

City of Cambridge

The Environment Committee conducted a public hearing on Thursday May 3, 1990 beginning at 7:10 p.m. in the Conference Room at the Public Works Building, 147 Hampshire Street.

Councillor Francis H. Duehay, Chair of the above referenced Committee convened the hearing and introduced those attending: Councillor Sheila T. Russell, Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager, William Sommers, Commissioner of Public Works, Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City Manager, Mark Corrales, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Lori Segall, Cambridge Recycling Committee, Fred Small, Cambridge ECO, and John E. Flynn, Deputy City Clerk.

At the conclusion of the introductions, Councillor Duehay stated the purpose of this evenings proceedings was to receive and review a report entitled: Planning Curbside Recycling for Cambridge, Massachusetts written by Mr. Corrales, with assistance from Ms. Segall and Mr. Sumner Martinson, Regional Recycling Coordinator, Department of Environmental Protection. Councillor Duehay also reviewed the City's current recycling efforts using as its vehicle the voluntary dropoff center models held the second Saturday of each month. The Chair, further stated that a curbside program was a logical progression in the City's recycling program.

At this time the Committee heard from Mr. Corrales for his opening remarks and presentation of his report, findings, and recommendations regarding a curbside program. Mr. Corrales started with the fact that

Cambridge had a curbside program some fifteen years ago exclusively for newspaper collection but abandoned, and in June 1989 the City began with a recycling program by operating two drop off centers.

Mr. Corrale's report cites the following key recommendations for consideration:

- 1) A curbside program to be successful would require a long term committment by the City and citizenry preferably through a phase in process;

- 2) Publicity/Education plays a major role in the success of the program; and,

- 3) Careful monitoring by full time staff to initiate modifications as as necessary as problems are identified.

Key conclusions that have been identified:

- 1) Sorting poses a problem;

- 2) Economies of scale are uncertain and marginal but likely to improve; and,

- 3) Costs vs. benefits uncertain in initial phases.

Mr. Corrales also notes that the City of Cambridge is unique in several ways that make curbside collection of recyclables different from programs in other cites:

- 1) Density (4th most dense city in the nation;)

- 2) Narrow Streets/on street parking;

- 3) Diverse housing stock (single family housing 7%); and,

- 4) Most households are rented (77%), not owned.

The reports further concludes that a curbside program should begin as a pilot one in two areas, one with high expected participation and another

area where other problems could be highlighted.

The pilot should include at least newspaper, and probably should include clear glass as well.

The city should write a Request for Proposal (RFP) in which private concerns could bid on the collection of the recyclables thus reducing the capital expenditure costs that would be incurred if done by city personnel.

Distinctive containers should be provided to all applicable households. (Recommendation would be those households with seven (7) or fewer units.)

Public Education is of utmost importance for a curbside program to be successfull. (Suggested vehicles - Cable T.V., newspapers and other printed media and discussions in the various elementary and secondary schools throughout the City.)

Dropoff Centers should be maintained in parallel with any curbside pickup.

Issues that would remain after the RFP is written include:

- 1) Formation of an adhoc advisory group comprised of citizens, outside experts, and city;
- 2) Study of how to arrange pick up in mid size and large apartment buildings;
- 3) Cost of Containers;
- 4) Negotiations with Bidders;
- 5) Education of Citizenry - Private Consultants; and,
- 6) Selection of a Coordinator to monitor and administer the curbside program.

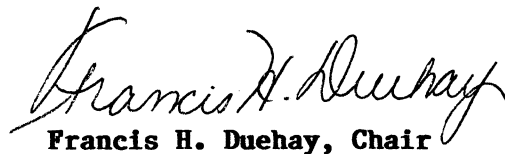
At the conclusion of his presentation Mr. Corrales was asked a series of questions ranging from cost of education to the limit of the scope of the pilot, to the cost of a private contractor vs. city to multi-households.

Councillor Duehay commenting on the series of questions that were posed suggested that with the issuance of the RFP and the formation of an adhoc group most of the opinions and suggestions that were offered would be examined and if possible implemented as the program matured.

The Chair in his closing remarks stated that the City in its recycling efforts has progressed quite a long way in the past year. He thanked the membership of the Cambridge Recycling Committee for helping to lead the movement and restated the City's commitment to the recycling effort.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

For The Committee


Francis H. Duehay, Chair

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COMMITTEE REPORTS S-604

Report from Councillor Duehay, Chairman
of the Environment Committee, to receive
and review a report entitled "PLANNING
CURBSIDE RECYCLING FOR CAMBRIDGE, MA".

In City Council,

June 4, 1990

*Report accepted
and placed on
file*