



**City of Cambridge**  
**Department of Human Service Programs**  
51 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, 498-9076

**TO:** Robert W. Healy

**DATE:** February 9, 1987

**FROM:** Jill Herold *JH*

**RE:** Emergency Shelter Update

Since September the Department of Human Services has actively sought the creation of another emergency shelter in Cambridge as a part of the increased services developed for the homeless. Recent on-going census of the 119 bed Cambridge shelter system have indicated that there is an "overflow" of people presenting themselves for shelter of about twenty persons per night. Private landlords, universities, churches, the Salvation Army, and a private corporation have been approached to provide space. While there are possibilities of shelter space at a few of these sites, none has been available for immediate utilization to address the current 20 person overflow of the Cambridge shelter system.

Lacking a space from the aforementioned groups, the resolution entered by Councillor Walsh in the January 12, 1987 City Council meeting regarding the use of the Cambridge Armory on Concord Avenue as a possible emergency shelter site was pursued by the City and a group of shelter and meal providers. At the following meeting of the Cambridge/Somerville Committee on Homelessness on January 20, 1987, a task force was created out of these ongoing meetings to address specifically the need and site of an emergency "overflow" shelter.

Within a week of the creation of the task force, determination was made that the armory presented the only immediate space available for the shelter. While certainly not the first choice of the task force because of its distant location from service providers to the homeless, the armory was determined a "last resort" choice and initial efforts to secure its use were intensified. The Executive Office of Human Services (EOHS) was contacted in that same week and informed that the City and the providers were united in their desire to use the armory as a twenty bed transitional shelter.

Several further meetings of the task force and further conversations with EOHS in the last week and a half have resulted in EOHS's support of the proposal and their efforts to work with the National Guard, the Fire Department, and the Department of Public Safety to expedite the opening of the facility. Cambridge churches, who have participated throughout the effort in an initiating role, have indicated their support both in terms of resources and volunteer for the shelter. Shelter, Inc. has been designated as the responsible agency for the shelter with regard to funding, staffing, and operations.

Community and Youth Services  
498-9037/9072  
Council on Aging/Elderly Services  
498-9039

Recreation  
498-9028  
Community Learning Center  
547-1589



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

250 FRESH POND PKY., CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138 • TEL. 498-9070

OFFICE OF THE WATER BOARD

Donald F. Hornig  
President

Thomas J. Begley

Ruth C. Birkhoff

Walter N. Conlon

A. Paul Flynn

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager  
FROM: *JJC* John J. Cusack, Jr., Superintendent, C.W.D.  
DATE: February 9, 1987  
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS  
AT FRESH POND RESERVATION

In response to your recent request for information on the subject referenced above, please be advised that the Water Board has discussed this proposal and has determined that a project of this nature would have several potential problems during its planning stages. These problems are outlined below:

1. In 1978, the Water Department, the Community Development Department, and the Fresh Pond Task Force citizens group accepted the "Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan" as a planning document for future activities within the Reservation. The proposal for a shelter for the homeless is inconsistent with guidelines for permitted institutional facilities within the Reservation.
2. Due to the fact that the Water Department is a regulated public utility, there are numerous State and Federal environmental laws controlling our operations which could restrict or prohibit construction activity adjacent to Fresh Pond, which is functioning as a terminal reservoir.
3. When the City purchased the Cambridge Water Works in 1865, the City Council delegated the care and management of the facilities and properties to the Water Board. The specific function of the Reservation property then and now is the protection of the water supply reservoir. In the early 1970's, Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution was enacted. This Amendment is related to the rights of people for clean air, clean water, environmental protection and the authority of the State Legislature to protect such rights. Subsequent court cases and legal opinions of the Attorney General under the doctrine of "prior public use" have determined that public lands devoted to one public use cannot be diverted to another inconsistent public use without plain and explicit legislation to that effect.

In the event that the proposal for a shelter for the homeless at Fresh Pond Reservation goes forward, the project would require special legislation. This legislation would have to be approved by the following groups: Cambridge Water Board, Cambridge City Council, the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering - Division of Water Supply; and the Legislative Committees for Water Supply, and Natural Resources and Agriculture. (Note: Neville Manor and the Golf Course were constructed prior to the enactment of Article 97).

Memo

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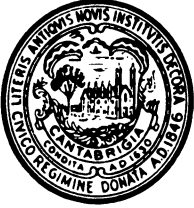
February 9, 1987

Robert W. Healy,  
City Manager

Summary

Eventhough the members of the Board are sympathetic to the needs of the homeless, the Water Board itself is quite restricted by laws from permitting new activities on Fresh Pond Reservation as stated above. In the event that the City Council elects to proceed with the evaluation of a site for a possible shelter at Fresh Pond Reservation, the Water Board will assign a sub-committee to work with the Council.

JJC/mp



## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139  
TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
ROBERT W. HEALY  
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI  
Deputy City Manager

February 9, 1987

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I transmit herewith an Emergency Shelter Update report and a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 15 relative to a possible shelter for the homeless at the Fresh Pond Reservation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

S-96

Re: response to Awaiting Report Item No. 15  
on a possible shelter for the homeless at  
Fresh Pond Reservation.& an Emergency Shelter  
Update.

In City Council,

February 9, 1987

Placed on File