

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in General Court assembled :

Respectfully show the inhabitants of the City of Cambridge, that there is a Bridge over the Charles River, between Cambridge and Brighton, called the Great Bridge, which was erected by the action of the Colonial Legislature about the year 1660, and was designed to accommodate the travel between Boston and the country lying North and West of Charles River ; it being for many years the only means of intercourse by bridge across said river. Sundry grants of monies and lands were accordingly made, from time to time, by the Colony and Province, for the purpose of repairing and re-building said bridge, as the same became necessary ; and the then town of Cambridge was charged with the care and preservation of said bridge, which town also embraced the present towns of Newton, Lexington, West Cambridge and Brighton. And as these several towns were set off from Cambridge, they were by the Legislature, in their Acts of incorporation, specially " held to keep up and support their proportion " of said bridge, which proportion was to be ascertained, from time to time, by the State valuation.

Your petitioners further show that since the decision of the Supreme Judicial Court, hereinafter referred to, was made, a careful examination of the Records of the town of Cambridge, and of the Selectmen has been made, and it clearly appears by said records, that the mode of making the repairs upon said bridge was always a matter of agreement between the several towns charged with its support ; that said repairs were at times made by Committees duly appointed from each of said towns, and at other times they were made by Cambridge, on behalf of all of said towns by agreement with them, and the expense apportioned.

Newton was released by act of the Legislature in 1781 ; and the then towns of Cambridge and Lexington were required to be at the whole expense of repairing said bridge. They and the towns of West Cambridge and Brighton, into which Cambridge had been divided, continued to support and maintain the same until the session of the Legislature in 1860, when the towns of Lexington and West Cambridge were released by an Act of the General Court from further liability to contribute towards the support thereof, and the County Commissioners for the County of Middlesex were authorized to lay out said bridge as a public highway.

Now your petitioners show that, upon a petition to said County Commissioners to lay out said bridge as a public highway, they adjudicated that the highway prayed for was not of common convenience and necessity ; and, by a decision of the Supreme Judicial Court, it has been settled that the town of Brighton and City of Cambridge are not released from the charge of maintaining said bridge by the Act of 1860.

Your petitioners humbly submit that the same change in circumstances which rendered it just and reasonable that the towns of Lexington and West Cambridge should be released from further contribution towards the support of said bridge, now render it expedient that your Honorable Body should remove all doubt and uncertainty as to the control of said bridge ; and that Cambridge should be relieved from the necessity, or supposed necessity, of exercising any control over that part of said bridge lying within the limits of Brighton.

Your petitioners therefore pray that your Honorable Body would provide that the City of Cambridge shall not be held to support and maintain any portion of said bridge lying without its own territorial limits, or that such other provision may be made as to your Honorable Body may seem meet and proper.

And as in duty bound will ever pray.

In behalf of the inhabitants of the City,

*Joint Special
Committee of
the City Council.*

CHAS. THEO. RUSSELL, Mayor.

CHAS. H. SAUNDERS, } Aldermen.
ALBERT VINAL. }

JOHN S. POLLARD, } Common
N. D. SAWIN, } Councilmen.
JOHN A. ELLIS. }

Cambridge, Oct. 9, 1861.

Petition.
Brighton Great Bridge.
Oct. 9. 1861

46.

Petition Brighton
Great Bridge