

City of Cambridge

The Special Committee on CASPAR held a public meeting on September 24, 1992, called to order by Chair of the Committee, Councillor Jonathan S. Myers at 12:12 p.m. Present at the meeting were Councillor Jonathan S. Myers, Chair, Councillor Sheila T. Russell, Councillor Alice K. Wolf, Carl Barron, President of Central Square Businessmen's Association, Judge Lawrence Feloney, Past President from CASPAR, Catherine Hoffman, Chair Ward 5 Democratic Committee, Dr. Gary Stiller, Representative for Green Street Neighborhood Group, Anita Shipman, Representative for the Council on Aging, Jacqueline Clarke, Coordinator of the Area 4 Crime Task Force, Rev. Williard Williams, Representative for the Central Square Clergy, and Ms. Sarah Gallop, Representative of M.I.T. and Mr. Win Poor, Director of CASPAR. The Chair also recognized, Ms. Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager of Human Services, as an Ex-Officio of the Committee.

After requesting that members of the Committee introduce themselves, Councillor Myers began with a discussion of the role of the Committee. He explained that the three City Councillors were appointed by the Mayor. They met prior to this meeting to discuss the issues and to summarize what needs to be done in this committee. They decided to invite working members of Committee to bring the viewpoint of the different perspectives on this issue, to attempt to come to an agreement and to make their final recommendations to the entire body of the Cambridge City Council, and to the City Manager. Councillor Myers expressed his hope that the process could result in agreement of all members, but noted that the City Councillors on the Committee have a responsibility to report and recommend to the Council, even if no agreement is reached.

The next topic of discussion was the principles to guide the committee. Councillor Myers distributed a list of three principles upon which the three Councillors had agreed in the preliminary meeting:

1. The placement of CASPAR into a permanent facility is a priority.
2. The process must be geared to hearing and understanding everyone's point of view.
3. This Committee has taken no position on the proposed site. The proposed site and other alternatives will be evaluated as part of Committee's proceedings.

After discussion, the Committee agreed upon these principle, and also agreed to add a forth principles, proposed by Cathy Hoffman, Chair, Ward 5 Committee:

4. The Committee sees a need to involve the community in the decision-making process and the final decision that is made.

Councillor Russell asked where was the representative of the Cambridge Police Department who will be the Ex-Officio for their department. Councillor Myers said he spoke to Superintendent Walter Boyle and he assured Councillor Myers that there will be a representative.

Councillor Myers then turned the discussion to the issues confronting the Committee. He requested that each member of the Committee speak briefly about the issues from his or her perspective.

Ms. Sarah Gallop, the representative from M.I.T. discussed briefly 240 Albany Street, which she said was always expected to be a temporary site, and described the efforts M.I.T. has made to work with the City and various agencies to identify a permanent site. She also spoke about the deadline of the property to be purchased, which is 12/31/92 because M.I.T.'s option expires at that time she said M.I.T.'s proposal is that M.I.T would purchase and rehab the Green Street building in exchange and the City of Cambridge would turn over ownership of certain streets and sidewalks that have been mentioned in the process of negotiations with the City of Cambridge.

Councillor Russell spoke about the concerns of the neighbors, and that the committee should try to learn about the community's point of view. She agreed to be responsible for looking into alternative sites.

Councillor Wolf spoke about the importance of the facility and how much it is needed, and expressed hope that the concerns of the siting issue are resolved.

Carl Barron, President of Central Square Business Association said that he supports finding a permanent location but that he was speaking as an individual and not for the Business Association opposes this location. Central Square is not a safe place to walk, or do business. There should be fair treatment to neighborhood. There will be two meetings with the Central Square Businessmem's Association. - Pro-Caspar - Anti-Caspar.

Mr. Gary Stiller, resident and dentist, spoke for the Concerned Neighbors of Green Street. A group which has been organized to come together and talk about the proposed shelter. They are opposed to this location, there are already too many social services and conflicts in Central Square.

Mr. Will Poor, Executive Director of CASPAR Shelter said that the CASPAR shelter served 1300 persons over last year. The facility is falling apart and they are eager to find another facility. CASPAR have done a good job, and believes it can make a Shelter work closer to Central Square.

Cathy Hoffman, Chair of Ward 5 spoke about her role, to represent Ward 5 and to take information back to committee. There is a need for CASPAR. If site is going to be in Cambridgeport, neighborhood fears should be listened to and responded to.

Cathy Hoffman also spoke about the importance of the committee being involved with helping the community process if the Committee reaches a viable agreement.

Rev. Williams noted that the Central Square Ministry hasn't met yet, so he is speaking as a individual. He spoke of the stereotypic attitudes of people against the CASPAR shelter. The need to reach a decision based on the facts not emotion.

Jackie Clarke, Coordinator of Area 4 Crime Task force said that the first concern should be the dignity of the CASPAR residents.

Anita Shipman, representing the Council on Aging, spoke about her role on the committee. She said that she was there to hear about the plans and to bring the information back to her committee. She stated that substance abuse doesn't discriminate. There are senior citizens who are substance abusers: however they are concerned, as the new Senior Center site was close to the proposed CASPAR site, and that the neighbors involved in COA has expressed their concerns.

The Committee agreed that the following information was information the Committee should have to make progress in this process:

Information essential for the Committee's understanding.

- o Tour of existing facility - CASPAR
- o Impact of CASPAR facility on proposed location from a service perspective, addressing issues such as hours of operation, outreach, to community, expected flow of foot traffic, and other issues related to the neighborhood - CASPAR. Include information about client population.
- o Exploration of alternative site possibilities - Councillor Russell.
- o Number of residential treatment facilities in Central Square and other parts of the City - Department of Human Services.

- o History of previous site searches - City Manager, M.I.T., CASPAR. - Information from the City Manager to tie them together with reasons why previous sites were not exceptable.
- o Analysis of proposed terms of deal, such as city streets, exploring other options, and whether there are other options - Councillor Wolf.
- o M.I.T. and terms of purchase agreement for proposed site - M.I.T. What is the nature of the agreement. Is there flexibility?
- o Historical perspective from CASPAR - CASPAR.
- o Community information sharing process - Chair, CSBA, and neighborhood groups.
- o Other information requested by Committee.
- o Criteria for evaluation of impact on neighborhood and places where similar siting has occurred.
- o Information from Police Department re: crime stats - CASPAR from Police Department re: crime stats - CASPAR clients.
- o Survey of street people in Harvard & Central Square.

Councillor Myers then opened the meeting to public comment. Mr. Arlen Wolpert, of 411 Franklin Street, discussed the possibility of system dynamics model. More facilities are needed, and a positive field growth needs to be incorporated. The system dynamics group of the Sloan School of Management could come and do survey, system dynamics concept is a way to put these facts together.

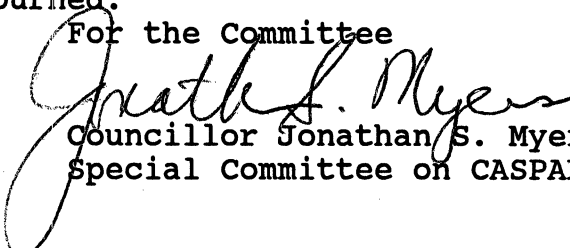
Andrew Laschenske, 675 Massachusetts Avenue asked whether Somerville has done enough to support CASPAR and what service they receive.

Buck Ewing, 801 Massachusetts Avenue, said the population of the homeless and the mentally ill and the alcoholic population are often an invisible group to residents, and, likewise residents are invisible to them. He also said that there needs to be a direct tie selection criteria are excellent.

Ms. Catherine Park of Pleasant Street spoke of her fear as she has a one year old child.

The meeting was adjourned.

For the Committee


Councillor Jonathan S. Myers, Chair
Special Committee on CASPAR

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S-824

COMMITTEE REPORT

Special Committee on CASPAR reprot
for a hearing held on Thursday,
September 24, 1992 regarding a
permanent facility placement of
CASPAR.

In City Council,

October 19, 1992

*Report accepted
Placed on file*