

City of Cambridge

The Ordinance Committee held a public meeting on November 19, 1997, beginning at 5:30 pm in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of considering a proposed amendment to the Municipal Ordinances to regulate the placement of newsboxes.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Francis H. Duehay, Chair of the Committee, Vice Mayor Kathleen L. Born, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves, Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Councillor Katherine Triantafillou, and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were Attorney Arthur Goldberg, Law Department and Benjamin Barnes, Chair of the License Commission.

Councillor Duehay convened the hearing and explained the purpose. He noted that there has apparently been a new proposal developed by the City administration. He noted that the Boston Globe had contacted him to tell him that the Globe had just learned of the new proposal and of this meeting two days ago and was dismayed at the short notice, so he would like to just have a brief summary of the new proposal and plan another meeting for further discussion. He invited Attorney Goldberg to summarize the new developments.

Attorney Goldberg stated that in August at the Ordinance Committee meeting, the proposal considered was identical to the Boston ordinance regulating newsboxes. The proposal required a permit from the City and provided several limits on where newsboxes could be placed. The procedure called for the Department of Public Works to consult with other city departments before approval. It also called for a one-time fee of \$150, not based on the number of newsboxes that would be placed. He said that at the August meeting, the Globe representative spoke against the sticker requirement.

Councillor Duehay added that the Globe also wanted flexibility to move boxes around to different locations.

Attorney Goldberg noted that Mayor Russell asked the Law Department to look into having all boxes the same color. The Globe also objected to this. There was also a small issue regarding abandonment of boxes. He spoke with Councillor Davis, who was unable to attend the meeting. After the meeting she raised concerns about the City maintaining flexibility to retain boxes.

Mr. Goldberg stated that since that meeting City administrative staff have had several meetings. They agreed that authority for approval of newsboxes should remain with Department of Public Works, in accord with guideline. The proposed ordinance now provides for Department of Public Works to have that authority. It also changes the fee structure and maintains the sticker requirement, as the Boston ordinance does. He said that there is another minor amendment which pertains to handicapped ramps and boxes not opening on to a street.

Committee Report #1

5-766

A report from Councillor Francis H. Duehay,
Chair of the Ordinance Committee, for a
meeting held on November 19, 1997 for the
purpose of considering a proposal from
the License Commission to revise the permit
process for banners to require approval of
the Pole and Conduit Commission.

In City Council December 15, 1997

Report Accepted

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