



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

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COUNCILLOR FRANCIS H. DUEHAY
26 LOWELL STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

February 11, 1983

The Honorable; the City Council:

This is to report about a meeting I attended concerning the Route 2 Alewife road system with Secretary Fred Salvucci in Speaker O'Neill's Boston office last Friday, February 4, 1983.

I was informed that the meeting had been scheduled on Thursday evening. Spaulding & Slye, developers of certain portions of Alewife had sought the help of the Speaker's Office in getting the road improvements under way. The Speaker's office invited the City Manager, who then notified me.

The Council will recall that the Committee on Transportation and Parking has had three recent hearings on this topic to review the meager plans which the state DPW unshelved in the waning days of the King administration. No progress on the road improvements has been made for several years. The main concern of these city council hearings was that the road improvements would lag behind the opening of the Alewife subway station by up to four years.

The first two hearings of the council subcommittee were attended by about 60 persons: Alewife business people, those affected by possible land takings, members of the Conservation Commission, members of the Cambridge Transportation Forum, and other concerned citizens as well as Councillors Danehy, Russell, Vellucci, and David Sullivan. The final hearing held in the Fitzgerald School on Rindge Avenue was not well attended by the public.

The conclusions of the city council subcommittee were as follows:

1. That concerns about the lag time between the opening of the Alewife station and the completion of the road system are real. Considerable traffic congestion will result around the Rindge Avenue exit until the connector providing direct access to and from route 2 is built. This congestion will retard the economic development of the Alewife area since the Planning Board will try to time its issuance of permits under the PUD to traffic concerns. A four year delay in the completion of the road system is indeed likely and is at the same time intolerable from the city's point of view.

2. The road system as shown did not reveal an adequate exit and entrance system from W.R. Grace and Company.
3. A reaffirmation of the position that the road be built in such a way that Rindge Avenue could not be used for commuter traffic as it now is.
4. A reaffirmation of proper signalization at several points along the parkway, both to slow traffic coming off route 2 and to allow safe exit and entrance to the shopping centers.
5. The Council subcommittee is concerned that no system was shown which ties together the whole complex for pedestrians. There will be a great deal of pedestrian movement back and forth across the parkway. This movement should be facilitated by proper passageways under or over the road.
6. The Council subcommittee is concerned that specifications for lane widths and shoulders were more suitable for a superhighway than for a parkway in which traffic must proceed at moderate speed.
7. The Council subcommittee is concerned that all environmental safeguards at Alewife be scrupulously protected. The subcommittee is particularly troubled that the potential development of the Mugar property in Arlington may force the road system closer to open space on the present Cambridge side of the roadway.
8. There is presently no indication in the plans that proper planting: trees, shrubs, and grass will be installed.
9. Legislation is pending in the current session that would transfer jurisdiction over the parkway from the MDC to the DPW. This pending change symbolizes Cambridge's concerns. While Cambridge wants proper entrance and egress from and to the commercial and business areas, the traffic circles eliminated, the bridges rebuilt, and new signalization, it wants the finished product to be a parkway rather than a highway. Certain structures on the use of federal highway funds may appear to dictate whether the specifications which Cambridge is seeking can actually take place. Speaker O'Neill's staff indicated that they would work closely with the city to assure that maximum flexibility with regard to the use of federal highway money is employed.

The February 4th meeting was attended by representatives of Spaulding and Slye who had sought the meeting, the Cambridge city manager and myself, Secretary Salvucci and members of his staff, and Speaker O'Neill's staff.

The presentation by Spaulding and Slye concentrated on whether the route 2 connector could be built first as a separate piece of the project so that the anticipated congestion around Rindge Avenue could be avoided and so that new economic development in that area could go forward more rapidly.

The City Manager and I repeated Cambridge's concerns and asked for a commitment to which future planning of the road system would go forward with the full participation of the city and continued consultation with all parties.

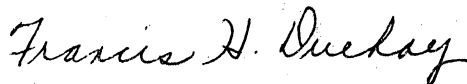
Secretary Salvucci indicated that the proper completion of this project had a very high priority with the Dukakis administration. He also expressed concern about the possible delay that the development of the Mugar property in Arlington might cause the entire project. He committed himself and his department to full participation and consultation during the life of the project. He also asked for the city's cooperation in developing a schedule for the opening of the Alewife station.

Secretary Salvucci indicated that the state DPW had suffered severe budgetary and management capacity cutbacks, which inevitably has affected their performance.

Secretary Salvucci indicated that he understood the concerns of all the parties, that he would study them, develop an action plan, and ask for a second meeting as soon as he was prepared.

I regret due to the extremely short notice the City Manager and I received about this meeting that I was unable to invite either other members of the city council or other concerned citizens and business people who had expressed an interest in meeting with the Secretary.

Sincerely,



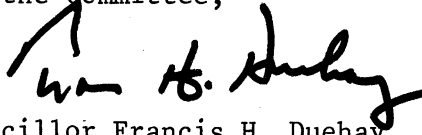
Francis H. Duehay
City Councillor

FHD/smc

Councillor Duehay stated that as the project goes through the required "Environmental Impact Statement" process, changes can be made.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francis H. Duehay", written over the printed name.

Councillor Francis H. Duehay
Chairman

City of Cambridge

In City Council..... February 7, 1983

The Transportation **Committee** conducted its third in a series of public hearings to discuss and consider roadway improvements for the Route 2/Alewife area. The hearing was held in the auditorium of the M. E. Fitzgerald Elementary School, Rindge Avenue, Cambridge at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26, 1983.

Councillor Duehay, Chairman of the Committee outlined to those present the discussions of the previous meetings, as well as the pending meeting with Secretary of Transportation and Construction Frederick Salvucci. He further stated the Committee's concern for the long delay of the roadway improvements to date, as well as the fact that the current projected completion date is 1989. He stated that both the Committee and City administration, working in concert with the neighborhood and business groups would continue to pursue an earlier completion date, as well as some important design changes which have been proposed as a result of the Committee meetings over the past few months.

Councillor Danehy re-affirmed the comments of Councillor Duehay and stated that he was most pleased with the effort of both the Committee and the community working together to achieve a united goal.

At this time Mr. John Walker of Standish Street stated that attention should be given to the entrance and exit of the Fresh Pond Shopping Mall, because it is an extremely hazardous condition for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Kevin P. Crane, Esq., of Norris Street agreed, stating that there have been many serious accidents at this location in the past. However, he further stated that he was unsure if a series of traffic lights (five in number) as currently proposed in the plans, would help the flow of traffic, particularly during peak hours.

Councillor Deuhay stated that currently there are insufficient details in the plans relative to just what will be done in front of the shopping mall, but that everyone is concerned that adequate safeguards and accessibility will be in place.

Richard Easler of the Community Development Department stated that current plans call for a four-lane road with a Jersey barrier with a 10 ft. shoulder to gain entrance to the mall.

REPORT 5-79

Committee on Transportation

Re: roadway improvements for the Route 2/
Alewife area.

2/14/83

- Placed on File -
see Addendum

In City Council,

~~February 7, 1983~~

February 14, 1983

Submitted by Lawrence
Puchay