

16 August 1998

Mayor Francis Duchay
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

1998 AUG 20 P 1:57

Dear Frank,

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

The enclosed

Please be kind enough to call the content of ~~this~~ letter about absentee ballots to the attention of the members of the City Council.

Having missed several elections due to the late arrival of absentee ballots, I feel very strongly that the process for overseas ballots is flawed. It needs to be revised in light of actual international postal conditions, which vary from country to country (Austria, for example, has no Saturday delivery).

Since the ballots aren't postmarked, the voting process -- which in a democracy should enjoy the full light of day -- is a murky business. I don't like that and I don't think it is proper.

I hope that you and your colleagues will find the time to reflect on this matter and take appropriate action.

Yours sincerely,

Pat

Patricia Sekler
21 Gibson Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

N.B. The exhibition "The Charles River. A Selection of Important Steps in the Making of the Riverscape from the Larz Anderson Bridge to Gerry's Landing" which I put together for the "Salute the Sycamores" event (with the help of Polly Malcolm and Franziska Amacher) is being shown at the offices of the EPA at One Congress Street in Boston. They picked the panels up several weeks ago, and the implication was that the panels (27 in number) would be exhibited until January, in one of their hallways.

Enclosure

Cambridge Election Commission
362 Green Street
Cambridge MA 02139

1998 AUG 20 P 1:57

Commissioner:

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Again this year I will be absent from Cambridge for both elections and would like to request absentee ballots.

They should be sent to:

Strohgasse 10/12
A-1030 Vienna, Austria
Europe

Last year, a ballot was sent to me, as requested, in Nepal. It was delivered to me on election day. It is a fact that mail to and from Nepal is slow. However, I would like to know how slow. I have no way of answering that question -- you have no postmark on your mailings.

All voters should have the right to know when you mail their absentee ballots. For the sake of our feeling that you are running honest elections, you should change your policy.

Don't misunderstand me. I am not accusing the Election Commission of deliberate wrong-doing. However, to erase any potential for wrong-doing, all ballots should bear postmarks. Your mailing dates, depending on destination, should be determined in consultation with the US Postal Service with at least 7 additional days added to the time they recommend for going and coming, by airmail. If the time allowed is not realistic, the whole process is useless.

International mail is often not as quick as it used to be.

Since this question should be of interest to all elected officials of our city government, I am sending a copy of this letter to the Cambridge City Council.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Patricia Sekler

16 August 1998

Mary Patricia Sekler
21 Gibson Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-4719

Consent Communication #49

6025

A communication was received
from Patricia Sekler, transmitting
concern about absentee ballots for both
elections.

In City Council September 14, 1998

No Action Taken

SEP. 28 1998

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