



City of Cambridge

Committee Report 7a

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 11, 1999

COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Law Department to draft an ordinance that requires exterior lighting for safety and does not conflict with the Zoning Ordinance.

In City Council January 11, 1999.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



City of Cambridge

Committee Report 7b

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 11, 1999

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Fire Chief and to the Police Crime Prevention staff to report back on what safety issues are presented by the different types of locks which can be used to lock windows which are partially opened; and be it further

ORDERED: That the report should be specific and should include any relevant safety studies for these windows.

In City Council January 11, 1999.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



City of Cambridge

Committee Report 7c

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 11, 1999

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Law Department to provide for the City Council's consideration, the best legal mechanism to require deadbolt locks and safety chain locks for rental apartments.

In City Council January 11, 1999.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

City of Cambridge

In City Council January 11, 1998

The Public Safety Committee held a public meeting on December 2, 1998, beginning at 5:40 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of discussing a report on the status of preparation of an ordinance requiring exterior lighting including porch lights on rental property.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Katherine Triantafillou, and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were Robert Bersani, Commissioner of Inspectional Services, Police Deputy Superintendent Michael Giacoppo, and First Assistant City Solicitor, Nancy Glowa.

Councillor Sullivan convened the hearing and explained the purpose. He invited Commissioner Bersani to discuss the report.

Commissioner Bersani began with a description of code requirements relating to porch and outdoor lighting. He stated that the Sanitary Code requires that porch lights be provided, although they are not required to be lighted continuously. Porch lights are not required by the Building Code. The Building Code does require continuous low level egress lighting. The Electrical Code requires an exterior outlet.

Councillor Davis stated that she recently went on a neighborhood walk with Cambridgeport residents and Police Officer Sue Cahill. She recommended that all of the alley areas be lit. The Police Commissioner recommends motion detector lights.

Commissioner Bersani noted that a change to the Building Code to require a twenty-minute fire door would result in a more secure door, but petitions to the State for changes are rarely successful, and even if a petition to the State were successful and the code were changed, it would only apply to new construction.

Councillor Davis asked whether the Sanitary Code could be changed. Commissioner Bersani stated that based on his inquiry, it appears that perhaps there is not the same problem with an ordinance that is more restrictive than the Sanitary Code as there is with the Building Code. Commissioner Bersani stated that in some zoning districts, some kinds of extensive lighting are not allowed by zoning. Attorney Glowa stated that an ordinance would have to be carefully drafted so as not to conflict with the Zoning Ordinance.

Councillor Davis moved that the Law Department be directed to draft an ordinance that requires exterior lighting for safety and does not conflict with the Zoning Ordinance. The motion was passed without objection.

The discussion moved to the proposal on window locks. Attorney Glowa stated that the Fire Department believes that the pin locks can be a fire hazard. Deputy Superintendent Giacoppo stated that he does not know whether the Police Department Crime Prevention Staff has discussed this issue with the Fire Department.

Commissioner Bersani stated that he too is concerned about safety for children and guests in egress windows. The Building Code says that the locks should not require special knowledge.

Councillor Sullivan noted that the proposal is to require pin locks in all first floor windows and all upper floor windows that can be accessed by decks, stairs, etc. Councillor Sullivan noted that in half of the recent rapes in Cambridgeport, the perpetrator gained entry through open windows.

Councillor Davis stated that there are several different locks. Some are quick and easy to operate.

Councillor Sullivan moved that the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Fire Chief and to the Police Crime Prevention staff to report back on what safety issues are presented by the different types of locks which can be used to lock windows which are partially opened. The report should be specific and should include any relevant safety studies for these windows. The motion passed without objection.

Councillor Katherine Triantafillou asked whether there are any studies on the fire safety issues connected with these windows. Deputy Superintendent Giacoppo said that there is usually data related to the product liability. He does not know if there are any fire safety studies.

With regard to the proposal to change the Building Code to require twenty-minute fire doors, Councillor Triantafillou asked whether it would be possible to write in an exemption for public housing. Attorney Glowa answered in the negative.

Councillor Sullivan then inquired about the issues related to the security of locks. He asked whether this is addressed by the Building Code. Commissioner Bersani stated that the Building Code does not address locks. Ms. Glowa stated that there would have to be more investigation as to whether "hardware," which is covered by the Building Code, includes locks. Councillor Sullivan stated that safety chains should be required along with the one-inch deadbolts already suggested.

Councillor Triantafillou asked how the City can "get to" landlords, to convince them to make these safety improvements. Councillor Sullivan stated that there is an attorney who specializes in lawsuits against landlords for injuries received by tenants where intruders broke into inadequately secured apartments. In those cases changes have been made in the safety of the doors and locks.

Councillor Davis stated that there is also the "carrot" approach, of public education and incentives to make changes. She noted that Sy Shapiro, owner of Tags had expressed some willingness to assist with discounts on the locks as part of a campaign to improve safety.

Councillor Triantafillou suggested first publicizing the Code requirements for a secure door and then increasing enforcement efforts.

Councillor Sullivan asked about "credit card" locks. Commissioner Bersani stated that if a tenant called for a code inspection and could demonstrate that the door could be opened by a credit card, in his view that would not be a reasonably secure door as required under the code.

It was agreed that the safety enhancements of deadbolt locks, safety chains, and exterior lighting were desirable. With respect to window alarms, Councillor Davis stated that she does not believe that that requirement is reasonable.

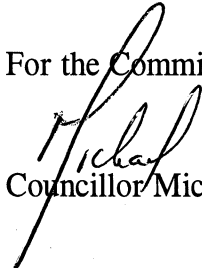
Councillor Sullivan moved that the City Manager be requested to direct the Law Department to provide for the City Council's consideration, the best legal mechanism to require deadbolt locks and safety chain locks for rental apartments. The motion passed without objection on a voice vote.

Councillor Davis noted that the ongoing neighborhood meetings held by the neighborhood police sergeants might be a good forum for discussing many of these issues.

Councillor Sullivan suggested that City Councillors give citizens the telephone number of the neighborhood sergeants. Deputy Superintendent Giacoppo said that they can also call Lieutenant Steve Williams in the Community Oriented Policy program.

Councillor Sullivan thanked all those present for their attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

For the Committee,


Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Chair

Committee Report #7

S41
A report from Councillor Sullivan,
Chair of the Public Safety Committee,
for a hearing held on December 2, 1998
for the purpose of discussing a report
on the status of preparation of an
ordinance requiring exterior lighting
including porch lights on rental property.

In City Council January 11, 1999

Report Accepted.
Three Orders Adopted