

Schoenhof's

ESTABLISHED 1856

SCHOENHOF'S FOREIGN BOOKS, INC.

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1280 MASS. AVE.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02138

6 June 1975

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
CAMBRIDGE / Mass 02138

Gentlemen:

As a businessman in Harvard Square managing one of Cambridge's oldest established shops I would like to register with the Council my concern at the pending implementation of a Cambridge ordinance that would gravely restrict the nature of advertising signs in the city. Certainly I must agree with the well-intentioned thrust of the legislation and would be among the first to support any and all measures that would beautify Cambridge. Hastily drawn, extreme steps toward regulation of business signs in commercial areas, however, can only serve to erode the fiscal base of the city's prosperity at a time when businesses are very hard-pressed and municipal income precarious.

Information about the ordinance currently circulating indicates in very absolute terms restrictions which often seem laughable (such as the red/yellow/green restriction) and many others which through the levying of filing fees penalize those shops that wish to continue their concrete aesthetic contribution to the Square. I believe that a good example of this is offered by the quaint projecting sign at our store which is in the very best tradition of tradesmen's signs but which would be subjected to fees and hearings and approval by authorities whose aesthetic abilities to judge might be called into serious question.

I do not believe that the City of Cambridge can effectively regulate matters of taste, nor can I agree with the implicitly present powers of interference with free expression. Free expression includes, as recent Supreme Court decisions have shown, not only the content but also the form of a message. Only those advertising signs which garishly offend public taste and agreed aesthetic canons might be subject to control, and with those alone city enforcement agencies would have enough to keep busy for many years to come. Why, then, attempt to hinder the small businessman with petty restrictions when large businesses with blatant offenses cannot even be controlled?

Sincerely

C.J. Furattini, Manager
Schoenhof's Foreign Books

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Comm. from C. J. Furattini re: proposed Sign
Ordinance

In City Council,

June 23, 1975

6/23/75

Referred to Ordinance

Committee 69

Copy to Chairman of

Commerce -

Copies sent 6/24/75

DM