

In City Council,
October 27, 1980

The City Council Committee on Health and Hospitals held a special meeting on Monday, October 20, 1980 at 8 a.m. in the Board Room at the Hospital.

Councillor Vellucci stated that he called the meeting because it was brought to his attention that a firm from Switzerland named Biogen had made overtures to individuals that they would like to establish a "factory" for the manufacturing of DNA products. He further stated that representatives of this company had met with the City Manager and outlined their proposed operation and development investment plan for the operation.

At this time Dr. Chalfen, Chairman, Health Policy Board, stated that the Health Policy Board and the Biohazards Committee had met with the representatives of Biogen and that they had outlined their proposed operation which would include the purchase of an existing building or the construction of a new one, the hiring of fifty-five to eighty people to maintain a "pilot" program for relatively small amounts of DNA.

At this time Dr. Neer, Chairman of the Biohazards Committee stated that he was somewhat impressed with the Biogen presentation and stated that Biogen had decided to look into Cambridge primarily for two reasons, the first being the close proximity of both Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology and secondly, because Cambridge has already established guidelines for genetic experimentation. He further stated that the entire field of genetic experimentation has been closely studied for the past four years and many positive advances have been made. He further stated that he believed that if Biogen did come to Cambridge and functioned within the National Institute of Health (NIH) guidelines as they had stated then the City would not have any thing to be worried about.

At this time Councillor David Sullivan brought to the attention of the committee that he believed that the City Council may have inadvertently repealed the 1977 ordinance regulating genetic experimentation since the 1978 Health Commissioner ordinance did not incorporate the previously adopted regulations. He further stated that he would submit an amendment to re-ordain this section at the City Council meeting later in the day.

Mayor Duehay, Councillors Vellucci, David Sullivan and Wylie all urged that a public hearing by the Biohazards Committee be held as soon as possible in order that the Cambridge community may be well informed on this issue.

Councillor Vellucci requested that the Wellington-Harrington Citizens Committee and the East Cambridge Planning Team be notified in view of the fact some statements had been made that Biogen may establish its operation in the East Cambridge Area.

It was agreed by Dr. Chalfen that a hearing would be held on Tuesday, October 28, 1980 beginning at 7 p. m. in the City Council Chamber.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a. m.

For the Committee,

Councillor Alfred Vellucci,
Chairman, Committee on
Health and Hospitals.

1.

S-488

Comm. from Councillor Vellucci, Chairman,
Committee on Health and Hospitals, trans-
mitting a report of said committee for a
public hearing held on Monday, October 20,
1980.

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10/27/80

Report received-