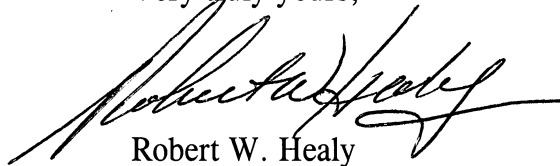


With respect to the issue of whether burying wires can become a subject of cable negotiations, we have made it clear to RCN that this is an issue about which the city is concerned. We have been told that requiring underground construction can lead to significant cost increases which would be passed along to subscribers in the form of increased rates. This creates a tension between the effort to promote competition that will lead to lower rates, and the desire to control the clutter of above ground installations. We believe that wherever feasible, cables should be below ground, and where they must, due to physical constraints, be above ground, they should be installed in the least intrusive locations. We also intend to explore any possibility of technological advances that may minimize these impacts.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", written in a cursive style.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
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19.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

February 8, 1999

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Nos. 4 and 5, regarding a report on utility wires obstructing views from homes and whether the franchising of another cable television company will mean a doubling of the number of barrels, boxes, cables, and other appendages on utility poles and whether burying wires can become a subject of cable negotiations, please be advised of the following:

The Pole and Conduit Commission reports that they are committed to carefully assessing the impact of such installations on neighboring properties. The Commission works with other City agencies in developing plans to see that any additional wires may be buried underground and if required to be overhead, be as aesthetically pleasing as possible by choosing poles not already loaded with wires. The Commission is currently using the best possible judgment in approving current projects where underground wires are feasible, without added cost to the Cambridge residents or increase in utility costs.

As the City Council knows, an initiative is under way to attract cable television competition to Cambridge. In response to the City's solicitation for applicants interested in becoming the second franchisee for cable television services in Cambridge, RCN has applied for a cable television license. As noted during committee meetings, the City has from the beginning indicated to RCN that minimizing disruption from build-out is an important goal. It is certain that a second cable provider, with the attendant need to construct a second plant for the delivery of cable services to Cambridge customers, will mean an increase in cables and appurtenances. There is reason to believe that RCN's partnership with a utility that already maintains underground conduits in the City should help to reduce the impact of additional installations. As to the installations that must be above ground, we intend to negotiate during the licensing process to obtain whatever commitments possible that RCN will work with the appropriate City departments to minimize any negative impacts from the build-out. The Pole and Conduit Commission will pursue its current practices to achieve the least intrusive locations for required installations.

Consent Agenda #19 *5-18* *Cal 4*

Relative to AR #4 and #5, regarding a report on utility wires obstructing views from homes and whether the franchising of another cable television company will mean a doubling of the number of barrels, boxes, cables, and other appendages on utility poles and whether burying wires can become a subject of cable negotiations.

In City Council February 8 , 1999

CHARTER RIGHT

BY

Councilman Adams

2/22/99

Accept Report. Placed on file