



City of Cambridge

O-5.

IN CITY COUNCIL

October 29, 2001

COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR BRAUDE
COUNCILLOR DECKER
MAYOR GALLUCCIO
VICE MAYOR MAHER
COUNCILLOR REEVES
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to investigate the attached complaint of a Cambridge resident and report back to the City Council on the customer service demeanor exhibited by an employee at the towing company.

In City Council October 29, 2001.
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Dear Ms. Davis,

COMPLAINT AGAINST THE COMPANY "PHIL'S TOWING"

Background

On Sep. 28, my car was removed from Kenway Street in Cambridge, which is the street next to the Shaler Lane HAH complex where I live, due to street cleaning. The towing company responsible for the removal of the car was **Phil's Towing** located at 333 Webster Street, Cambridge.

At the time of collecting the car, I noticed three incidents of damage to the car, a bent license plate, a large scratch on the rear bumper, and displacement of the exhaust system.

Description of damage to the car

The scratch was reportedly included in the police report issued in connection with the removal of the car, but it was certainly not there when I parked the car on Sep. 27, and I consider it very improbable indeed that the scratch can have been caused by any other entity than the towing company. The exhaust system was severely bent, but could be put back in place by heating it up and bending it to fit. It should be noted that the car in question is only 3 months old.

Interaction with Phil's Towing

I made the company, represented by the night guard, aware of the damage upon collecting the car, as I immediately noticed that the exhaust system made a loud rattling sound. The following day, Mr. Paul Burk, an employee of the company looked at the car and strongly suggested, however implausibly, that all incidents of damage were inflicted prior to the towing.

Subsequently, Mr. Burk called me at work to convey the content of the relevant police report issued at the time of the towing, which reportedly did mention the scratch, but not the other damage. When I disputed the content of the report as it was conveyed to me, Mr. Burk delivered a list of invectives, a small selection of which is provided verbatim below:

"You suck."

"Where are you from? Sweden? Where the hell are you guys while we are at war?"

"You are a fucking bunch of cowards, hiding under the blanket while we are war, how's that?"

"Go back to where you are from."

Mr. Burk also sarcastically commented during my first visit to the company that every "shitbox of a car", in his own words, was "claimed to be in perfect shape" and that they (Phil's Towing) were always wrongly accused of causing damage to the cars towed.

Conclusion and recommendation

In my experience, Phil's Towing is a very crude operation both in the way the company carries out its professional tasks and the way in which its employees interact with "customers". I am simply taken aback by the degree of rudeness that I encountered while interacting with this company.

After three months of use, my car is practically new and it is therefore extremely improbable that the damage to the exhaust system can have arisen from anything else but the towing of the car. It should be noted that the damage was such that it would not have been possible for me to drive the car without considerable risk.

In my view, this is not a company that should be used for this type of business. As a resident of Cambridge and a resident in Harvard Affiliated Housing, I strongly object to the City or Harvard University outsourcing any business to this company.

By outsourcing services to such a company, both the City and Harvard University by extension associate themselves with the actions and behavior of the company and its representatives, which in turn cannot but reflect badly on both.

Sincerely yours,

0-51



City of Cambridge

IN CITY COUNCIL

Councillor Davis

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October 29, 2001

COUNCILLOR DAVIS

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to investigate the attached complaint of a Cambridge resident and report back to the City Council on the customer service demeanor exhibited by an employee at the towing company.

324cm

Order #5

Investigate complaint of resident regarding the customer service demeanor exhibited by an employee of a towing company used by the City of Cambridge.

Councillor Davis

In City Council October 29, 2001

ORDER ADOPTED