



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

To Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Date February 12, 1985

From Paul E. Healy, City Clerk

Reference

Subject Report of the Committee on Environment
dated 2/11/85

Enclosed is a copy of the report of Councillor Duehay from the Environment Committee, which he requested be made a part of the Council record and further, that the recommendations of the Committee be adopted.

The entire report and recommendations are forwarded to you for your consideration.

PEH/mh

Enclosure

City of Cambridge

In City Council February 11, 1985

The Cambridge City Council Committee on Environment conducted two extensive public hearing on December 11, 1984, and January 9, 1985, in an effort to discuss in full the recently issued report by the consulting firm of Camp, Dresser and McKee relative to the results of the Cambridge Dump Site Comprehensive Monitoring Program. The committee, in a more general sense, also discussed the problem of toxic waste dumping throughout the general area.

Vice Mayor Francis H. Duehay, Chairman of the Committee, opened the first meeting, which was held at the M.E. Fitzgerald Elementary School on Rindge Avenue, Cambridge, by stating that it was imperative the City Council as well as the community-at-large understand the potential harmful effects of toxic waste at the former dump site. He further stated that the City has had an on-going process of monitoring the site and that the Camp, Dresser and McKee report was the latest in a series of analyses of the area. He stated the City was in receipt of our reports previously submitted by the consulting firm of Haley and Aldrich, Inc., outlining the installation of ten gas monitoring wells in and around the New Street landfill area. Vice Mayor Duehay further stated the City was in receipt of a report from the State Department of Environmental Quality Engineering commending the City for its good judgement and decisiveness in undertaking a variety of studies as well as offering some criteria for continued evaluation.

Councillor Alice K. Wolf stated the City has an important opportunity to provide a new athletic facility for the City and that it was crucial that the public be certain that it is going to be a safe place.

Vice Mayor Duehay stated his intent to allow the consultants and various technical experts to present their findings and statements to the committee and once that has been done to receive testimony from the community and city staff.

At this time the committee heard from William Callahan, Senior Vice President of Camp, Dresser and McKee who presented an overview of the contract his company has with the City and the report they submitted as a result.

Also present from Camp, Dresser and McKee and providing an insight to the committee were: Donald Muldoon, David Newman and John Kissida. Mr. Muldoon outlined the specific objectives of this study which were as follows:

1. To determine design criterion for the proposal site drainage system and detention area.
2. To estimate the maximum groundwater evaluations at the site;
3. To estimate the relationship and potential impacts of the dumpsite on Fresh Pond via groundwater monument; and
4. To collect additional field data on combustible gas levels beneath the site, and document the performance of the existing vent trench with respect to preventing off-site migration of combustible gases.

Mr. Muldoon stated that the purpose of the study was actually more to define symptoms rather than prescribe a cure. He says they took a conceptual approach to the problem. This included he said, doing an endangerment assessment, identifying any on-site toxic materials and determining a passway of migration as well as determining the impact of the water supply pathway. He further stated that their study concluded some low level contaminants in some ground wells within the area, there was no cause for alarm. He stated that this will be monitored again in six months.

Councillor Wolf raised several questions relative to the contaminant levels and whether or not they could endanger the ground water. She further questioned the actual magnitude of the consultants contract and stated she was concerned whether it was broad enough.

City Manager Robert Healy responded by stating that the City was committed to ensuring the community that this area is safe from toxic waste and stated he will continue to have this area monitored based on the recommendations of the DEQE.

Vice Mayor questioned whether or not any attempt has been made to determine what kind of material had actually been dumped on the site. Mr. Callahan responded by stating their study did not take that into consideration, but rather it review the existing pathways for any contaminants to exit. He further stated in response to Mr. Duehay's question, the only way to actually determine the existence of any toxic waste on the site would be to unearth what is on the site, and he thought that was unnecessary.

At this time the committee reviewed a slide presentation by David Newman of Camp, Dresser and McKee regarding their latest study.

Once the presentation was complete, Councillor Wolf questioned whether or not any recommendations could be made regarding upgrading the current ground water system without effecting the water supply.

Mr. Callahan responded by stating that having the water level high, as much as it is possible, at the Fresh Pond Reservoir and a good mixture of manganese would be the best recommendation.

Both Vice Mayor Duehay and Councillor Danehy questioned future monitoring schedules. Mr. Callahan responded by stating that new samples should be taken within six months to a year. Councillor Danehy further questioned Camp, Dresser and McKee as to what was the most comprehensive test that could be taken of this site in order to ensure the City and its residents that the area is free of toxic chemicals.

Mr. Muldoon responded by stating that a complete sweep of "priority pollutants" could be done by digging some additional ground wells. Vice Mayor Duehay requested that, that kind of a proposal be reduced to writing and forwarded to the City Manager.

Councillor Alfred Vellucci questioned whether or not the officials of Camp, Dresser and McKee would be willing to certify that nothing harmful to the Cambridge community is flowing into the water supply.

Mr. Callahan responded by stating that one could only certify the report they submitted as being an accurate analysis of the present conditions of the site.

Mr. Callahan further stated that their analysis concluded that 7.5 million gallons of water flows through Fresh Pond daily and of that the maximum quantity of ground-water moving through the dump and into the clay zone is 1235 gallons per day. He further stated that the water supply meets all standards required by federal and state agencies.

At this time City Manager Healy stated that the City will undertake the more comprehensive testing plan as has been suggested by Camp, Dresser and McKee.

Councillor Wolf questioned if anything could be done to ensure high water levels at Fresh Pond. Mr. John Cusack, Superintendent of the Water Department, responded by stating the Water Board in conjunction with the Water Department and Public Works Department decided to raise the water level about three years ago because it gives the department additional purifying capacity.

At this time the committee heard from David Whitman, Vice President for Administration at W. R. Grace Company. Mr. Whitman outlined the history of the company in Cambridge dating back to 1954. He further stated that Grace Company has always tried to be a good neighbor and will continue to try in the future. He gave the committee a slide presentation outlining the historical development of the company.

At this time Mark Stoler, Legal Counsel to W. R. Grace Company, stated that no bulk chemicals are stored any longer at their Whittemore Avenue site. He further stated that Healey and Aldrich Inc., had also done geotechnical studies of the area and that DEQE has determined that the chemicals on-site are non-hazardous. He stated the company has disposed of the 1600 tons of waste.

At this time Mr. Wesley Simpson, Vice President of Haley and Aldrich, Inc., outlined in detail the actual geotechnical studies which were conducted at the site. Vice Mayor Duehay questioned whether or not Grace Company has made a public disclosure relative to everything which had either been stored or manufactured at the site. Attorney Statler responded by stating any testing done is within compliance with 1983 Environmental Protection Agency guidelines and those established in 1980 when Congress enacted Superfund legislation.

Vice Mayor Duehay questioned whether or not anyone from Haley and Aldrich was aware of any other toxic chemical sites in the area. Wesley Simpson responded by stating some toxic chemical has been found on Spinelli Way but could not go into any specifics at this time. At this time Vice Mayor Duehay questioned whether or not the studies being done by the City of Cambridge are "state of the art technology." Mr. Simpson responded in the affirmative.

At this time the committee heard from Victor Karaian of the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering who re-affirmed the agency's position which was outlined in a communication to the City on June 18, 1984. He further stated that current regulations require a 2' cap on a dumpsite and that he believed Cambridge's site was somewhere between 5' and 40'. Vice Mayor Duehay questioned whether or not the City should be more aggressive and require more testing. Mr. Karaian responded by stating that local EPA offices review all reports of environmental impact statements and any further testing requirements would have to come from them.

Councillor Wolf questioned if street guidelines for each potential toxic site are set by DEQE. Mr. Karaian responded by stating his department takes each case on an individual basis.

At this time Vice Mayor Duehay recessed the hearing at 11:26 PM and stated he would reconvene a second hearing at a later date at which time public testimony will be taken by the committee.

The committee reconvened on January 9, 1985 at 6:00 PM in the auditorium of the John M. Tobin School at 197 Vassal Lane, Cambridge.

Vice Mayor Duehay opened the meeting by welcoming all those present and stated that the purpose of this hearing would be to receive testimony from members of the public who are concerned with the toxic waste issue in and around the former city dump. He further stated that eventually, at the conclusion of these hearings, a full report of the committee will be submitted to the full City Council.

At this time the committee heard from Edward Cyr, 106 Dudley Street, Cambridge, who read a prepared statement (attached) on behalf of the North Cambridge Toxic Alert Committee outlining their concerns relative to the possibility of hazardous chemicals existing in their area. He further stated that members of the committee had gone door to door in the neighborhood to identify the concerns of the community and they had discovered enormous interest. Furthermore, he said people clearly do not want testing such as what's being done at Arthur D. Little Company, nor do they want a toxic waste on the city dump or W. R. Grace Company.

At this time Hillary Frank of 13 Linden Avenue, Cambridge, stated that she had called the W. R. Grace Company to request some additional testing results which were supposed to have been done since the last meeting of the committee. However, she stated that she was informed those results could not be released at this time. Wendy Baruch, 18 Bolton Street, asked a series of questions including: whether or not new fencing will be constructed around the former dump site; whether signs could be placed on the fence and whether there was an environmental official within the city who could evaluate the data that she has been collecting on the various sites.

Vice Mayor Duehay responded by saying the appropriate individual would be the Health Commission, Dr. Melvin Chalfen. He further stated the issues of a fence and signs were good ones and will be included in the report of this committee.

Vice Mayor Duehay questioned an earlier statement by Mr. Cyr regarding high incidences of skin rashes and eye irritations. Ms. Frank responded by stating this was part of the information collected from members of the Toxic Alert Committee who went door to door.

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Mr. Cyr stated that another thing his group discovered was that there is a pump within the Rindge Towers complex which functions twenty-four hours a day to keep the water flow from that complex.

The committee next heard from Daniel Grossman of 47 Fenno Street who voiced some concern relative to the January report issued by Camp, Dresser and McKee. He questioned why there were no ground wells dug in the middle of the dump and the fact that he found no correlation between the wells which were dug and the former clay pits.

At this time John Matthers of 63 Avon Hill Street stated although he too was concerned with the problems in the North Cambridge area, he was more concerned with the broader problem of toxic waste and hazardous chemicals throughout the country. He urged the Congress to take big reductions in the defense budget and to use these reductions to increase the "Superfund" appropriation in order that

the Environmental Protection Agency will have the proper resources.

Also voicing concern regarding W. R. Grace and the dump site were John Seager of 28 Seagrave Road, Cambridge and Alicia Sinclair of 80 Alpine Street, Cambridge. These people questioned the ground water level in North Cambridge; the New Street pump, the need for the instruction of an emergency generator and the zink level in the area.

The committee heard from Richard Bird of 138 Sycamore Street, Somerville, who stated he has a master's degree in the area of public health and formerly was connected with the National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards. Mr. Bird outlined the historical background of the problem and stated that a comprehensive study of the entire area should be done. He further stated he has developed a questionnaire which would be sent to 200 homes in a particular area to identify concerns and toxic problems. The cost would be \$1000. He further stated the New Street pump station should be examined and the area should be checked for any additional contaminants. Furthermore, he stated a descriptive history of just what went into the dump should be provided to the city. He further stated it was important to erect a fencing system which will be properly marked if any athletic field is to be constructed.

Councillor Vellucci stated that for many years rubbish collectors would go to the Public Works Department and obtain a permit to have rubbish and bring it into the dump. He further stated such former and present companies like General Latex, B and B Chemical and Union Carbide used to dump on the Cambridge site. He further stated that although he too was concerned regarding the toxic waste issue, all testing which may still have to be done should happen as soon as possible, since the people of Cambridge have been waiting a long time for the athletic facility to be built.

Vice Mayor Duehay questioned if technical techniques are known and conducted by regular engineering firms. Mr. Bird responded by stating it is difficult work, but several qualified engineering firms in the area can conduct such studies. Councillor Wolf questioned the volatility of the athletic field area and whether or not anyone has checked it. Mr. Bird responded by stating that a check of the various gases on the site would be a good indicator. He further stated that a site lying dormant for five to ten years would allow for some deterioration and less volatility.

This ended public testimony received by the committee and at this time Vice Mayor Duehay called upon the various city staff assembled to make comments.

Mrs. Dorothy Altman, chair of the Cambridge Conservation Commission, outlined the function of the commission dating back to the 1950's up to and including the enactment of the Wetland Protection Act in the late 1970's. She further stated the commission has issued a formal order relative to the water quality in the New Street area and had issued a permit for the construction of the MBTA terminal in North Cambridge.

At this time Councillor David Sullivan stated he was concerned as to whether or not the E.P.A and DEQE were as deeply involved and aggressive in the overall monitoring and enforcement process as they should be.

Councillor Wolf questioned how the Conservation Commission assesses the data they collect. Mrs. Altman responded by stating the Commission refers a lot of material to the Water Board, City Engineer and the Health Commission. She further

stated that it may be necessary in the future to hire a consultant.

Vice Mayor Duehay questioned whether or not a mechanism was in place to insure monitoring of work that has been done at Yates Pond and at Alewife. Mrs. Altman responded by stating the commission was currently in the process of setting compliance requirements for that work. The MBTA, she said, will be required to certify they have complied with all orders issued by the Conservation Commission.

At this time Vice Mayor Duehay moved the Conservation Commission be empowered on behalf of the city to follow the entire development of the W. R. Grace property. The Vice Mayor questioned whether or not governmental fragmentation existed on such projects which require so much import, regulation and monitoring. Mrs. Altman responded by stating the commission has had a great deal of cooperation from all city departments but voiced concern regarding having the necessary personnel to conduct inspection of work after the fact.

At this time Councillor Wolf moved that the City Manager be requested to convene a working group of various municipal departments in order that there could be a cohesive group following the toxic waste issues which have been raised before this committee.

At this time the committee heard from Dr. Melvin Chalfen, Commissioner of Health and Hospitals, who outlined the historical problems relative to toxic chemicals. He further briefed the committee on various pieces of federal and state legislation which has been enacted. He further stated that one of the biggest problems he has is the coordination of data. He continued to say that currently he just does not have sufficient staff to monitor these sites and do various analyses. He further stated that although he believes the dump issue is manageable, he would recommend that testing be done for the 125 primary pollutants. Regarding an earlier statement relative to an outbreak of skin rashes in the North Cambridge area, Commissioner Chalfen stated there currently was no medical evidence of disease in the area. Vice Mayor Duehay questioned that the Commissioner provide the committee with comparative information of any future studies done in the North Cambridge area regarding skin rashes, etc.

Councillor Wolf suggested that a statistical sampling could be conducted as a way to get additional data.

Mayor Russell questioned whether any physical examinations had been done on people who had swam in the old "Jerry Pit" area. Commissioner Chalfen responded in the negative.

At this time Mrs. Barbara Ackermann, a member of the Health Policy Board, reaffirmed the statement of Commissioner Chalfen relative to inadequate staff.

At this time Vice Mayor Duehay questioned the officials present from W. R. Grace Company as to what stage their latest testing is at. Attorney Mark Stoler representing W. R. Grace responded by stating most of the recent tests were done, but more is currently on-going.

Councillor Wolf urged that the City Manager be requested to immediately establish a working group previously discussed as well as to work with the Health Commissioner regarding an expanded health survey in the North Cambridge area.

Vice Mayor Duehay stated he would prepare some conclusion and recommendations on behalf of the committee based on the hearings he has conducted. The recommendations are as follows:

1. That the City Manager compose an interdepartmental committee whose membership shall include representation as follows: the City Engineer, the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals, the Superintendent of the Water Department, the Commissioner of Public Works, the Chief of the Fire Department, the Director of the Community Development Department, the Clerk of the Water Board; and representation from the Conservation Commission and the Water Board, and any other members that the City Manager feels can contribute to the expertise of the committee. It shall be the purpose of this commission to ensure that a strategy for establishing and monitoring a comprehensive groundwater and other testing programs are developed and followed throughout the area discussed at the hearings. The committee shall meet at least monthly to share technical and planning information and to oversee testing and assessment activities in the Alewife/Fresh Pond area.
2. This committee shall compile and evaluate all existing and future studies done for the city and for any other public or private agencies.
3. This committee shall follow with great care the results of the testing now going on at the W. R. Grace site, and shall report the results of these studies in a timely fashion to the City Council, through the City Manager.
4. The City Manager is hereby requested to establish a more comprehensive groundwater monitoring program which would test for a greater number of contaminants over a wider geographical area, as he indicated at the hearing he would do.
5. The Commissioner of Health and Hospitals should conduct a health study to determine whether or not there are any adverse health effects in the population living near the areas where past dumping has occurred. An advisory committee of neighbors, members of the North Cambridge Toxic Alert, and members of the Cambridge Health Policy Board and the Cambridge Scientific Advisory Committee shall advise the Commissioner on the parameters of this study.
6. Every effort shall be made to have the results of the new groundwater monitoring and the results of the health study within 6 months, or by August 15, 1985, so that public and private development slated for this area can go forward if no adverse effects are found. Testing will, however, be thorough enough to assure the complete safety of the entire area.

The hearing was adjourned at 9:27 PM.

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Councillor Wolf raised several questions relative to the contaminant levels and whether or not they could endanger the ground water. She further questioned the actual magnitude of the consultants contract and stated she was concerned whether it was broad enough.

City Manager Robert Healy responded by stating that the City was committed to ensuring the community that this area is safe from toxic waste and stated he will continue to have this area monitored based on the recommendations of the DEQE.

Vice Mayor questioned whether or not any attempt has been made to determine what kind of material had actually been dumped on the site. Mr. Callahan responded by stating their study did not take that into consideration, but rather it review the existing pathways for any contaminants to exit. He further stated in response to Mr. Duehay's question, the only way to actually determine the existence of any toxic waste on the site would be to unearth what is on the site, and he thought that was unnecessary.

At this time the committee reviewed a slide presentation by David Newman of Camp, Dresser and McKee regarding their latest study.

Once the presentation was complete, Councillor Wolf questioned whether or not any recommendations could be made regarding upgrading the current ground water system without effecting the water supply.

Mr. Callahan responded by stating that having the water level high, as much as it is possible, at the Fresh Pond Reservoir and a good mixture of manganese would be the best recommendation.

Both Vice Mayor Duehay and Councillor Danehy questioned future monitoring schedules. Mr. Callahan responded by stating that new samples should be taken within six months to a year. Councillor Danehy further questioned Camp, Dresser and McKee as to what was the most comprehensive test that could be taken of this site in order to ensure the City and its residents that the area is free of toxic chemicals.

Mr. Muldoon responded by stating that a complete sweep of "priority pollutants" could be done by digging some additional ground wells. Vice Mayor Duehay requested that, that kind of a proposal be reduced to writing and forwarded to the City Manager.

Councillor Alfred Vellucci questioned whether or not the officials of Camp, Dresser and McKee would be willing to certify that nothing harmful to the Cambridge community is flowing into the water supply.

Mr. Callahan responded by stating that one could only certify the report they submitted as being an accurate analysis of the present conditions of the site.

City of Cambridge

In City Council February 11, 1985.....

The Cambridge City Council Committee on Environment conducted two extensive public hearing on December 11, 1984, and January 9, 1985, in an effort to discuss in full the recently issued report by the consulting firm of Camp, Dresser and McKee relative to the results of the Cambridge Dump Site Comprehensive Monitoring Program. The committee, in a more general sense, also discussed the problem of toxic waste dumping throughout the general area.

Vice Mayor Francis H. Duehay, Chairman of the Committee, opened the first meeting, which was held at the M.E. Fitzgerald Elementary School on Rindge Avenue, Cambridge, by stating that it was imperative the City Council as well as the community-at-large understand the potential harmful effects of toxic waste at the former dump site. He further stated that the City has had an on-going process of monitoring the site and that the Camp, Dresser and McKee report was the latest in a series of analyses of the area. He stated the City was in receipt of our reports previously submitted by the consulting firm of Haley and Aldrich, Inc., outlining the installation of ten gas monitoring wells in and around the New Street landfill area. Vice Mayor Duehay further stated the City was in receipt of a report from the State Department of Environmental Quality Engineering commending the City for its good judgement and decisiveness in undertaking a variety of studies as well as offering some criteria for continued evaluation.

Councillor Alice K. Wolf stated the City has an important opportunity to provide a new athletic facility for the City and that it was crucial that the public be certain that it is going to be a safe place.

Vice Mayor Duehay stated his intent to allow the consultants and various technical experts to present their findings and statements to the committee and once that has been done to receive testimony from the community and city staff.

At this time the committee heard from William Callahan, Senior Vice President of Camp, Dresser and McKee who presented an overview of the contract his company has with the City and the report they submitted as a result.

Also present from Camp, Dresser and McKee and providing an insight to the committee were: Donald Muldoon, David Newman and John Kissida. Mr. Muldoon outlined the specific objectives of this study which were as follows:

1. To determine design criterion for the proposal site drainage system and detention area.
2. To estimate the maximum groundwater evaluations at the site;
3. To estimate the relationship and potential impacts of the dumpsite on Fresh Pond via groundwater movement; and
4. To collect additional field data on combustible gas levels beneath the site, and document the performance of the existing vent trench with respect to preventing off-site migration of combustible gases.

REPORT

Committee on Environment

Re: report of Camp, Dresser & McKee on the results of the Cambridge Dump Site Comprehensive Monitoring Program & toxic waste dumping throughout the general area.

*Councilor Pichay -
MOVED TO MAKE REPORT
PART OF THE COUNCIL
RECORD AND FURTHER
THAT THE RECOMMEND-
ATIONS OF THE COMM.
BE ADOPTED*

In City Council,

February 11, 1985

2/11/85

*COPY OF THIS REPORT
AND RECOMMENDATIONS
TO BE SENT TO THE*

*CITY MANAGER -
PARALLEL LETTER COPY OF REPORT SENT TO CITY
MANAGER 2/12/85 WITH COPY WITHIN*