

City of Cambridge

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

In City Council June 9, 2003

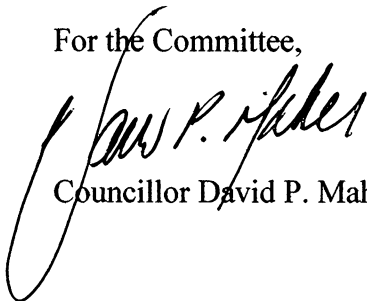
COMMITTEE MEMBERS*Councillor David P. Maher, Chair**Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Vice Chair**Councillor Brian Murphy**Councillor E. Denise Simmons**Councillor Timothy J. Toomey*

The University Relations Committee held a series of public meeting on February 26, March 5, March 26 April 1 and April 11, 2003 in the Ackermann Room and the Sullivan Chamber to explore opportunities for city and university dialogue and collaboration. The meetings focused on the following areas, which had been selected as priorities at previous committee meetings attended by the full City Council: housing, the environment, public education and fiscal health.

All of the meetings followed a similar format. For each topic, there was a facilitated informal discussion among committee members, city administrative staff and representatives from Harvard University, MIT and Lesley University. The discussion encompassed the goals and activities of the city government and the universities, the areas for joint and/or complimentary activities and the obstacles and dilemmas that must be faced and discussed.

This report of the proceedings of the meetings contains a short introductory summary of current issues and factors affecting the relationship and activities of the city and the universities in each area and a working list of the opportunities and obstacles developed during the group discussion of each issue. At the end of this series of preliminary discussions, the Committee will convene a meeting at which it is hoped that all City Council members can discuss the results of these exploratory meetings and decide on the next steps. A list of the attendees at each meeting is attached.

For the Committee,



Councillor David P. Maher, Chair

HOUSING February 26, 2003

Introduction

The meeting began with a discussion of the needs and goals of the city and the universities. The cost of housing in Cambridge is extremely high. The Cambridge Housing Authority has a waiting list of 4245 low and moderate-income Cambridge residents and a total waiting list of 13,242 applicants. Moderate and middle-income residents are finding increasingly difficult to remain in Cambridge.

Universities are also affected by the high cost of housing in Cambridge. Graduate students and faculty experience similar difficulties in trying to find housing in Cambridge. As living close to one's academic community is rated as an important factor in academic life, the lack of affordable housing can play a large role in the choice of the university at which to work or study.

As the city government and the universities develop strategies to increase the supply of housing available to their constituents, they must take note of the substantial changes in the housing market that will come with the downturn of the economy and analyze how these changes will affect their strategies.

Opportunities For Action

- Economic analysis of current housing market
- Opportunities for affordable housing in a down market
- Growth plans for universities over the next ten years – opportunities for additional affordable housing for city residents?
- Analysis of current housing collaborations to better understand what has worked and what has not
 - Harvard: 2 Mt. Auburn; MIT: LBJ – Miller's River
 - Harvard 2020; analysis of agreement; utilization (only half of available financing)
- What new agreements and initiatives may be available?
- Inclusionary housing zoning ordinance revisions could allow family units in grad student housing

Dilemmas

- Are non-permanent agreements with the community ever possible?
- Legal constraints can make programs difficult to access.

Ways To Coordinate Collaborative Work

- Place (organization?) to track and analyze the information we get and have over time
- Affordable Housing Trust could be focus of collaborations

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION March 5, 2003

Introduction

In the area of preservation of the environment, the City of Cambridge and both of the universities are taking many similar steps to achieve remarkably parallel goals. All have set aggressive recycling goals. MIT's standard demolition contract now requires the contractor to commit to recycling 96% of the debris. The universities have also focused on reuse rather than just recycling with organized textbook and furniture exchanges, swap shops and a reuse listserve. All are employing "green purchasing" policies to buy recycled paper, toner cartridges and other products and using green standards in building construction. All are planning or experimenting with cleaner-fuel vehicles. Sewer and storm water separation are important issues to all three entities, as is protection of the Charles River.

In addition, all have task forces or committees that focus on environmental concerns. Communication between the city government and the universities has been very good, and is seen as cooperative, and knowledge-sharing. There is a perception that in the area of environmental issues, the city government and the universities are equal partners rather than in a regulator-regulated relationship.

Opportunities For Action

- Establish compact: formalize ongoing good work; tell the story of cooperation
- Climate protection work plan the example of good work
 - Why? Shared goals, common ways of measuring, advantage of scale;
 - PPDM more difficult; city in regulatory role
- Learn from each other on joint and parallel effort
- Forum for information exchange

- CNG complex, but potential: clean fuels area (NSTAR possible compressor site for fleet)
- Bus shelters
- Continue recycling efforts
- Electronic swapshop (furniture)
- Student climate protection work: potential problem solving and innovation
- City has measuring needs; potential for student projects
- Joint internship programs

Ways To Work Productively Together

Voluntary participation: praise and shame can be very effective; concern about punitive efforts

Simple and concrete actions are easier for people to “get”

Include business community in activities

Include MDC on work on the River

How do we negotiate well; good communication; develop resilience in the relationships

Dilemmas

Economics of green energy are not currently positive

Complex regulatory world

Cynicism of the community

EDUCATION March 26 and April 1, 2003

Introduction

The city administrative staff and elected officials and the representatives from Harvard, MIT and Lesley University agreed that the Cambridge public school system is in crisis. The public does not have confidence in the schools. The universities are seeing the concern about the quality of the schools negatively impact the choices that graduate students and faculty make about where they want to study and work. While there are pockets of high performance, overall academic achievement of students in the system is low. Cambridge spends a much larger amount of money per student than most other cities and towns, but does not achieve the educational results one might expect from such expenditures.

The universities all have many individual activities in the schools, but they are frustrated by their inability to have a systemic impact on the schools. The existing relationships among school personnel and the universities are multi-tiered. Individual teachers have come to university faculty or staff for assistance, and then over the years those relationships have blossomed into wonderful programs and partnerships. There are positive aspects to the many layers of relationships. The school superintendent cannot be the sole contact; and the “hands-on,” empirical development of teaching tools and programs can lead to amazing results. However, the lack of an overarching partnership structure it can also exacerbate the uneven achievement levels and get in the way of systemic impact on the educational system.

All agreed that the focus of the committee in the area of education should be on finding answers to the following question: How do we better utilize the expertise, capacities and resource of the universities to improve public pre-K-12 education, and how can the City Council support these activities?

Possible Activities

- University involvement in Superintendent search and selection
- Universities host reception for new Superintendent
- Establish infrastructure/protocol for Universities’ entry into and participation with the system

- Universities as a source of ongoing resources and support
Resources available (based on previous participation in the public schools, areas of expertise, and interest:
MIT: improving science education (teacher and student focus)
Harvard: Ed school: relevant research, professional development, museums as learning resource, community responsiveness
Lesley: teacher preparation and professional development
Other possible areas of support

Ways To Work Productively Together

- Management expertise and research on mergers
- Development and Definition of Role for the Universities in improving the school system
- Definition of a positive and productive role for the council for improving the schools in light of the primary role of the school committee
- Definition of Procedures and/or organizational structure for Productive University participation in the schools system (contact person/structure) The superintendent cannot be the sole contact, too busy

Dilemmas

- Fragmentation of the school system
- The relationships with the school systems and the universities are multi-tiered
- Multitude of educational organizations also asking for university support
- Well-known university experts are not always the best resources for local efforts

FISCAL HEALTH APRIL 11, 2003

Introduction

The meeting began with a discussion of the effects on the city and the universities of the deteriorating economy. The state budget crisis will result in large cuts in the local aid that Cambridge receives from the state; the working assumption is a 15% cut. The universities have experienced declines in the value of their endowments and are concerned that the federal budget and especially the looming tax cuts will significantly decrease their research grants and student aid funding. Nevertheless, Cambridge has a strong economy, with reserves and excess levy capacity, and Harvard and MIT are strong, successful institutions.

The universities own a significant amount of land, which is exempt from property taxes, the city's main source of tax revenue. On the other hand, the institutions are an enormous part of what makes Cambridge so desirable to the biotech and knowledge-based companies that are the major commercial entities in today's Cambridge. Federal research funds basic science research at these universities, these research discoveries lead to entrepreneurial spin-off applications developed in Cambridge by people who want and need the academic and scientific community provided by the institutions. They also want the vibrant, diverse community and quality of life that Cambridge provides and that can be important to whether a brilliant scientist chooses MIT or Harvard over Stanford, etc. Similarly, the affordability of housing in Cambridge and the quality of the public schools are also important to the success of the institutions.

Opportunities For Joint Action

- Better way to understand and tell the economic development story: understanding the key elements of the current innovation and knowledge based economy
- Joint economic data developed through city's work, chamber, universities
- Supporting Cambridge as a place where innovative people desire to be:
 - Livability, Authenticity
 - Schools
 - Affordable housing generally and also faculty and affiliate housing
 - Neighborhoods
 - Thriving arts
 - Open space
 - Values: openness and tolerance
- Better ways to utilize the thinking power and expertise of Universities: urban planning, other disciplines
- Efforts to reduce health care costs
- Efforts to reduce energy costs

Dilemmas

Limited geography for multitude of needs: globally driven University expansion, neighborhood cohesion, authenticity preservation, changing technology and the associated needs

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LIST OF MEETING ATTENDEES

February 26, 2003

Convened: 12:46 p.m.
Councillor David P. Maher, Chair
Vice Mayor Davis, Vice Chair
Councillor Murphy
Margaret Drury, City Clerk
Elaine McGrath, City Clerk's Office
Roberta Miller, facilitator and trainer
Mary Power, Senior Director of Community Relations for Harvard University
Sarah Gallop, Co-Director of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
Stash Horowitz, 12 Florence Street
Elie Yarden, 143 Pleasant Street
John Pitkin, 18 Fayette Street
John Moot, 44 Coolidge Hill Road
Adjourned: 2:10 p.m.

March 5, 2003

Convened: 12:55 p.m.
Councillor David P. Maher, Chair
Vice Mayor Davis, Vice Chair
Councillor Murphy
Margaret Drury, City Clerk
Roberta Miller, facilitator and trainer
Mary Power, Senior Director of Community Relations for Harvard University
Sarah Gallop, Co-Director of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
William Van Schalkwyck, Director, Environmental Programs and Risk Mgt., M.I.T.
Daniel Winograd, Deputy Director, Senior Counsel's Office, M.I.T.
Tom Vautin, Associate Vice President for Facilities and Environmental Services, Harvard
Owen O'Reardon, City Engineer
John Balduc, Environmental Planner, Community Development Department
John Moot, 44 Coolidge Hill Road
Stash Horowitz, 12 Florence Street
Adjourned: 2:48 p.m.

March 26, 2003

Convened: 12:50 p.m.
Councillor David P. Maher, Chair

Vice Mayor Davis, Vice Chair
Councillor Brian Murphy
Margaret Drury, City Clerk
Roberta Miller, facilitator and trainer
Mary Power, Senior Director of Community Relations for Harvard University
Sarah Gallop, Co-Director of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
Paul Parravano, Co-Director of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
Mary Ann Jarvis, Community Relations, Harvard University
Paul Karoff, Lesley University
Rachel Jellinek, Office of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
Robert W. Healy, Cambridge City Manager
Stash Horowitz, 12 Florence Street
Adjourned: 2:30 p.m.

April 1, 2003

Convened: 10:20 a.m.
Councillor David P. Maher, Chair
Vice Mayor Davis, Vice Chair
Councillor Brian Murphy
Councillor E. Denise Simmons
Ruby Pierce, Educational Liaison for Mayor Sullivan
Margaret Drury, City Clerk
Roberta Miller, facilitator and trainer
Mary Power, Senior Director of Community Relations for Harvard University
Sarah Gallop, Co-Director of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
Paul Parravano, Co-Director of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
Mary Ann Jarvis, Community Relations, Harvard University
Paul Karoff, Vice President, Community Affairs, Lesley University
Rachel Jellinek, Office of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
Adjourned: 12:05 p.m.

April 11, 2003

Convened: 9:15 p.m.
Councillor David P. Maher, Chair
Vice Mayor Davis, Vice Chair
Councillor Brian Murphy
Margaret Drury, City Clerk
Roberta Miller, facilitator and trainer
Mary Power, Senior Director of Community Relations for Harvard University
Jane Curlette, Associate Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, Harvard
Sarah Gallop, Co-Director of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
John Curry, Executive Vice President, M.I.T.

Steven Marsh, Senior Director of Real Estate, M.I.T.
Rachel Jellinek, Office of Government and Community Relations, M.I.T.
Paul Karoff, Vice President, Community Affairs, Lesley University
Robert W. Healy, Cambridge City Manager
Louis DePasquale, Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs
Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development
Stash Horowitz, 12 Florence Street
Elie Yarden, 143 Pleasant Street
John Pitkin, 18 Fayette Street
Tom Lucey, President, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce
Adjourned: 11:45 p.m.

S-209

Committee Report #9

A communication was received
from D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk,
transmitting a report
from Councillor David P. Maher,
Chair of the University
Relations Committee, for a series of
public meetings held on February 26,
March 5, March 26, April 1 and
April 11, 2003 to
discuss opportunities for city and
university dialogue and collaboration.

In City Council June 9, 2003

**REPORT ACCEPTED.
PLACED ON FILE.**