

# City of Cambridge

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 4  
ENVIRONMENT/CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MEETING HELD IN WALNUT ROOM, CITY HALL, JUNE 1, 1978  
COUNCILLORS DUEHAY, CRANE AND WYLIE PRESENT  
MEETING CONVENED BY COUNCILLOR DUEHAY AT 7:45 P. M.

## TOPICS DISCUSSED

Councillor Duehay opened the meeting explaining that he had scheduled the joint meeting between the Environment Committee and the Conservation Commission in order to identify crucial issues and problems of mutual concern to both groups. At this time, both the agendas for the Environment Committee and Conservation Commission were distributed.

### Wetlands Protection

Mr. Thomas Bracken, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, outlined the Commission's responsibilities under Chapter 131, Section 4 of the General Laws regarding the Wetlands Protection Act. The City's wetlands have been mapped out and a technical report will be distributed to City Council in the near future. He further stated that with the impending MBTA Red Line Extension, the Alewife Brook area is of major concern to the Commission in terms of protecting the wetlands. Public hearings will be held during various phases of construction. Mr. Bracken further stated that both civil and criminal action may be taken by the Conservation Commission against any violator of the Wetland Protection Act.

At this point, Councillor Crane questioned if any provision regarding this act had been made in the recently signed MBTA agreement with the City relative to Russell Field and the use of that field by the MBTA as a staging site during construction of the Red Line Extension. The Commission was unsure about this so Councillor Duehay requested that the Commission review the agreement.

Councillor Wylie questioned why the Commission had not posted the Wetlands to inform people that this property was a "Community Resource Asset" or "Cambridge Wetland Property".

Councillor Duehay questioned what authority the Commission had to be "pro-active".

Mr. Bracken responded by stating that the Commission's statutory authority was pretty much limited to the Wetlands Act but they are trying to be an Activist Commission in order to preserve, protect and enhance the many beautiful areas of Cambridge. He further stated that the general areas of concern of the Commission are generated from members themselves.

### Recycling

Mrs. Dorothy Altman stated that the Commission was in full agreement with the Environment Committee regarding weekly pick-up of recyclable material. She further expressed the Commission's disappointment over the prior recycling program not working and its subsequent termination.

At this point Councillor Duehay stated the Committee had held several meetings on this issue and discussed at length with PWD Commissioner Fagone the need for such a program

along with the cost involved by the city in running such a program. He further stated that he had requested Commissioner Fagone to review all alternatives and proposals for reinstituting the recycling program and to report back to the Committee.

Councillor Wylie, at this point, stated that the burden to generate a recycling program was on those people who wanted it. If the City sees enough broad based support for the program then they should support it financially at least through a pilot program.

#### Energy Conservation

Mr. Richard Henry stated that energy conservation was possible throughout all city buildings with no initial capital outlay. Furthermore, he stated, that as the program expanded weatherization of these buildings could begin.

#### Open Space

Mrs. Ruth Birkhoff stated that the Conservation Commission had worked with the Fresh Pond Task Force to develop a comprehensive plan for the Fresh Pond Reservation which would include new pedestrian lighting on Alewife Brook Parkway and the expansion or redesigning of the parking facilities in the reservation.

Councillor Wylie questioned why there had been no money allocated in the upcoming budget for the implementation of some of the proposals made by the Task Force for the Fresh Pond Reservation.

Mr. Peter Hahn of the Community Development Department stated that generally the funds for such projects come from "Block Grant" money and that is usually allocated fairly early. He estimated that to begin the implementation of the Task Force proposal would cost between \$50,000 to \$85,000.

Mrs. Birkhoff stated the Commission felt strongly that the position of Watershed Manager be filled as soon as possible in order to protect the Hobbs Brook and Stony Brook Reservations. This person would also be responsible for the maintenance of water quality. Mrs. Birkhoff further stated the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (M.A.P.C.) is considering a proposal for a trail system linking the reservation land with the Minute Man National Park. The Commission is deeply concerned about the regional planning of recreational facilities without careful review and participation by the Conservation Commission. The Environment Committee agreed to submit to the full City Council for adoption the following order relative to this issue:

ORDERED: That the City Council urges the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (M.A.P.C.) to use its resources to monitor and protect the water quality of Cambridge reservoirs at Stony Brook and Hobbs Brook and that this be the primary concern and the main criterion in regional land use planning on abutting lands.

Mrs. Birkhoff further stated the Commission needed to hire someone on a short term consultant basis to review annually the health of our trees.

At this point Councillor Wylie requested the Deputy City Clerk discuss with each member of the Environment Committee appropriate orders recommending increased appropriations to either the Water Department or Conservation Commission to address the concerns of the Commission relative to trees, the Watershed Manager and the report from the Fresh Pond Task Force.

PENDING REPORT

The Deputy City Clerk was requested to forward to each member of the Committee and Conservation Commission a map prepared by the Public Works Commissioner detailing the planting of 300 trees purchased during the current fiscal year.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:06 P. M.

For the Committe,

Councillor Francis H. Duehay  
Chairman

S-284

Comm. from C. Duehay transmitting a report  
of the Environment Committee.

In City Council,  
June 26, 1978

6/26/78

Placed on File -  
Copy to City Mgr.  
copy sent 6-28-78