It's only because I work for a nonprofit that I have the flexibility to do both. It's a sacrifice. I live and breathe work. The Council comes first, my primary job. I choose to be here at budget time and at committee hearings, to scrutinize Council orders and to come here prepared. The people will decide. That is what democracy is about. I wasn't going to talk on this. I'm here when I need to be here. I have always made myself available to talk about this. One person criticized this being tied to CPI. I did not think it was respectful to have a hearing if we already know the outcome."

**Anthony Galluccio** - "I am fully confident that there was public process on this issue. If not, more of us would have supported a hearing. There were three opportunities to comment on this. I am happy that the Council engaged to comment on this. No one moved quickly to a vote. This dialogue speaks well of the Council. It has been civil and that's something to be proud of. There is not a process issue here. The amount of the pay raise can be debated. I respect those that disagree, those who think this is part-time. In my second term I voted against the pay raise and donated it to charity. Since then I have left another job. I dedicate never less than 40 or 60 hours per week. I love this job. It's always tough to try to legitimize and put value on something. You get what you pay for. Without this pay raise, I can see this Council become only a place for the very wealthy, or those who are retired or already own a home, or are stable in the community. We do work full time. This ensures that the city is represented by a diverse group. I'm not afraid to take this vote. \$52,500 will not make anyone rich. I respect those who do not support it. Nothing in the Charter says this is a part-time job. We try to be people who stand out in the community, to oversee those that run a big budget. You all work very hard."

The pay raises for Council and School Committee passed on a 7-2 vote with Kathy Born and Jim Braude voting NO.

The Yoder, Tennis, and Broussard zoning petitions were all passed to a 2nd Reading.

There was a discussion of having a new "nexus study" on which affordable housing linkage payments from new commercial development for housing would be based. Councillor Born noted that the previous 1988 study listed rent control as an important component.

On the matter of the white geese next to the BU Bridge, Councillor Davis noted that the geese were brought there by a worker at the MWRA facility there and that they need to be better managed. She said, "These are farm geese, the kind that are raised for Christmas dinner, frankly." Councillor Braude added, "The advocates have been relentless. I hope the people involved in this will show the same passion for humans at risk in Cambridge in the future as they have for geese at risk."

### Taking shots at Harvard

Councillor Reeves started the discussion on Harvard's proposal for a 21-story graduate student dormitory for 400 across the Charles River along Western Ave. He called it "an

extraordinarily bad building.” He noted that Boston’s Mayor Menino sent Harvard a letter telling them to redesign the building because of lack of neighborhood support. Reeves called it odd for the Globe to be supportive of Harvard’s bidding on 40 acres of train yards in Allston considering their clandestine purchases in Allston-Brighton, “one of the sadder acts of neighborhood destruction.” He said that Harvard has made its share of building mistakes, such as William James Hall and the Sackler Museum. “Harvard says they’re like a multinational corporation, many tubs on many bottoms and they all do their own thing. Brighton will become Boston’s backside with no concern for what is built there. How do we protect future sites along the river? The power plant is being decommissioned and Harvard has an option to buy it or they have already bought it. They say they know nothing about it. When incorrect information is given to elected officials by the university it really does undermine any possibility of trust. The bigger question is about where are the community development eyes and ears. We only learned about the 21-story building because of Martha Eddison. To see canyonization of the river is sad. The university needs to speak truthfully. This latest dorm thing has certainly scared me. Where are the 40 planners in Community Development? We have got to take this seriously. Multiple expansion in multiple areas in multiple directions is a terrible way to try to do business.”

Councillor Davis called the proposed Harvard dormitory “a blight on the river.” She suggested that there should be a Charles River commission that would have looked at the BU building that was built at the Armory site. She added that this is not just a Harvard problem and that MIT plans to build another million square feet of development. “We need to look at what universities are doing in this big growth phase. I would like an annual town-gown report and a comprehensive 1-25 year plan. We’re just fighting fires here and there and leaving people in places like Riverside to fight on their own.”

Councillor Decker reported that Allston-Brighton residents are not satisfied and that Harvard claims it’s not Cambridge’s affair. She said that no one is opposed to Harvard housing more of its students, but that people are opposed to their process. “Harvard has taken the corridor of the Charles River and made it inaccessible. Harvard is not being a good neighbor.”

Councillor Born called the proposed Harvard building an example of “brutalist architecture,” saying that the building really defines that term. “Harvard’s biggest problem is accepting its limits. They are now expanding many of their professional schools. They’re in a city where there just isn’t the room to do this. Duke owns a 14,000-acre forest abutting the university. They take a little piece of it whenever they need it. Harvard wants to compete with these. Harvard has to accept limits of size and density of the city in which it is located.”

### 8) June 12, 2000 City Council meeting

There was some telling discussion about election procedures in response to an order from Mayor Galluccio that called for election day registration for all elections. Some, including this writer, would argue that although maximizing the number of people who vote is a laudable goal, this proposal would chiefly benefit those candidates, like Galluccio, with significant political machines. Councillor Toomey voted NO on the order because of the potential for fraud. He said he would also not support Internet voting at this time either. Mayor Galluccio said his order was in response to a previous order calling for Internet voting, which he called “classist.” Councillor Davis suggested that weekend voting should be considered in order to increase voter turnout and that this is done in places like Australia and New Zealand.

Kathy Born suggested bringing the Election Commission into the loop on this. “Anything that increases turnout is good, but this could have unintended consequences. Weekend voting is good. Internet voting is not the problem you may think. People could vote at the Public Library. We should get more information on Internet and weekend voting.” Mayor Galluccio refused an amendment to get information on Internet voting.

This brief meeting concluded with Councillor Decker’s thanks to the fire department for fighting the fire in her building on Bishop Allen Drive. She has subsequently moved to Magazine St. in Cambridgeport.

### 9) June 19, 2000 City Council meeting

One big item on the agenda for the meeting was the proposed Harvard Square Historic District. Though it was clear before the meeting that there were not enough votes for the proposal, there was plenty of public comment on the proposal, including testimony from former Mayor Frank Duehay.

At the other end of the seriousness spectrum, a gaggle of residents again spoke about “the conspiracy to destroy the white geese.”

On the proposed Loose Petition for downzoning in the Riverside neighborhood, Bridgett Dinsmore quoted former Councillor and Mayor Lenny Russell, saying, “Harvard will give you an apple for an orchard any day.” Several others, including Cob Carlson, Sandra Graham, and Martha Eddison, spoke on the Loose Petition moratorium. Sandra gave some history of the Riverside neighborhood and of Harvard’s long-term plans to buy out the neighborhood, how this was a factor that led to rent control in Cambridge, and of her own march to Harvard on June 10, 1970 and takeover of the Harvard commencement. Martha said that there was room to negotiate with Harvard and that a museum at the Mahoney’s site was not the worse thing in the world. She suggested that a moratorium is pretty much like going to court with Harvard University and that there might be a better way to go.

Jonathan King presented a petition with over 600 names opposing the MCAS test and asked that the MCAS test be suspended in the Cambridge schools. He was joined by several



others who oppose the MCAS test, calling it “a deterrent to education” and a “war against the working class.”

Robert Winters addressed the proposals for Internet voting, weekend voting, and Election Day registration. He distinguished between two principles - enfranchisement and representativeness. “Even if only 10% voted, this could still give a representative result. Weekend voting enfranchises and gives access regardless of economics. There will soon be a day when Internet voting may be fair when we cross the digital divide. Same day voting enfranchises, but those with big Election Day machines will be the chief beneficiaries. The rich get richer.”

The Council again discussed having a new “nexus study” and higher linkage fees from commercial development. The rationale of this “nexus” is the impact of commercial development on the cost and supply of housing. An economic and legal analysis is required before changes can be made.

On the matter of the proposed Harvard Square Historic District, there was discussion of an alternative Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD). A principal cause for the non-support of the Historic District was that it gave legal standing to any neighborhood conservation group, including the Harvard Square Defense Fund. The City Manager said that in the alternative proposal, he would appoint a study group for the proposed NCD and that the Historic Commission may serve as the NCD commission for this district. [This is, in fact, what was eventually approved.]

Les Barber of CDD explained that one significant difference between an historic district and a NCD is that the two are established under different legislation. In a NCD, nonprofit entities do not have a right to appeal decisions. In the Historic District, they do have this right of appeal under state statute. He said there are now NCD’s for Mid-Cambridge, Half Crown, and Avon Hill, each with their own criteria. [Subsequently, Harvard Square and Marsh District NCD’s have been established.] After some consternation about who might have voted for the historic district, the Council voted to re-file the proposal in the form of a NCD. Unlike a historic district which requires six votes out of nine to be established, a NCD requires only a simple majority. Only Councillor Toomey voted NO.

The Council next took up the zoning petition that would allow housing as a permitted use in all Industrial Districts. The three options were: all housing in these districts to require a special permit; housing permitted as-of-right; and a hybrid version in which a special permit would be required from the Planning Board if (a) the project was over 50,000 sq ft, (b) there were more than 12 units, and if the density exceeded certain limits in various districts.

Councillor Decker made the point that if there is a housing crisis and we want to remove barriers and provide incentives, we should remove every barrier unless there’s a good reason not to and only then look at incentives. Councillor Davis countered by observing that this is new territory with potential conflicts for new tenants in this housing more than for neighboring tenants. The special permit would allow the City to monitor projects case by case and allow for tinkering to

make it work better. Les Barber quoted recent examples (Worthington Place, Oaktree Development) where housing developers and commercial developers were in competition with each other. Councillor Born took the view that in larger developments, there was a better chance for more affordable housing if the project was subject to a special permit.

Councillor Reeves remained skeptical, saying, “In the universe I’m living in, we are closer to the end of the affordable housing crisis. Rents have quadrupled and section 8 tenants are on the way out.” He suggested asking developers what incentives it would take to produce more affordable housing. Councillor Toomey took the embattled townie stance, saying, “I will vote against this. In my neighborhood, buildings have been converted to residential. These are not long-term residents in those buildings. This is transient housing that the students have taken over.”

Councillor Decker described the situation as very frustrating. “When affordable housing is our #1 priority, then every department should be looking at things through affordable housing lenses. This should have been done right away. This should have taken place two years ago....I’m frustrated that the majority of housing being built is not affordable. We must increase the housing stock if there’s to be any hope.

The Council ordained on an 8-1 vote the intermediate version (with the special permit requirement above certain thresholds). Only Councillor Toomey voted against the petition.

The zoning petition to allow a library as a permitted use in all zoning districts was passed to a 2nd reading. (It was eventually ordained on Sept 5.)

### **On weekend and Internet voting**

In response to the order from Councillors Davis, Braude, Decker, and Born on the possibility of weekend voting and voting via the Internet, Councillor Sullivan suggested that Saturday voter turnout would not be much better since “everybody will be at soccer and not voting.”

Councillor Davis explained that this was not intended as a call to have exclusive weekend voting, but only that opportunities should be expanded.

Mayor Galluccio said he would support getting information on this but that he does not support Internet voting. Calling it “classist,” he said, “If I get more information on it, I’ll be able to oppose it in a much more aggressive way.” Councillor Born countered by saying, “Don’t assume Internet voting has class bias. Among the elderly, e-mail is very big. Interactive TV may be here in 5 or 6 years.”

Mayor Galluccio responded with: “Higher income people have more computers. There is concern about fraud on the Internet.” Born answered with “70% of Americans have access to the Internet. Soon it will be 90%.” Jim Braude pointed out that working class people may not have time to vote on Election day, so there is bias the other way. David Maher noted that the reason why the elderly may be the fastest growing segment on Internet was because they had previously been left behind.

The order passed with, you guessed it, Toomey voting NO.

### Who owns the trees?

In response to an order calling for recommendations on how to deal with conflicts between neighbors and owners of significant trees (triggered by the controversial tulip tree at 1446 Cambridge St.), Ken Reeves was emphatic: "The City dates to 1630. Trees have survived because people who cared about them didn't cut them down. Special status was given to the Mass. Ave. tree. The Linnaean St. tree was moved and didn't die. I am very concerned about this notion that we would go on other peoples' property and tell them what to do with their trees. One person suggested there should be a board that would decide whether you could prune your tree. This hit my conservative bone. At tax time no one comes to assist with that effort. Every morning I look at a double copper beech. This is not a landmarked tree, but people had the common sense not to cut it down. They didn't have to have government tell them what to do."

Jim Braude responded with: "I can empathize with Reeves' concern. I'm not a traditional tree-huggin' kinda guy. I've been born again since this tree which is a couple of blocks from my house. Whatever we do has to balance private property rights with the public interest. Some of these magnificent things have a status that goes beyond the people on whose property they happen to have their roots."

### 10) July 31, 2000 City Council meeting (at CRLS)

Public comment was extensive with speakers commenting on the Tennis, Yoder, and Broussard zoning petitions; housing problems on Dana St., Douglas St., and Wendell St.; the regional truck study; the MCAS exams; delivering public money to former Councillor Jonathan Myers' agency; the North Mass. Ave. median strip; geese; and the proposal to build a West Cambridge youth center on the Fresh Pond Reservation. The material made available for this meeting included the Fresh Pond Master Plan, an impressive document that was finally approved by a Council vote in January 2001.

Drew Leff, working with the owners of the "Faces" property along Route 2, presented a potential plan for a significant housing development on that site. He said they could develop over 380 units of housing, including about 60 affordable housing units. He argued that the 85 ft. height limit of the Yoder petition would not help to achieve the goals expressed in the petition, but would instead spread density over the site. He argued that reduction in density at the expense of housing does nothing to protect the natural habitat and said that the current zoning allowed for the best options.

The Tennis Petition (affecting the stretch of Concord Ave. across from Fresh Pond) was unanimously ordained with two amendments: (1) the height limit was set at 50 ft., and (2) a special permit would be required over 25,000 sq ft.

There was an extensive discussion among councillors and City staff about the effectiveness of homebuyer programs for low and middle-income Cambridge residents. A report indicated that most available units were in the under-\$150,000 range. Councillor Born noted the need for programs in the next

bracket. Darcy Jameson, Housing Director at CDD reported that such a program was under development and would be ready in Fall 2000 and would be available to those with incomes in the \$50-78,000 range income for a family of four.

Mayor Galluccio described these programs as a form of neighborhood stabilization with people buying a controlled rent with some return of equity. Ken Reeves responded with, "As I see it, since the end of rent control we are at the end of something. The City has believed that limited equity was good. My own belief is that Americans won't sign up for it in great numbers and history has borne me out. Even in my tenant days, people would not sign up for it. At Hampshire and Columbia, we were able to be successful because the buy-in price was so attractive relative to the market. Rental is now so attractive that nobody wants to build condos. We have to understand our own market dynamic. There is no demand for limited equity. Giving the City the first option to buy may be more attractive."

On this point, Councillor Davis and City staff said that there are numbers of people who apply for limited equity coops and that people are turned away. Davis described them as buying a stable rent, "like a personal kind of rent control."

On the matter of giving tax breaks for those who rent to low-income people, City Treasurer Jim Maloney put things in perspective when he explained that the monthly fraction of rent attributable to tax is not that significant. He suggested that even if taxes were to triple, this may only amount to \$20 per unit. It's likely we won't hear much more on this proposal.

### Taking shots at Harvard - not the last time

On Harvard's proposed graduate student housing across the river, Deputy City Solicitor Don Drisdell explained that the City may have no legal standing since there are no City-owned properties as abutters. To this, Ken Reeves pointed out that at recent Riverside meetings on Harvard's museum proposals, some expressed the belief that as citizens of the Commonwealth, we may have some standing in terms of historic review because of the Charles River. Mr. Drisdell could not identify any relevant historical status and said that no further process was required under MEPA. Reeves suggested the possibility of a landmark designation. Councillor Davis also suggested landmarking, but the idea seems rather far-fetched.

It was asserted that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) had access to Harvard's institutional master plan, and the desire was expressed that Cambridge also get a copy of such a plan. Mayor Galluccio agreed to request the Harvard Master Plan. [It arrived Sept 11, but it was not publicly available.]

Ken Reeves commented on Mayor Galluccio's piece on Harvard in the July 31 Boston Globe. "The Law School and other schools may be moving across the river. The National League of Cities brochure refers to Harvard as being in Boston." On the Harvard administration, Reeves continued, "Every tub on its own bottom, but nobody is running the show. Mr. Grogan is supposed to try to speak for it. This style of administration has to change. It is unfortunate that we have not

been able to make our relationship better regarding the schools. They seem to be wanting to develop everywhere. They are buying up everything, secretly. As an alum, I don't want to be a part of this. Harvard seems to think they can just ignore the City Council. There is an opportunity to get this better. The Mayor's letter seems to imply that the President leads the institution. This is not so. We very much need this Master Plan. The town-gown approach is insufficient."

Councillor Decker suggested that Harvard has no Cambridge Master Plan. She also criticized Harvard unwillingness to guarantee a living wage to all its employees.

Mayor Galluccio emphasized the importance of face-to-face contact with Harvard officials. "I talked with Paul Grogan today on the school piece, about rebuilding our technical program here. We spoke of the importance of Harvard and MIT housing their graduate students. Some members of Council feel very strongly about this, but it does not have to be an enormous building on the river. Boston is dying to get Harvard. They have more of what Harvard wants. The red carpet is out. We have one posture, Boston has another. The Allston-Brighton development will take an enormous number of graduate students out of our housing."

There was discussion on the Phase 1 report of the Transportation Service Study that looked into, among other things, the possibility of paratransit shuttle services. A telephone survey revealed no demand for a shuttle, but there were calls for better MBTA service. The report listed ten existing employee shuttle services (including "The Link" operated by the Charles River Transportation Management Association), one residential shuttle serving Museum Towers, 7 institutional shuttles serving the universities with one for the Cambridge Hospital, and four serving retail establishments and hotels. [The Phase 2 report arrived at the Mar 19, 2001 meeting.]

Over the objections of Councillor Davis, the Council passed a Galluccio-Maher order calling for the N. Mass. Ave. redesign process to start over from Square One. Davis' position was that we should not throw out all the good work that had already been done. She objected to the misinformation that has been spread about the loss of the existing median strip, noting that the existing plan would retain more than 50% of the median while making many other safety improvements. [I have to agree with Davis on this. The existing plan is good. Its fatal flaw is only that it was not the brainchild of a local group who feels it is their right to call the shots in North Cambridge.] In any case, delayed funding for sewer reconstruction in the area has pushed the surface improvements back several years anyway.

The Council took action on the Yoder petition that called for zoning changes in an area along Route 2 in the Alewife area. They divided the petition into the non-controversial part (which simply rezones the AD Little parking lot as Open Space and which passed unanimously) and re-filing the remainder as "the Alewife petition." Ralph Yoder disassociated himself from the gutted petition, so the remaining fraction was renamed "the Tringo petition" after the 2nd signature on the original petition.