



City of Cambridge

8.

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 14, 1991

COUNCILLOR DUEHAY

ORDERED:

That the City Manager be and hereby is requested immediately to initiate an inquiry surrounding the circumstances contained in the contents of the attached letter with regard to possible misleading marking of spaces in the Porter Exchange Parking Lot, to take whatever remedial action is called for to correct the situation and to report his findings to the City Council.

In City Council January 14, 1991.

Adopted 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

Maria Tadd
7 Dix Terrace
Winchester, MA 01890

December 11, 1990

Peter Wasserman
Sharon Cerney
CEO's
C.D.I.A.
Porter Exchange Management
1776 Mass Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Dear Mr. Wasserman and Ms. Cerney:

Please be advised that patrons are being victimized in the parking lot at Porter Exchange.

On December 9, I went with a friend to brunch at Cottonwood and parked in a spot which from an initial assessment at least, appeared to be perfectly legitimate. We parked perpendicular to the building on the right side of the handicapped space to the right of the back entrance.

After dining and browsing we went out to find my car missing. I have owned a car for 20 years and have **never** been towed. After getting over the initial shock of first thinking that my car had been stolen, we noticed the barely perceptible tow notices on the building. These notices are the same color as the brick and are printed in light blue. Mind you, the sign leading people into the parking lot is bright blue, so people can't miss it. There is no yellow line demarcating a restricted zone nor are there stripes crossing the parking spaces which would clarify their restricted usage. In addition, these spaces are not near a loading dock, therefore making one less inclined to think the area is restricted.

Most tow zones are conspicuously marked so that patrons can make an informed decision as to take the risk or not. In this case patrons aren't informed of the rules of the game.

If one drives around Cambridge looking for other tow notices, one will find they are all very visible, usually in a contrasting color with large, bold letters.

When I finally got to Pat's Tow I was asked to pay \$60 in cash; \$35 for towing, \$5 for labor (how does that differ from towing) and \$20 for storage, a fee which I understand is charged if your car has been there over night. My car had been in the lot for an hour!!

The attendant gave me a complaint form to fill out and pointed to the bin on the desk which was full of complaints - maybe 20-25, written within the last two hours, all complaining about your parking lot.

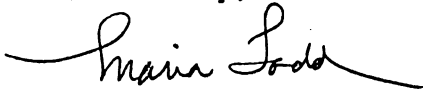
I personally can't imagine why you are willing to make so many people angry while you are desperately trying to salvage your mall. Patrons will simply stop shopping there.

From an outsider looking in, it appears that patrons are being entrapped. Unsuspecting drivers are lured into a parking lot which is clearly identified and then subtly if at all are instructed about the restrictions. Clearly you and Pat's Tow are making a fortune.

I would appreciate your reimbursing me the full \$60 as well as correcting this situation, in order to spare other patrons this unnecessary loss of \$60, a lot to pay when times are tough, as well as being grossly inconvenienced.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maria Tadd".

Maria Tadd

cc: Paul Schlaver, Director of Cambridge Consumer's Council
Francis H. Duehay, City Councilor
Paul Kelly, Esq.
Pat's Tow



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS
CITY COUNCIL

8

COUNCILLOR FRANCIS H. DUEHAY
26 LOWELL STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

Councillor Duehay

January 14

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Exchange



City of Cambridge

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City Council JAN. 14 1991

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Maria Tadd

cc: Paul Schlaver, Director of Cambridge Consumer's Council
Francis H. Duehay, City Councilor
Paul Kelly, Esq.
Pat's Tow

Order # 8 *f-35*

Councillor Duehay re: misleading parking
spaces in the Porter Exchange Parking
lot.

In City Council,

January 14, 1991

Order adopted