



SHREWSBURY'S ELECTRIC LIGHT PLANT

SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01545
(617) 845-4881

OCT 14 1983
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

October 11, 1983

Honorable Members
Cambridge City Council
City of Cambridge
Cambridge, MA

Gentlemen:

Presently, Cambridge residents will be asked to make an important decision regarding whether the City should become an applicant for the cable franchise there. The Town of Shrewsbury, after a lengthy battle against the cable industry, is currently enjoying the benefits of a municipally owned system that is second to none.

Understanding the gravity of this decision, I would like to extend an invitation to the citizens of Cambridge, the Mayor, and the City Council to visit our facilities, ask question, and to learn first hand about a municipal cable operation. I feel also that we could be of service in clearing up much of the misunderstanding about municipal ownership.

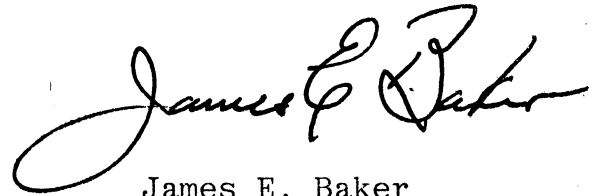
Shrewsbury's reasons for opting for municipal rather than private are compelling: Municipal ownership can guarantee local accountability and community responsiveness; private ownership doesn't. Under municipal ownership we can maintain more stable rates since in Massachusetts rates are de-regulated and private operators can, and often do, charge whatever the market will bear. Municipal ownership means that revenue can now be redirected back into the town. In fact, under private ownership, we would be able to collect very little. Massachusetts law allows only fifty cents for each subscriber to be paid back to cities and towns as a franchise fee which, at best, means a few thousand dollars. After all, if there were no money in cable and a very small chance of success, why would the industry be fighting so hard to maintain their monopoly?

We in Shrewsbury have carefully weighed all the options and investigated all the avenues of thought. We felt that it was time to explore this new option and we could not be more pleased with the results. Residents of the town voted overwhelmingly in favor of municipal ownership at two town meetings.

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It would be unfortunate should only industry applicants be allowed to bid. A franchise license lasts a long time. Voting Yes on the referendum will allow the City to become an applicant and will keep all options open, guaranteeing the best possible system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James E. Baker". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

James E. Baker
Manager,
Shrewsbury Electric
Light Plant

S 568A

Comm. from James E. Baker, Mgr., Shrewsbury
Electric Light Plant inviting the Council
to view its municipally owned cable tele-
vision facilities in Shrewsbury.

10/17/83

City Clerk as the
Request of E. Dechay
to contract with
Representative to
Arrange a Meeting

In City Council,

October 17, 1983

WITH INTERESTED
City Council -
- 10/24/83 -

C. Clinton - NO
C. W. Follis NO
C. J. Brennan NO