



City of Cambridge

Committee Report #4

IN CITY COUNCIL
March 24, 1997

COUNCILLOR DAVIS

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to instruct the Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation to report to this City Council on the current time table when the bicycle riding ban on sidewalk regulations go into effect.

In City Council March 24, 1997

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

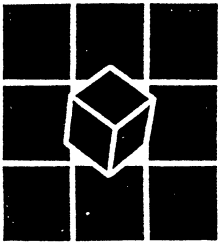
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D. Margaret Drury". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "D" and "y".

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



CENTRAL SQUARE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Carl F Barron, *President*
Putnam Furniture Leasing Co., Inc.
617-354-3358 Fax 617-547-6636

February 25, 1997

VIA FAX - 617/349-4287

Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair
of the Traffic and Transportation Committee
Cambridge City Hall
795 Mass. Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

RE: CHILDREN BICYCLING ON SIDEWALKS

Dear Councillor Davis:

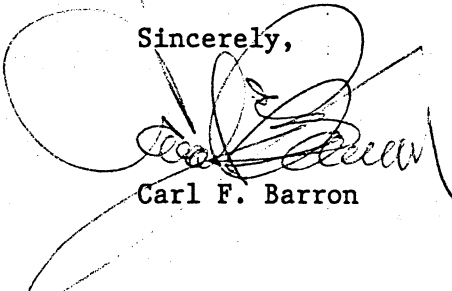
In response to your letter of February 13, 1997, relative to a discussion of "the age at which children should be included in the proposed sidewalk bicycling ban", please be advised that I do not feel that children of any age should be permitted to ride on the sidewalks in the crowded areas of Central Square and Harvard Square.

Regardless of age, any person, particularly elderly, could be just as seriously injured by a youngster riding a bicycle at the age of 10 as if driven by a person of 20 or 50 years of age. This would be especially true if the pedestrian were struck from the rear, without notice, and was handicapped. Even a non-handicapped person, unexpectedly hit, could be very seriously injured.

The population in the city is getting older, as is true throughout the world. In particular, my wife, at age 81, is handicapped and would never be able to move quickly out of the way of a bicycle that was aimed at her, even if she saw it. She is representative of many others, even of younger age, and I do not believe that they should be jeopardized by the alleged safety of young bicyclists who ride on the sidewalk as a safety precaution for them, but only to endanger the pedestrians.

My Association has, on several occasions, unanimously voted to support the existing ban on bicycle riding in Central Square. I strongly support this and hope that the ban will be enforced and eliminate the constant fear of injury, especially from an unheard bicyclist, riding at fairly high speed, from the rear. It is not a nice thought.

Sincerely,


Carl F. Barron

CFB/Davis

cc: CSBA Board of Directors

614 Massachusetts Avenue • Cambridge, MA 02139-4088

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CAMBRIDGE MA.

City of Cambridge

The Traffic and Transportation Committee held a public meeting on Wednesday, February 26, 1997 at six o'clock and forty-five minutes p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber.

Present at the meeting were Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Francis H. Duehay, Vice Mayor Kathleen Born, Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., Donna P. Lopez, Deputy City Clerk, Sue Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Lauren Preston, Deputy Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Police Lieutenant Steven Williams, Sergeant Paul Sugrue and Rosalie Anders from the Community Development Department.

Councillor Davis opened the meeting by stating the meeting was called to discuss the effect on children of the proposed regulation with regard to bicycle riding on the sidewalk. Also she stated that pamphlets were sent to school children throughout the city to notify parents of the meeting.

The committee heard from Lieutenant Steven Williams who outlined proposed changes to sections 12.3 and 12.7 of the traffic regulations. He stated that the state regulations are being included in the Traffic Regulations Book. He stated that one significant change in the proposed regulations is a new rule that bike operators shall not pass on the right of a bus. Some of the other changes include a requirement for audible warnings and bicyclists yielding to pedestrians and a rule that no person shall operate a bike unsafely on the sidewalk.

At this time, Sue Clippinger stated that the proposed changes will be presented at a meeting scheduled for March 10, 1997. She said the goal is to provide enforcement measures to prohibit reckless bicycle riding.

The committee heard from Astrid Dodds, 73 Wendell Street, member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, who requested a copy of the proposed changes before the meeting scheduled for March 10, 1997. Ms. Clippinger stated that the City should be done with their comments by March 8th and the modifications will be sent out at that time.

Councillor Davis asked what are the proposals and how do they relate to children? Ms. Clippinger stated that the concept that is most important is prohibiting bike riding on sidewalks in hot spots. She stated that the regulations are ageless in hot spots where bikes can be walked. She stated that the hot spots are Porter Square, Inman Square, Huron Village, Massachusetts Avenue between Shepard Street and Linnaean Street, only on one side of Massachusetts Avenue, all of which are busy congested areas where people and businesses are concentrated. She stated that other areas can be added as long as they are similarly concentrated.

The committee heard from Fred Reece, 9 Woodrow Wilson Court, who stated that he felt tricycles only should be allowed on sidewalks.

Ms. Clippinger stated that the hot spots are areas where the level of activities is high.

Ms. Dodds stated that there was no discussion with the Bike Committee about including the use on one side of Massachusetts Avenue as a location where bicycle riding would be prohibited. Hot spots, she said, need to be micromanaged in some way.

Councillor Davis stated that a hot spot was a short strip of area. Ms. Dodds stated that defining squares is cumbersome.

The committee heard from Lauren Preston, Deputy Director, Traffic, Parking and Transportation, who stated that in the current Traffic Regulations there are two business districts - Harvard and Central Squares. He stated that the business district regulation contains a schedule that lists streets and sections of streets where bike riding is prohibited. Ms. Dodds stated that these regulations have been on the books for years and they have not been enforced. A list of streets is needed for enforcement. Ms. Dodds stated that there have been meetings for six months on this issue and it is not a good idea for the City to propose this new idea and ask us to comment on this. Ms. Clippinger responded that no decision has been made as to where bikes will be banned except Harvard and Central Squares.

At this time, Vice Mayor Born stated that she is a resident of the Massachusetts Avenue neighborhood. It is a very specific area because of the median strip and two lanes of traffic. It merits a ban from Harvard Square to Alewife.

Ms. Clippinger stated that if an area is short in length there is no need to make an age distinction as to who is allowed to ride on the sidewalk, and it is not unreasonable to require that bikes be walked for a few blocks.

Lieutenant Williams stated that the Police Commissioner would defer to the final regulations. He stated that alternative routes should be found in the designated areas. He stated, for example, if the area of Massachusetts Avenue were lengthened and an age limit was instituted it would be difficult to enforce the regulations. Ms. Dodds stated that there are a lot of alternative routes to Massachusetts Avenue.

Councillor Davis observed that no children or parents were present at the meeting despite the fact that elementary principals distributed notices to students to take home. She said that this may not be a big issue for parents.

The committee heard from Paul Myers, 51 Davenport Street, representing the Porter Square Neighborhood Association, who stated that the association supported the prohibition of bikes in Porter Square and that the ban made sense. He stated that sidewalks need to be made

safer for pedestrians and he also suggested lowering the speed limit for bikes.

Ms. Clippinger asked Mr. Myers to define geographically the area of Porter Square. Mr. Myers responded that it includes the area from the Porter Square Exchange Building to Walden and Rindge Avenues. Mr. Myers stated that there are no safe intersections along this route.

Councillor Davis stated that we need to get the concept out to the public. This policy is a sidewalk bike riding ban and is a policy to walk bikes on sidewalks in congested areas.

The committee heard from Charles Bahne, 224 Concord Avenue, a Pedestrian Committee member, who stated that people need to be educated about alternate routes. The routes need to be defined. He stated that the sidewalk in front of the Senior Center in North Cambridge should be included in the business district. He suggested that Garden Street in front of the Commander Hotel be included in the business district from Harvard Square.

Lieutenant Williams stated that education is going to be the major component. He stated that a two month period is needed to work with the schools. Beginning June 1st there will be awareness type of enforcement and on July 1st strict enforcement will begin, he said. He told the committee with regard to children warnings will be issued the first time and a parental citation will be sent the second time.

Councillor Davis asked to clarify if the riding on sidewalk bicycle ban will include children younger than sixth grade. Lieutenant Williams responded that all children are included in the proposed ban and that more education will be conducted next year for children younger than sixth grade.

Ms. Dodds asked who will have input into this education material. She asked if the Pedestrian Committee would have the opportunity to review the material. Lieutenant Williams responded in the affirmative, but added that there is a tight schedule.

Ms. Dodds asked Sergeant Sugrue how he will enforce the rules against biking on sidewalks. Sergeant Sugrue responded that the officer will inform the violator of the violation.

Councillor Davis stated that the banned area is understandable, but bicycle behavior needs to be worked on. Concepts of no reckless biking and no speeding need to be incorporated in the educational campaign, she said.

Mr. Michael Halle, 2 Westacott Court, stated that the bike videos are a fun way to teach the children.

Ms. Dodds stated that she would like the educational material to be publicized as safety for everyone. She stated that walking a bicycle is a concept that has to be instilled. She requested that the education policy should be written down. She wanted to know what happened to the concept of behavioral education. Lieutenant Williams responded that the Police Department is going to promote responsible biking.

Mr. Halle stated that he would like to see where selective enforcement is going on. Sergeant Sugrue stated that the bicycle patrols are doing selective enforcement. Mr. Reece asked if police patrols will be visible in the square at all times. Lieutenant Williams responded that the patrols will not be in the squares all the time. They will be doing selective enforcement.

Mr. Reece asked if all bikes were registered, would this help the Police Department. Lieutenant Williams responded in the affirmative. Registration forms will be sent out to school children, he said. The department is hoping to do a major registration program.

Mr. Reece asked why if a bicyclist hits a pedestrian the police cannot arrest the violator. Lieutenant Williams stated that this is not an arrestable offense.

Ms. Clippinger noted that the new regulations call for the exchange of names and address. Councillor Davis asked if the bike registration would be large enough to be visible. Lieutenant Williams stated that is not the proposal at this time. Sergeant Sugrue added that the police must view the violation in order to write a ticket for the offense.

Lieutenant Williams stated that if bicycles were registered, it would make it easier to return bikes to their owners. He stated that the Police Department could not do this now because it does not have a list of serial numbers and a list of owners names and addresses for stolen property. Ms. Dodds stated that this process is to identify the bike if it is stolen, not for any other purpose. Lieutenant Williams stated that the City Council would have to appropriate money to make 5,000 plates. Ms. Dodds stated that stickers would be more visible.

Councillor Davis stated that she was especially interested in more information about a bicycle identification program and the cost of the program.

Ms. Arvilla Sarazen, 15 Lambert Street, senior citizen advocate, asked why sixth grade was selected as the age that children must follow the bicycle riding on sidewalk ban. Lieutenant Williams said that children of all ages are effected by the ban at this time. Sergeant Sugrue stated that there was a huge number of public grammar schools, private schools, parochial schools and high school students who need to be educated. He stated the younger kids will be educated next year.

Mr. Bahne stated that you have to start with one thing and expand it.

Ms. Dodds requested that the new regulations be put in writing so that it can be reviewed by the citizen groups before distribution. She stated this was important to avoid needless errors.

Councillor Davis read a prepared communication by Carl Barron which is attached to this report as **Attachment A.**

Councillor Toomey stated that he did not support that there be no age limit in the ban of bicycle riding on sidewalks.

Councillor Davis stated that Councillor Duchay expressed some concern that the material should discourage sidewalk bicycling.

Ms. Rosalie Anders, Community Development Department, stated that the requirements that bikes be walked on sidewalks does discourage riding on sidewalks. She said that this is part of the message that this is where you do not belong. Councillor Davis stated that sidewalk bicycling is not a preferred mode of transportation and that should be conveyed generally.

Mr. Halle stated that the wording should be studied. If the wording is not correct, it will not work.

Councillor Davis stated that the next step is the promulgation of the new regulations.

Ms. Clippinger stated that the final recommendations will be reviewed by the Bicycle on Sidewalks Committee on March 10, 1997. The regulations need to be advertised for thirty days and then they will go into effect.

The meeting adjourned at eight o'clock and fifteen minutes p.m.

For the Committee,

Henrietta Davis
Councillor Henrietta Davis *my @*
Chair

A report was received from the
Traffic and Transportation Committee,
to discuss the effect on children of
the proposed regulation with regard
to bicycle riding ban on sidewalks.

In City Council March 24, 1997

Report Accepted.

Placed on file on
motion of

Councillor Davis.

Order Adopted.