

### THE COMMITTEE

When I was inaugurated as a City Councilor in January of 1978 two things were apparent to me: The City of Cambridge is committed to the provision of human services to its citizens, particularly those in special need, nonetheless, the delivery of these services has been fragmented, disorganized and not very cost efficient. It was clear that a structural reorganization was imperative if Cambridge citizens were to receive the full benefit of city services and the Cambridge taxpayer was to feel that precious and hard earned tax dollars were being spent wisely and well.

This goal was all the more urgent given the fever of Proposition 13 that was sweeping across the land in the form of budget slashing that was all too often aimed at the human services. Can there be any question that those who are most vulnerable to the slash of the budget knife are those very people in our society who are already themselves most vulnerable? If even well-managed systems were in trouble then clearly ill managed ones were endangered; and along with them more members of our community who look to the human services for the enrichment and at times the very maintenance of their lives.

I prevailed upon our newly inaugurated Mayor, Thomas Danehy, to create what had never before existed, a City Council Committee on Human Services. The Mayor was gracious and understanding enough to do so and proceeded as well to appoint me as chairperson of the committee with Councilors Frisoli and Vellucci as the remaining members. By identifying the

human services as a functional whole within its own framework, the Mayor and Council took an important step toward the realization of the restructuring that was necessary in the various service agencies.

The major specific goal of this committee has been the orderly and planned creation of a Department of Human Services which would bring to our service agencies a humane, comprehensive, and efficient style of management. Along the way we have also advocated and assisted more limited programs that fall within our general realm of jurisdiction. In the space that follows I would like to briefly summarize the more important of these activities.

#### PLANNING WITH THE AGENCIES

The committee has met on a number of occasions with important Human Service leaders from the community in order to assess the various needs and plans for a more fruitful future. Central to meetings have been the board members and staff of Cambridge Community Services (CCS). Cambridge Community Services has truly been a partner of the city in its planning efforts and has helped to focus on the necessary integration of services provided by public, private and non-private sector. At these meetings, the groundwork was laid for the various steps that would ensue if a Department of Human Services was created to oversee the delivery of services.

The most ambitious and public of these meetings took place in December of 1978. This meeting was called in order to bring all the human service providers together to assess their needs, acquaint them with each others needs and most importantly, to state the case for human services to the public. The response was overwhelming. Over one hundred agencies from

Cambridge were represented. State Senator LoPresti, Representatives Lombardi and Graham and the Lieutenant Governor's Administrative Assistant all were present. We felt it was vital that policy leaders from state government be present so that the needs of the Cambridge community would be well-known and protected when critical funding and policy decisions were being made by a newly elected government at the State House. Media coverage of the meeting was extensive and communicated the message that Cambridge was not about to abandon its heritage of commitment to human needs. I believe our State Delegation left knowing that Cambridge people were dedicated and sincere in their desire to serve their constituents and were willing as well to face up to serious organizational problems.

#### DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

In March of 1979, the City Manager initiated, through the Cambridge Community Development, a planning process for a Department of Human Services. From March through June, planning staff reviewed the large number of existing needs assessments (dating back a decade) and evaluations of municipal human services in Cambridge; met with a significant sample of staff from the Recreation Department, Community Schools, the Youth Resources Bureau, and the Council on Aging, both individually and in groups, and reviewed models of human service systems which have proved effective in other cities.

As a result of these activities, a working structure was proposed for the department in June. That structure relies on a neighborhood based system of services, with a central administration focused on resource development, training and technical assistance, and planning. A detailed

description is attached as an addendum to this report. The proposed structure has served, as anticipated, as a concrete starting point for discussions with citizen groups, agency staff, other human service providers in the public and private sectors, and, of course, the City Council. Some of the issues and concerns raised to date include:

- clear definition of the responsibilities and authority of city councils
- retention of the community control inherent in the community schools process
- closer coordination with other relevant city services, such as the School Department, the Cambridge Hospital, Health Centers and Health Department.

In response, meetings have been initiated with representatives of the School Department and the Cambridge Hospital's planning unit. These meetings will continue in coming months. At the beginning of September, the Human Services Planning Staff will meet with the Recreation Commission and each of the fourteen Community Schools Councils, as well as continue discussion with the Community Schools Advisory Council and the Commission, to begin developing ways to address their concerns about the proposed structure. The planning staff will meet with other interested neighborhood-based or special interest citizen groups to solicit their input. Discussions with staff around organization and procedures will also continue.

A number of planning tasks remain. These efforts include development of clear job descriptions for the department, staff development and training packages, and procedures for budgeting and resource allocation. A review of the municipal facilities now used for human service activities, including the facility name, programs and target populations, hours,

responsibility for access and an estimate of costs is currently underway. It is anticipated that by early December a revised structure for the department and a detailed implementation plan will be available.

#### COMMISSION ON THE HANDICAPPED

During 1978 the committee met with several individuals who were concerned about insuring the rights of handicapped citizens. The city government continuously albeit inadvertently violates these rights most often by failing to provide access to facilities, meetings, events, and services. In an older city like Cambridge, this problem is especially acute in that most of our buildings were constructed long before access to the handicapped was a mandatory feature of building construction.

A small, dedicated group of volunteers representing various handicaps was assembled and began to meet regularly to make plans for helping the city to help the handicapped help themselves. All the while, specific tasks were undertaken such as beginning to audit city buildings for architectural barriers, reviewing plans for new construction of sidewalks (curbcuts), buildings (the new high school), and parks (Clarendon Ave. and Riverside areas). Currently, waivers are sought from the State Architectural Barriers Board so that work on City Hall and the Annex to assure accessibility may begin.

The committee drafted legislation which would create a Commission ON THE HANDICAPPED by Ordinance. This Commission will serve as a central agency to insure that handicapped citizens in our community are guaranteed full access and equality of opportunity. I am delighted to note that on August 6, 1979, the Cambridge City Council voted to pass this Ordinance to a second reading. It is gratifying to have been able to assist this

dedicated group of volunteers in achieving this goal. I am confident this final adoption will take place in September and that the City Manager will then appoint to the Commission a group of people who will diligently advocate and protect the rights of the handicapped in the city of Cambridge in conformance with federal laws such as 504, state regulations and a fundamental of decency and justice.

The Commission has its work cut out for it, but if my experience with our volunteer task force is any indication of things to come, then I fully expect Cambridge to take the lead in the near future on matters concerning the handicapped.

#### ALCOHOLIC EMERGENCY SERVICES

Since November of 1974 the Cambridge and Somerville Program for Alcoholic Rehabilitation (CASPAR) has sought in vain to find a site for an emergency station for street alcoholics. This facility is intended as an alternative to the street for these people so that they can get in and out of the elements, have soup and coffee and get some company, conversation and support. During the winter months this facility literally could mean the difference between life and death as was learned last winter.

The committee met with representatives from CASPAR and offered its full support to them in their research.

Thanks to the incredible tenacity and dedication of the people from CASPAR, good news can now be announced. CASPAR is leasing land from MIT on Albany Street. Trailers have been ordered and will arrive in September allowing an October opening of this emergency facility just in

time to be available before the devastating New England cold sets in. This facility will be a boost to the entire community in that it will help keep the alcoholics off the streets and out of the doorways while at the same time providing shelter and warmth to this particularly vulnerable segment of our community.

#### DAY CARE

In February of 1979, the committee met with the Day Care Alliance. On their own, the various day care centers throughout the city have joined forces to bring the type of comprehensive effort to their services which we seek throughout the entire spectrum of human services. At this meeting, it was decided that the committee would support the Alliance in any way possible particularly in pushing for the implementation of a sliding fee scale which would help those more in need to break the endless cycle of economic dependence which flat fee day care necessarily fosters.

I am pleased to announce that the state budget now includes provisions for the sliding fee scale that I have advocated for some years. Additionally, I testified, for the committee, before the State Rate Setting Commission this summer and am pleased to announce the new rate structure to be more in line with C.P.I. and commensurate with qualifications required for providers.

#### FUTURE WORK PLANS

The committee has two major items of business that it will pursue during the remainder of the legislation session. Both items attempt to reduce the human costs of the energy crisis that is increasingly upon us.

The first concerns the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Emergency Fuel Funding. This coming winter will be especially severe for the elderly and families of modest means. The rising costs of home heating fuel, the deepening of the general economic recession and the established policy of fuel companies to demand cash on delivery all combine to place tremendous pressure on elderly and families and raise the possibility of little or no heat in certain homes. The Advisory Committee will be charged with the responsibility of formulating a plan of action to see that this does not happen.

The second item comes directly from my experience as a member of the National League of Cities' Task Force on Youth and information which I received while in Washington in August at one of the Task Force's meetings. I will initiate steps which will result in a federal grant application for a weatherization program which will utilize youth employees. The city has already developed a household weatherization program but limited funds have kept the program limited. New programs in Washington may help us to greatly expand this important energy conservation project while at the same time employing a substantial number of Cambridge young people.

#### CONCLUSION

The City of Cambridge is blessed with a remarkable human service institution which is headed by a person who personifies the very best in humane, creative, cost efficient management. Mr. Joseph Sakey, Director of Libraries in the City of Cambridge, has written in the December 1978 issue of The Library Journal a statement that is an appropriate closing to this report.



The real and only challenge to our political leaders is to make the delivery of human services an even more fundamental necessity in the lives of all of us, to turn the argument of selfishness around and demonstrate that self-interest is best served by supporting the common interest.

## ADDENDUM



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

City Hall Annex - Inman & Broadway - Cambridge, Mass. 02139

(617) 876-6800  
EXTENSION 344

May 31, 1979

### I. The City's Role in Human Services

In 1970, the Cambridge census documented a dramatic decline in mid-Cambridge among the population under 18 years of age. The mid-decade census confirmed the trend. Yet for FY'80, the city has targeted \$33,015 for a teen center at the Longfellow School, the largest single expenditure the city will make for a teen center. By what process was that decision made? Who had input? Does that allocation reflect current priorities among neighborhood residents?

Under the Community Schools program, city revenues support as little as 30% of the total budget in some school programs and as much as 80% of others. Do these figures reflect differences in the quality of the programs or in the needs of the citizens in those areas or in the distribution and accessibility of private services in the respective neighborhoods?

The Youth Resources Bureau, which is mandated to serve youth in the city, depends upon CETA slots for most key outreach staff positions. The Recreation Department receives almost \$90,000 for part-time teen center workers. Does the difference reflect the relative cost benefits of the programs or a documented evaluation of the effectiveness of one program over another in reaching youth? To what extent does either program meet its goals and objectives? What are the city's priorities for youth services?

The fact is that we simply do not know the answers to these and many other similar questions.

In 1979-80, municipal recreation, leisure, youth and senior citizen agencies alone will consume over \$1,400,000 in city dollars. This figure does not include those resources expended on facilities nor those allocated through CETA slots nor other "hidden" city costs.

Despite the magnitude of these expenditures, the city has no mechanisms for assessing human service needs, for setting policies or service priorities, for coordinating the human service activities of the public and private sectors, for ensuring staff accountability, or for measuring the impact of specific city programs.

The establishment of a Department of Human Services would bring to the city, and to human services, benefits in at least three areas: Management, services, and budgeting.

First, through the Department of Human Services, the city could

- assess needs and set policy and priorities
- involve citizens in policy making
- maximize use of administrative and support services
- insure coordination with other city departments around the impact of their activities on human services
- develop, modify, and phase out services in response to changing community needs, priorities, and resources

In addition, a Department could also help human service programs by providing

- training for staff
- assistance in obtaining external funds
- evaluations and recommendations for program improvement
- needs assessments for long range planning

Finally, such a Department, operating on a planned program budgeting system, would

- generate the cost data necessary for informed planning in the face of spending caps
- measure the cost effectiveness and the cost benefit of various programs

Since March, the planning process for the Department of Human Services has been focused on two distinct, but interlocking, tasks: (1) to design the technical and support services required to build a comprehensive human services system city-wide; and (2) to develop an action plan for consolidating those programs currently administered by the Recreation Department, Community Schools, and the Youth Resource Bureau. The Council on Aging will also participate in the new Department as a unique body both overseeing direct municipal services to senior citizens and providing broad planning and support services for the elderly of Cambridge.

Over a two to four year period, we project that additional municipal human service activities will be integrated into the Department.

## II. Proposed Structure

On the basis of the information gathered to date from interviews with staff in the targeted agencies, discussions with representatives of other departments in the city and with private groups, as well as an extensive review of human service delivery systems in other cities,

we have developed a preliminary set of criteria for city services during the first phase of the Department. Currently these criteria include:

- minimal disruption of current direct services
- utilization of existing staff and staff capabilities
- increased accountability for the large number of field staff
- participation of neighborhood advisory groups
- conformity with the neighborhood orientation of the city
- maximum development of a system for service delivery
- initiation of additional functions appropriate for a comprehensive Department of Human Services, e.g., information and referral

Under the new Department of Human Services, services will be coordinated through a series of neighborhood units which will provide management for all city service delivery sites in the neighborhood. In order to facilitate the transition to a Department of Human Services, each of the city's fourteen neighborhood will have its own unit during the initial year of implementation. As the service delivery system itself is refined and as the management skills of current personnel are upgraded, the number of local management units will be reduced, though the number of actual service delivery sites may remain constant.

Each neighborhood unit would have a service team attached consisting of a coordinating supervisor and a group of service specialists. The exact composition of each team would be negotiated on the basis of the overall service priorities of the city and those priorities established for each neighborhood by a local advisory group. Under such a system, local concerns remain the focus of attention, while the city retains discretion in setting city-wide goals and objectives.

Additional goals established for the Department of Human Services call for a systematic increase in the Department's capacity in terms of the technical and support services available both to direct municipal operations and to programs supported through the city. These areas include:

- management systems
- planned program budgeting
- fiscal accountability
- program evaluation
- planning capabilities, including generation of baseline data on programs, performance measures for staff, and indices of consumer satisfaction

The decision to emphasize these functions within the Department is an important one. Since our long term objectives is to maximize the availability of quality human services in our city, while living within current fiscal constraints, we must have a Department of Human Services which can

- leverage significant external dollars

- account for the federal, state, and private human service dollars currently being spent in the city
- establish selection criteria, training plans, and evaluation measures to ensure accountability and performance on the part of personnel and programs
- develop "trigger mechanisms" for phasing out low priority programs in order to free resources to meet those needs with a higher priority

### III. Co-location

In order for the Department of Human Services to achieve significant improvement in performance over that of existing agencies, two changes must be made. The structure of the new Department must make it as difficult as possible for individuals to do "business as usual"; and the central staff must be co-located to facilitate interaction among personnel.

The most desirable site for such a co-location is the second floor of 57 Inman Street. Currently, that space houses Community Schools, the Council on Aging, and also the Arts Council. There is approximately 3700 square feet of additional office space available in which to house the Recreation Department and the Youth Resources Bureau.



# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

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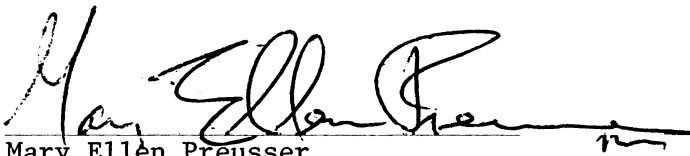
Mary Ellen Preusser  
City Councillor

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

August 28, 1979  
Cambridge, MA 02139

With this report I would like to update my colleagues and the community on the activities of this committee and related developments over the past year and a half.

For the Committee,

  
Mary Ellen Preusser,  
Chairperson

S-487

Comm. from Councillor Mary Ellen Preusser,  
Chairperson, Committee on Human Services,  
transmitting report of the activities of  
said committee.

In City Council,  
Sept. 17, 1979

9/17/79

Report Accepted -  
Placed on File