

January 11, 1993

To the Cambridge City Council:

In the aftermath of the snowstorms of January 6-8, I have decided to voice my complaints about Cambridge's snow emergency system. I will also make some suggestions for improvement based upon my experience in the snowbound city of Montreal.

What is wrong with the current snow emergency/snow removal system?

- The enforcement of a parking ban *during* the storm forces people to drive under hazardous conditions.
- We are provided with no list of streets where parking is allowed.
- Judging from my own neighborhood, the majority of streets are labelled emergency arteries, dislocating *most* of the on-street parkers in the city
- We are provided with no alternative parking such as schools or municipal lots (I called the police station for assistance and was told they could not help me).
- Since we are given no safe alternative parking, people have no choice but to leave their cars at risk of being towed, either in the street or in someone's parking lot.
- People are given no warning immediately before towing will begin on a street. Our cars are at risk for the duration of the snow emergency (in this case approx 36 hours).
- In the end, all I and everyone on my street got out of the current system was a \$15 ticket, 36 hours of hassle and worry (my car was nearly towed out of the Avon Street school parking lot - others were towed), and an UNPLOWED PARKING LANE where parking spaces are down by about 50% - *they never did tow or plow the parking lane on Shepard Street.*
- 48 hours after the snow stopped parking, and as a result, driving, was still a mess all over the city. Parking continues to be a major problem. Only some of the major roads have been properly plowed (note that the parking lane on Columbia Street has not been plowed), and none of the smaller "emergency arteries" have been properly plowed.

What can we do to improve the current system?

I recommend we model our new snow removal system after that in the city of Montreal. Montreal is a considerably larger than Cambridge and much more snow falls there each winter. I parked on the street there for two and a half years and can vouch first hand for the efficacy of their system. I will use the snowstorms of last week to show how the city of Montreal would have handled the storm.

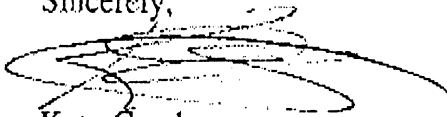
- While it is snowing the city plows and salts, but does not institute parking bans. *Note that this policy allows people to stay off the roads during the storm.*
- When it stops snowing Saturday afternoon, the city posts signs on one side of each street, forbidding parking on that side between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. starting that evening. *Note that only one side of each street is off limits at any one time, thereby dislocating only half of the on-street parkers as opposed to most of them.*
- *Parkers are given a minimum of four hours warning that a parking ban will be enforced on their street.* The maximum warning period is thirteen hours. If it had stopped snowing as late as 4:00 p.m., signs would have been posted forbidding parking between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. the following day.
- The city starts towing at 7:00 p.m. *However, parkers are given a second warning in the form of a loud speaker announcement, much like our own street cleaning announcement.*
- Towed cars receive a \$50 ticket, but owners are *not* required to pay cash to get their cars back.
- *Cars are towed to a place that is easily accessible.* The one time that my car was towed in Montreal I was able to walk to where it was being held. It would be difficult for most people to walk to Pat's Tow. I just called Pat's Tow and the man could not even tell me what bus to take to get there.
- When the targeted side of the street is free of cars, snow removal begins.
- The procedure is repeated for the other side of the street between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. the following day.
- *No more than 37 hours after precipitation ends, the city is fully operational and on-street parking is back to capacity.*

I'm sure you'll agree that the city of Cambridge would benefit greatly from a re-thinking of the current snow emergency/snow removal system, and I would be happy to give you the name and number of the person at the city of Montreal with whom I spoke to refresh my memory of their snow removal procedure.

Cambridge, which offers proportional representation, diversity in city government, a very successful recycling program, strong neighborhoods, the post office of the future, and a surplus in the coffers should also offer a sound and efficient system for restoring order to the streets after a snowstorm. Consider the Montreal model.

I can be reached during the day at 727-8257x233. I will be in touch if I do not hear from you.

Sincerely,



Kate Gendreau
46 Shepard Street, #35
Cambridge, MA 02138



City of Cambridge

7.

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 24, 1994

COUNCILLOR DUEHAY
COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR MYERS
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

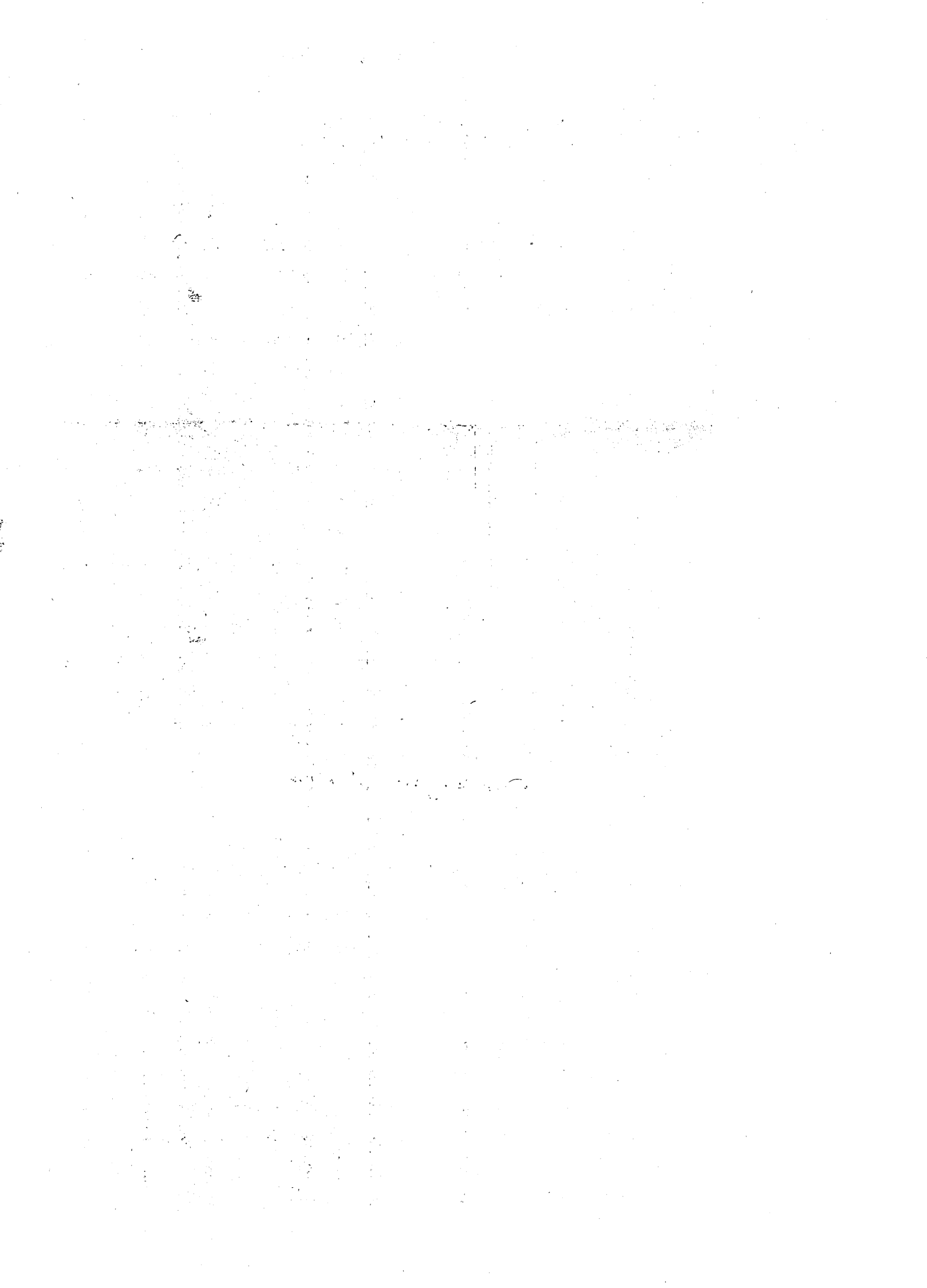
ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to analyze the snow emergency/snow removal procedures currently employed by Montreal as submitted by Kate Gendreau, a citizen of Cambridge, to determine if such procedures could be employed in Cambridge, resulting in more satisfactory snow clearance from all streets.

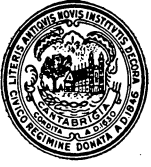
In City Council January 24, 1994.
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:- *D. Margaret Drury*

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk





City of Cambridge

7.

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 24, 1994

COUNCILLOR DUEHAY

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to analyze the snow emergency/snow removal procedures currently employed by Montreal as submitted by Kate Gendreau, a citizen of Cambridge, to determine if such procedures could be employed in Cambridge, resulting in more satisfactory snow clearance from all streets.

Born, Myers, Sullivan, Triantafyllou

Consent Order #7

CM-25

Councillor Duehay re: Request to
analyze the snow emergency/snow
removal procedures employed by
Montreal for possible employment
in Cambridge.

Order Adopted

In City Council,

January 24, 1994