



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
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City Manager

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
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7.

February 23, 1998

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 14, regarding a report on clarifying the responsibility of snow removal and when snow should be removed, received from Public Works Commissioner Ralph Dunphy.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec  
Attachment



Ralph E. Dunphy  
Commissioner

147 Hampshire Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617-349-4800  
TDD 617-349-4805

To: Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

From:   
Commissioner

Date: February 18, 1998

Subject: Council Order # 019, dated 2/2/98  
Re: Report on Clarifying the  
Responsibility of Snow Removal and  
When Snow Should Be Removed

RECEIVED  
98 FEB 18 PM 2:24  
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

The appropriate time to clear sidewalks of snow and ice continues to be a dilemma for all. The DPW seeks to achieve some clarity and understanding of the many problems associated with this dilemma at the "Roundtable Discussions" scheduled for February 24, 1998.

The approximate time to clear the walk of snow and ice is dependent on the condition existing on the walk, the nature and duration of the storm, time of day and day of week, to mention a few. For example, a six inch snow storm in late March on a Saturday night starting at midnight may be approached differently than a similar storm in early November starting at 5AM on a Tuesday. There are many factors that may require priorities to change due to school routes, public transportation, businesses opening, and the morning rush hour. For instance, the DPW would concentrate on clearing the walks at public transportation areas on a Sunday morning in March. In the November storm we would concentrate our priorities on school routes, walks, and public transportation areas with equal priority. It is these types of issues, priorities, and needs that require our constant attention, flexibility and effort. Any policy, regulation, and/or ordinance change must allow for the flexibility, need, and efficient operation of all the available forces to clear the snow.

The property owner (either citizen in the neighborhood or business) must also be flexible and change priorities and efforts based on the type of storm, nature of the storm, day, time, and sidewalk conditions. Everyone is reminded that the last storm experienced in this area did not require anyone to shovel snow from the walks. It required them to remove ice from the walks



during the evening rush hour, during the week. We were keenly aware of citizens moving out to the streets to walk because property owners and businesses did not place sand, chemicals, or make attempts to remove ice from the walks. The perception was that the streets were safer to walk on than the sidewalks. Of course, they were not, due to the amount of vehicular traffic. The DPW was in the process of treating and removing ice from walks during these periods. Our priority of effort was public buildings and walkways at public facilities.

The correspondence dated December 17, 1997 was intended to inform all concerned on considerations for handling snow windrows pushed to the walk by plows, falling snow, and termination of plowing when clearing walks.

We agree that more awareness is needed about snow clearing responsibilities for City forces, contractors, neighborhood residents, landlords, business owners, and school districts.

Awareness, coupled with departmental regulation changes, possible ordinance revisions, and enforcement, will be required to improve snow clearing operations on sidewalks throughout the City.

The DPW is preparing the appropriate actions to achieve the above. We are, at present, evaluating the input of the Pedestrian Committee and others, in preparation for the Roundtable. These actions will result in a report with recommendations to the City Manager and Council on snow clearing of sidewalks.

Consent Agenda #7

S-93

Relative to Awaiting Report Item Number  
Fourteen, regarding a report on clarifying  
the responsibility of snow removal and  
when snow should be removed.

In City Council February 23, 1998

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