

Note:
(FAXed on Oct. 29
to City Clerk
attn: City Council / cp City Clerk)

October 29, 1998

To: Frank Duehay, Esq.
Mayor of the City of Cambridge
and the Members of Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Hall
Mass Ave. Cambridge

This is an original signed for
the files.

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
-3 P 12:49

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

Since I am a single mother of a five year old with no back up my writing time is short, and for this reason I was unable to write sooner, although I have addressed the issue by phone with Mayor Duehay several times in the past.

I am a resident of Sparks Place, a "driveway" (unpaved) cul de sac directly across from Bradbury Street one block up from Mt Auburn St. I have been a resident on Sparks Place for 16 years after returning from 12 years in Paris. In 1961 as a child I was a resident at 9 Sparks St. with my family before moving to Camden Place (around the corner) in 1963. I went to Buckingham School which was then an affordable neighborhood school, and for nine years I walked up Sparks Street across Brattle Street everyday both ways until I graduated in 1970 and went to Paris. (In the 60s it was always a 2-way Street, I believe it changed in the 70's). Since my return in 1982 from Paris, I drive or walk it everyday, for the last five years with my daughter in a stroller, now on foot or with her and her bike. All this to say lower Sparks Street is still a family neighborhood, and I have known it intimately since 1961.

Increased traffic and higher speeds have become a problem all over Cambridge. It seems that the City keeps trying to curb it by building extended curb/corners wherever it can. But this does not decrease the speed or the size of the vehicles traveling on our streets. The speed scares me more and more, along with thoughtless driving. On any given day I see so many vehicles driving down Mt. Auburn Street through the cross walk at Sparks St. going 50 m.p.h. and on endless occasions cars actually pass me into oncoming traffic on Mt. Auburn Street. It is sad that we have become one big passageway for commuters from all other destinations. When I drove daily for the last three years taking my daughter to daycare at the Harvard Business School at 9 AM and 5-6 PM it amazed me at the speed that cars travel down Memorial Drive, the number of trucks on Memorial Drive, and the number of vehicles sitting in traffic on the Harvard Bridge in and out of Harvard Square without Cambridge resident stickers. I understand that you have no authority over Memorial Drive, but its violations and loads affect not only the trees (which we marched and chained ourselves to save in the 60's) but also our City's traffic patterns.

I am here to speak about my neighborhood. Sparks Street has become a commuter thru way from Huron down to Mt. Auburn. Of course they all have to stop and slip through the Brattle Street intersection, but then they think that no one lives on lower Sparks and

they pick up speed. Coming home from my daughter's school (Agassiz) this afternoon I noticed that a TELL YOU WHAT SPEED you are going machine was set up just by the Armenian Church before the Brattle intersection. I really wonder what that will tell you, since most cars have slowed down by that point. When I drive home I am always tailed by some anxious driver, and we have to put on our turn signals about two blocks ahead in order to show them that YES we live here and are making a right turn into our driveway. Our driveway has SEVEN cars living on it that go in and out daily. Just before us is Sibley Court with another four or five cars, and there are three single car driveways after us before Mt. Auburn Street. I fear being rear ended or side swiped every time I make my turn, and I am not alone - just speak to any one of my neighbors.

A few weeks ago I drove out to pick up my daughter at around 5 PM, I stopped at the end of the driveway and looked left for traffic in order to make my turn right. The street was blocked - suddenly I was frozen in time - there in the middle of the street was a child's wagon (one I knew well) lying on its side and toys strewn across the road. A car was swerved up toward the left sidewalk. Another car was headed up the street in the wrong direction, then I realized it had Official State plates and had driven in from Bradbury St.. On the other side of the accident scene was an ambulance. I thought that my worst nightmare had just happened to my neighbors' children, as I drove down Williard and onto Brattle another ambulance was rushing to the scene, I started to cry, then I prayed that the family I knew who owned the wagon were all right. I guess our fears ignite our imagination, and I imagined the worst. Perhaps because at that exact location about two years ago a cat was killed, and I drove up just after that accident and saw the bloody cat and the stunned driver of the vehicle. On both occasions, what did I do? I called Frank Duehay and left a message, and he responded. But what has the traffic department done? (I attach copy of letter from Traffic Dept. May 1997). After the cat there were several cops sitting to regulate speed, but they never seemed to be sitting in the right spot at the right time. Luckily the latest accident was not as bad as I had imagined and only one person was injured. Still I do not feel safe for myself, my five year old daughter, or my 84 year old mother who comes to stay with us - either walking or driving. We should be able to live in our neighborhood without the constant fear of crossing the street to go to the park or driving in and out of one's driveway.

I know that this is not just Sparks Street - there was an accident on Huron Village on October 20th, and daily it is happening all over West Cambridge. But, speed is a problem everyday on lower Sparks Street and where Sparks intersects on Mt. Auburn. Just give me a speed calculator and I will prove it to you on any given day on a 24 hour basis.

Please help us, and let us know that you are doing something to make it better. This is a dangerous situation and only seems to get worse.

Thank-you.
Sincerely,

Laurie Dietz

Laurie Dietz 3 Sparks Place Cambridge 02138

NOTE: Attached
* P.S. Re: May 1997 letter
from City manager -
speed limit @ 30 mph is
too high for lower Sparks st.
and BIKE LANES DO NOT
slow drivers down!



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300
FAX 349-4307



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

May 5, 1997

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 22, regarding speeding on Sparks Streets, please be advised of the following:

The Commanding Officers of both the Day and Night Patrol Sections have been directed to have the appropriate motorcycle traffic units conduct selective enforcement for speeding violations on Sparks Street between Huron Avenue and Mount Auburn Street. In addition, Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department Director Susan Clippinger reports that the legal speed limit on Sparks Street is 30 MPH. Bicycle lanes will be repainted by the end of May, making the street narrower which should encourage motorists to drive slower.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec

*Louise -
this is in
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FAC*



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Deputy City Manager

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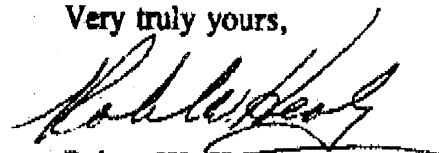
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- 2 -

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To: FAX# 349-4269

To: City Council
c/o CITY CLERK of CAMBRIDGE

VIA FAX - (3) Pages
(FOR MONDAY Nov. 2 city council meeting)

1998 OCT 29 1998 12

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

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and the Members of Cambridge City Council
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Mass Ave. Cambridge

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Consent Communciation #17

6975

A communciation was received from Laurie Dietz, transmitting concern over the speed of cars travelling down lower Sparks Street and where Sparks intersects on Mt. Auburn Street.

1998 OCT 29 P 3:12
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council November 2, 1998

Referred to

City Manager