

## City of Cambridge

The Committee on Civil and Human Rights conducted a public hearing on Thursday, June 28, 1990 beginning at 5:50 p. m. in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall.

The purpose of the hearing was to discuss the issue of Affirmative Action within the City of Cambridge.

Members present were Mayor Alice K. Wolf, Chair, Vice Mayor Kenneth Reeves, Councillor Jonathan S. Myers and City Clerk Joseph E. Connarton.

Mayor Wolf opened the hearing by welcoming everyone and stated that pursuant to a public hearing which was held before the full City Council following the adoption of Order #34 dated May 7, 1990, a copy of which is attached.

The Mayor further stated that it was her intent to put together a work plan which would provide the structure for the development of a much stronger Affirmative Action Plan. Affirmative Action, she stated, was everyone's job, not just that of the city's Affirmative Action Officer. Furthermore, she stated, that while reading the current Affirmative Action plan she was struck by the fact that it is supposed to provide for a non-discriminatory process, but does not address the diversity of the population.

The Mayor also stated that it was important to the City Council that the current workforce feel comfortable, wanted and recognized.

Finally, she stated that the time frame during which this process should be completed would provide for a draft document being prepared by October, 1990 at which time public hearings would be held with a final document inclusive of amendments which could come out of the hearing ready for adoption by the full City Council by December, 1990.

At this time the committee heard from City Manager Robert W. Healy, who briefly outlined the current process of Affirmative Action stating that the

overall goal of the city was to have minority representation equal to twenty percent (20%) of the entire workforce. Currently, he said, the number is at eighteen percent (18%) stating he believed that there is a certain misconception on how well the city has done. Furthermore, he stated, he would be glad to work with the committee and has no problem with the time frame as outlined by the Mayor, indicating he thought he, the Personnel Director, Affirmative Action Officer, and other appropriate personnel would have a draft ready by October.

Councillor Jonathan Myers stated he believed it was very important to develop specific goals and objectives within the revised Affirmative Action Plan. This issue, he stated, needs to be addressed at all levels of the salary scale above and below the \$40,000 level. He further stated that the city needs people of color in positions of leadership, with no delay being allowed between the policy stage and implementation stage.

The committee next heard from Susan Dowds, representing the Cambridge Civic Association, who stated she had done some research on existing Affirmative Action Plans of other cities, including Lowell, Springfield and Worcester stating she found each had their strengths and weaknesses, but said she found the Cambridge plan to be lacking in several areas including, but not limited to:

- No set percentage goals
- No detailed accountability for compliance
- No detailed process for citizen involvement
- An aggressive recruitment plan for hiring minorities
- Supplemental documentation outlining the results of the hiring process.

Also speaking in support of a stronger and more comprehensive  
Action Plan were:

Noah Berger  
9 Merrill St.  
Cambridge, MA  
Executive Director, Cambridge Civic Association

George McCray  
2301 Mass. Ave.  
Cambridge, MA

Sylvia Savvedra-Kebor  
4 Cornelius Way  
Cambridge, MA

Arthur Lipkin  
16 Chatham St.  
Cambridge, MA

These individuals stressed the importance of diversity within the city workforce, stating the Affirmative Action Plan should serve as a narrative to what the city wants to do. Furthermore, they indicated that the training of individuals around the Affirmative Action Plan was important.

Nancy Ryan, Executive Director of the Women's Commission, stated she supported a concept of regular training for department heads and senior managers and further stated that the issue of comparable worth needs to be addressed.

Denise Simmons, Executive Director of the Civic Unity Committee, suggested the city should consider establishing a system of resume retention such as the School Department.

Mayor Wolf questioned whether or not the City Manager was close to appointing an Advisory Committee on Affirmative Action as established by a previously adopted City Council resolution.

The City Manager responded by stating it is his desire to appoint a committee as soon as possible. However, to date, even after advertising the

committee, only six people submitted resumes.

Janice Platner, Executive Director of the Human Rights Committee, stated she did not support the establishment of another committee given the current expertise within the city departments, boards and commissions.

Responding to this statement, Vice Mayor Reeves stated that the order he submitted was done in order to address what happens when resources are short i.e. during a hiring freeze vs. times during which no freeze exists. He stated that he believes his order called for a broader mandate than that of the Human Rights Commission. It is not his intent, he stated, to overburden people already serving on a commission.

The Vice Mayor stated that a strong Affirmative Action Plan should address a multiplicity of issues including minority business enterprises, as well as having a mechanism for establishing and meeting goals and objectives of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. He further stated that he was under no illusion that everyone shared his view on this issue and questioned whether or not that mind set should also be addressed by the committee.

The Mayor responded that possibly this should be addressed at another meeting.

Denise Simmons suggested the possibility of working groups being appointed to deal with the larger issues.

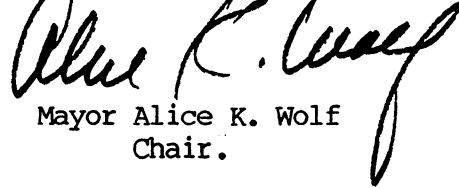
The Mayor responded by stating she wants to include the union leaders of the city and will welcome support from everyone.

Noah Berger stated that he believed it is important to have all department heads establish individual goals early.

- 5 -

The Mayor stated the next meeting would be scheduled for July 19, 1990  
at 5:30 p. m.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice K. Wolf". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned over the printed name and title.

Mayor Alice K. Wolf  
Chair.



# City of Cambridge

34.

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 7, 1990

MAYOR WOLF  
VICE MAYOR REEVES  
COUNCILLOR CYR  
COUNCILLOR DUEHAY  
COUNCILLOR MYERS

- WHEREAS: The people of Cambridge take great pride in the cultural and racial diversity of our city; and
- WHEREAS: It is the responsibility of the leaders of this city to make sure that all levels of Cambridge government reflect the diversity of our city's population; and
- WHEREAS: An effort by city administrators to increase the city's minority work force has resulted in the percentage of people of color employed by the city to rise from 16% to 18%, yet of city employees earning more than \$40,000, only 8.7% are people of color; and
- WHEREAS: The lack of minority representation at the top levels of government is particularly disturbing; and
- WHEREAS: The Affirmative Action Plan of the City of Cambridge does not set clear goals or establish timelines for ensuring that city departments made steady progress towards employing a workforce that reflects the diversity of Cambridge; now, therefore be it
- ORDERED: That the City Manager and his appropriate departments, in cooperation with the City Council's Civil and Human Rights Committee and interested citizens, shall review current affirmative action hiring policies and practices with a view toward filling present gaps in the procedures, and strengthening the Cambridge Affirmative Action Plan to include clear hiring goals and guidelines for all city departments; and be it further
- ORDERED: That to prepare for this effort the Cambridge City Council hold a hearing on the issue of affirmative action in Cambridge city government to hear suggestions from the public relative to the city's affirmative action hiring practices.

In City Council May 7, 1990.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk

## COMMITTEE REPORT 715

Civil & Human Rights Committee report  
for a hearing held on Thursday, June 28,  
1990 to discuss the issue of Affirmative  
Action within the City of Cambridge.

In City Council,

July 30, 1990

*Report Accepted  
& placed on file*