



City of Cambridge

AMENDED ORDER
CR # 1
IN CITY COUNCIL

April 2, 1990

COUNCILLOR DUEHAY
COUNCILLOR RUSSELL

- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Water Board with the view in mind of establishing a vehicle for the notification of the general populace as it relates to the safety and quality of the Cambridge water; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Water Board with the view in mind of establishing a program to rate payers with lead lined pipes or lead solder offering free testing and estimates for the replacement of said conduits with costs to be spread over a payment plan; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Water Board and with the view in mind of establishing an on-going educational campaign to restore the public's confidence in the water supply; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to initiate a system-wide independent physical audit of the water treatment facility by insuring that the specifications go out to bid.

In City Council April 2, 1990.

Adopted as amended by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Connarton".

Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

City of Cambridge

The Environment Committee conducted a public hearing on Wednesday, March 14, 1990 beginning at 8:40 a.m. in the Ackermann Room, City Hall.

Councillor Francis H. Duehay, Chair of the above referenced Committee, convened the hearing and introduced those attending: Councillor Sheila T. Russell, Melvin H. Chalfen, M.D., Commissioner of Health and Hospitals, Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager, Dr. Donald F. Hornig, President of the Cambridge Water Board and John E. Flynn, Deputy City Clerk.

At the conclusion of the introductions, Councillor Duehay stated the purpose of this morning's hearing would be to discuss the following: 1) The issue of the quality of Cambridge water; 2) The report entitled "Notes on Betterments Made to Improve the Quality of Water for Cambridge, Massachusetts;" and, 3) Short and long term recommendations for implementation to improve the delivery of services offered by the Water Department.

In Councillor Duehay's opening remarks to the Committee, he stressed the distress and uncertainty that is being experienced by users of the water supply as it relates to the quality, taste and odor of the finished product. The Chair also mentioned the recently adopted Council order, as sponsored by Councillor Ed Cyr, calling for the establishment of an independent review committee to examine the operations of the Water Department as well as the treatment facility and to make recommendations back to the City Council and City Manager for discussion and possible implementation.

At this time the Committee heard from Dr. Hornig, who outlined the problems that have been identified and the corrective actions that have been implemented since November, 1989 as well as stating to those in attendance that there should be no concern regarding the health and safety of the Cambridge water. Dr. Hornig identified three potential problem areas that are constantly monitored: 1) Sodium Levels; 2) Trihalomethanes (THM) Levels; and, 3) Lead Content.

Dr. Hornig stated that there were no established Federal guidelines in regards to sodium levels but State guidelines calls for 20 parts per million. Cambridge water averages between 30-40 parts per million. Although higher than State guidelines, Dr. Hornig stated that the water is less hazardous than milk which contains five times the level or diet soda which contains six times the level of sodium.

In the area of trihalomethanes (THM) levels, Dr. Hornig stated that the maximum contaminated level allowed by the Environmental Protection Agency is 100 parts per billion (ppb). During the last quarter of 1989, the level of THM in the Cambridge Water Supply was 196 ppb. Although the level was almost double the maximum allowed, Dr. Hornig stated that it would require an individual to be exposed to this level over a long term for it to be hazardous to the individual's life. He stated that the individual would have to consume two liters of water per day over a 70 year period and the odds of contracting cancer would be 10,000 - 1.

On the subject of lead content, Dr. Hornig stated that the water that Cambridge delivers to its users is well below Federal and State guidelines. He reminded the Committee of the seriousness that Lead poses to children where studies have documented marked mental performance denigration in those children with a high level of lead toxicity in their body system. Sources of lead infiltration would be from the inside of the residence through lined pipes of lead solders. He further stated that Water Department personnel do recommend to homeowner's to replace these conduits when construction work is being done on public ways by the City of Cambridge or its agent(s).

John J. Cusack, Jr., Superintendent of the Water Department, outlined to the Committee the preventative maintenance program that has been implemented as well as the Captial Program which allowed for the covering of Payson Park in Belmont which will decrease the level of THM's in the finished water supply.

Dr. Hornig further stated that the system is aging and in need of rehabilitation to meet the evergrowing regulations as promulgated by the appropriate Federal and State agencies. He further stated that he has no hesitancy in drinking the water as delivered by the City of Cambridge.

Councillor Russell questioned Dr. Hornig as to the level of risk, if any, cancer patients would be exposed to if they drank the water. Dr. Hornig responded that the water quality would not be harmful to their therapy.

Councillor Duehay questioned given the seriousness of the matter of lead content if Dr. Hornig would recommend additional regulations or

amendment(s) to the Municipal Code of the City be enacted to require the replacement of lined pipes and lead solders. Dr. Hornig responded that he would like to think through the issue before making any recommendation on this action. As a follow-up, Councillor Duehay suggested that one course of action that could be implemented might be an annual reminder to property owners on the potential consequences of these conduits.

Mr. Rossi recommended that a lead education seminar be incorporated in the curriculum of the schools throughout the City of Cambridge.

Mr. Kevin Reilly of the Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) commented that in theory due to the ban of lead solder in 1987 by the Clean Drinking Water Act as amended that this source of threat has been eliminated.

Dr. Chalfen responding to a series of questions regarding the issue of water quality stated that the water is safe and it was the look of the product that created concerns. He stated that a notice regarding lined pipes and lead solders should not be a regulatory action but one that is voluntary offering encouragement to those home owners to replace these conduits.

Councillor Duehay, in continuing the discussion on the issue of water quality, reiterated his statement made at the hearing dated February 21, 1990, that it was imperative that the City restore the public's confidence in the water supply.

The Chair questioned Superintendent Cusack on the circumstances and/or lack of attention to detail that has led to the erosion of the public's

confidence in the water supply.

Superintendent Cusack cited the following complications: 1) Mechanical and electrical problems in the replacement of the irrigation system at Fresh Pond Reservoir in the Fall, 1989; 2) Flow reversals with Massachusetts Water Resources Authority straining high lift pumps and seals; 3) Flocculation problems; and, 4) Replacement of Laboratory personnel.

Councillor Russell questioned the Superintendent on the poor taste of the water. In response, he stated it was due to increased level of chlorine that was added to the water in the last quarter of 1989, but in December, 1989, given the fact of better turbidity, the level of chlorine was reduced.

Ms. Norma Weinberg, 130 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge, questioned the Superintendent on the certification of the Laboratory. In response, Mr. Timothy MacDonald, Watershed Manager, outlined the State certification vehicles and stated that the recently hired Cambridge Laboratory Director is certified as a Grade 4, highest in the State of Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

At this time, Councillor Duehay called upon Mr. Reilly to provide the Committee with an update on what water suppliers should expect in the way of new standards to be promulgated by the EPA. Mr. Reilly stated that by June, 1989, 83 new standards will be in effect and by the year 1992, 14 additional containments will be included in this Federal Law. He further stated that given his firsthand knowledge of the water treatment facility, it was his opinion that it will not be able to meet these new standards.

Councillor Duehay inquired of the Water Board if it agreed with Mr. Reilly's statement. Dr. Hornig responded in the affirmative.

Mr. David Burmaster, 205 Walden Street, Cambridge questioned Mr. Reilly if there were to be new standards for THM's. Mr. Reilly responded in the affirmative but stated the standards have not been finalized as of this date.

In returning to the discussion regarding the water treatment facility, Mr. Rossi provided the Committee with a historical prospective regarding the water rate and level of capital improvements undertaken by various City administrations. Mr. Rossi stated that in stablizing the rate over an 8-10 year period, it was not able to keep up with the inflation rate nor the cost of water.

Mr. Burmaster was critical of the notification process employed by the Water Department because it did not notify the general populace only the rate payer. He further stated that a physical audit was necessary so as to formulate a uniformed plan to meet future needs. He also disagreed with Drs. Hornig and Chalfen on the health threat of THM and didn't concur that with the covering of Payson Park, it will cure the THM problem.

Councillor Duehay and Councillor Russell at this time offered the following motion:

ORDERED: That the Environment Committee forwards the following recommendations to the full City Council:

- 1) That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Water Board with the view in mind of establishing a vehicle for the notification of the general populace as it relates to the safety and quality of the Cambridge water;

2) That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Water Board with the view in mind of establishing a program to rate payers with lead lined pipes or lead solder offering free testing and estimates for the replacement of said conduits with costs to be spread over a payment plan;

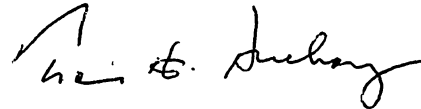
3) That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Water Board with the view in mind of establishing an on-going educational campaign to restore the public's confidence in the water supply; and,

4) That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to initiate a system-wide independent physical audit of the water treatment facility.

On a voice vote the motion carried.

The hearing was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

For the Committee

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Francis H. Duehay", written in a cursive style.

Councillor Francis H. Duehay
Chair

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report from the Environment Committee
for a hearing held on March 14, 1990
relative to a discussion on the quality
of the water in Cambridge; a report
entitled "Notes on Betterments made to
Improve the Quality of Water for Cambridge
and the recommendations to improve the
delivery of services offered by the Water
Dept.

In City Council,

April 2, 1990

*Order Adopted
As Amended
Report Accepted*