



# City of Cambridge

Consent Comm. #15

IN CITY COUNCIL

October 19, 1998

COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to respond in writing to Joanne Karpowicz concerning various issues relating to traffic and parking in the City of Cambridge, as set forth in the attached communication, with copies to the City Council.

In City Council October 19, 1998.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret Drury".

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury  
City Clerk

- b. Outside of the daily "special traffic details" that are required by the traffic plan filing, I never see police presence in the area in so far as monitoring conformance with noise ordinances. Perhaps the Inspection Department would be better suited to enforce these ordinances on a regular basis than the police who have an obvious conflict of interest because of paid traffic details.
  - ◆ In a conversation that I had with the Mayor's Office, I was gratefully informed that Mr. Healy has received many e-mails about the construction noise in the referenced areas. How is it that Mr. Healy has not taken the initiative to act independently to investigate and correct the complaints made in these referenced e-mails until finally and expectedly a citizen "blows his cool". What did the City Manager think was going to happen if he kept ignoring the problem?

Issue #2 - Posted No Parking

On several occasions, the contractors carrying out the public works project have posted no parking signs on Dana Street. During these posted times, personal vehicles or construction personnel as well as officers working paid traffic details park in these posted areas and no construction work takes place. I have observed construction workers at 5:00 P.M. crossing out current dates and inserting next day dates on these no parking signs issued by the City. I telephoned Traffic and Parking and was informed that notices had gone out that work was being performed. That was the extent of the explanation for this occurrence. Now, to the rest of us who live within the City of Cambridge - no parking signs have to be posted within stated time limits, and for a specified period of time. These posted signs and time slots are monitored and enforced by the City Traffic Department.

- a. Why are personal vehicles parking in posted residential areas without enforcement of parking regulations;
- b. How is it that arbitrary changes have been made to signs with a magic marker without giving proper notice;
- c. Why is this permitted?

Issue #3 - Business Parking Permits

- a. Have it be known that there is a small minority who are aware that Business Parking Permits exist or what they are. This seems to be a closely guarded secret kept by the City Traffic Department. Who is responsible for disseminating parking regulation information and for providing training to City departments and employees as it relates to the enforcement of parking policies
- ◆ I have spoken to City of Cambridge Police Department employees who have never heard of them;
  - ◆ Employees at City Hall cannot tell you their function; and
  - ◆ Local businesses that I have polled have never heard of them.

When I called Traffic and Parking and requested a written copy of the *Business Parking Permit Policy*, I was told to write a letter on my business letterhead addressed to the Traffic and Parking Commission and that the Department will respond to the request for a Business Permit in writing - i.e. either approving or not. No justification for the decision was mentioned as being included in their response. This was at the end of August. I asked the Mayor's office if they could obtain a copy of this policy for me. On October 13, 1998, I learned that the City Manager, Robert Healy, responded to the Mayor's office written request for a written copy of the Business Parking Permit Policy and that there is in fact, no written policy. In a follow up conversation with the Mayor's Office, I was informed that Mr. Healy told the Mayor's Office such a policy would not be promulgated in writing until new business next March, 1999.

- b. Why is there no Business Parking Policy in writing and why now does it take five months to write one.
- c. Who decided that the Business Parking Permit fiscal year should differ from Resident Parking Permit reissues.
- d. You can read all about resident parking permits on the City of Cambridge WEB page, but as the attached copy the Traffic Department's WEB page will show - there is no mention of Business Parking Permits. Isn't this considered to be public information and shouldn't it be available to the general public in written as well as electronic format?
- e. As to the issue of Traffic and Parking Department hours, I have been told that the Traffic Department is open until 7:00 P.M. in the evening - but they close at 5:00 P.M. If I telephone the Police Department during the "black out" period - the Police Department issues instructions to call Traffic and Parking. Will this open ended loop ever close.

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Cambridge City Council

f. How can you distribute Business Parking Permits without any standards. Where is the *Validity? Management? Uniformity?*

The point of all this is that there are very restrictive policies for individuals such as the enforcement even of the minutia (like a guest permit turned upside down - a \$15 ticket) if the regulations are violated. While businessmen may do pretty much what they wish without any enforcement tickets or detailed regulations. This doesn't appear to be fair. If parking must be restricted then the relationship between individuals and business persons should be carefully considered and both treated alike after the policy decisions have been made. Besides this - some business persons in our neighborhood abuse their rights, park in resident parking permit areas where they have no right to be with no apparent penalty. If we are going to have restricted parking in Cambridge then it seems to me that everybody - individuals and business - should "*equally*" be required to follow clear public regulations which are enforced.

The point of this letter is to ask for help from the City Council to educate the City Manager to be more responsive to public concern. Obviously if noise gets to the point where citizens wind up in confrontation with the police after prior notice to the City Manager of the problem something is wrong. In addition, producing a uniform written policy for business parking should have happened already and should not take five more months. Perhaps the City Manager thinks these problems will go away by the passage of time but harm is being caused to innocent persons on a daily basis that we can all see.

Sincerely,



Joanne Karpowicz

# NOTES

## Work site noise leads to arrest

As residents of mid-Cambridge grow increasingly restive over disruptions and noise from public works construction on Cambridge Street, friction over the ongoing road and sewer work took a bizarre twist last month when a resident of nearby Prescott Street was arrested after protesting the early morning noise.

James Cusack, 45, said he was jolted out of sleep at 6:30 a.m. Sept. 3 by the sound of heavy equipment outside his home. Believing the activity, part of the Cambridge Street work, violated city laws banning construction before 7 a.m., Cusack went outside to talk to Cambridge police Lieutenant Timothy Hogan, who was on duty at the site.

When told Hogan would "look into" the alleged violation, Cusack said, a heated exchange resulted that culminated in the two butting chests during the argument. Hogan arrested Cusack and charged him with resisting arrest, disorderly conduct and assault and battery.

Cusack has filed complaints with the city's police review board and internal affairs division, alleging he was wrongly charged for the morning confrontation.

"This is just insane," said Cusack. "I'm not guilty of assault. The only reason I went out there and was assertive about it was that these guys know the story. It's crazy that this happens to me for asserting my rights as a citizen and expecting these guys to protect the law."

Frank Pasquarello, spokesman for the Cambridge police department, said, "Apparently, the suspect pushed the officer with a bit of profanity." He acknowledged, however, the officer may "have gone a little

overboard."

Neighbors have grown impatient with the Cambridge Street construction that started in spring 1997. A contingent of residents asked the council Monday for a hearing on what they say are contract violations and shoddy work at the site, including nighttime noise from unfixed metal plates in the street.

"I sympathize with this person," group member Michael Swartz said, referring to Cusack. "These are things that are very frustrating. I wish someone would come and enforce the law on the side of the citizens. I haven't been protected by my city, with little in terms of information or compensation. It's just been terrible, and this is going to go for years as it moves from part of the city to the next."

Councilors asked the city manager to schedule a hearing Oct. 19.

[Cambridge Home](#)



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department  
57 Inman Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Susan Clippinger, Director  
[sclippinger@CI.Cambridge.MA.US](mailto:sclippinger@CI.Cambridge.MA.US)

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Dear Resident: 1998 resident stickers and visitor permits are available by mailing in an application or coming to the office.

Looking for information about the City's Traffic Calming program?

- [Qualifying for a Resident Sticker](#)
- [Leased or Company Vehicles](#)
- [Applying for a Visitor Permit](#)
- [Fee Schedule](#)
- [Renewals by Mail](#)
- [Hours of Operation](#)
- [Revocations](#)
- [Important Telephone Numbers](#)
- [How are We Doing? \(Feedback\)](#)

***ALL PARKING TICKETS AND AUTO EXCISE MUST BE PAID IN FULL***

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**A. To qualify for a resident sticker:**

You must be a resident of Cambridge whose vehicle, weighing less than 2.5 tons, is registered with the Registry of Motor Vehicles as principally garaged in Cambridge at your residential address. You must also present a current gas, electric, Nynex, or cable bill dated for service at your residence within 30 days. When applying at the office, please bring your original registration or a legible photocopy. The fee schedule is in Section D.

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**B. Leased or Company vehicle:**

This vehicle registration must indicate that the vehicle is registered in Massachusetts and principally garaged in Cambridge. You will also need to present a current ComGas, ComElectric, Nynex or cable bill as described below in Section C. The fee schedule is in Section D.

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**C. To apply for a visitor permit:**

You must present a current ComGas, ComElectric, Nynex, or cable bill, dated for service within thirty days for your residence. The fee schedule is in Section D.

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**D. Fee Schedule:**

- \$8.00 for initial resident sticker and one visitor permit
- \$8.00 for each additional resident sticker in the household
- \$8.00 for a visitor permit in a household without a car
- NO FEE for SENIOR CITIZENS (age 65 or older)\*
- NO FEE for persons with either HP or DV plates\*
- NO FEE for persons with HP placard with the car in the same name\*

*\* PROOF OF AGE OR A COPY OF THE FRONT AND BACK OF THE HP PLACARD MUST BE SHOWN. HP PLACARD MUST BE IN THE SAME NAME AS THE REGISTRATION.*

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**E. Renewal by Mail**

1. Resident Sticker - print and fill out the application using one section per qualifying vehicle in your household. Please print legibly. Mail this form along with the applicable fee in check or money order. DO NOT SEND CASH. Include a current ComGas, ComElectric, Nynex, or cable bill dated for service at your address within thirty days of your application. This bill can be in the name of any housemate at your residence. The fee schedule is in Section D.
2. Visitor's permit in a household without a vehicle: mail a current ComGas, ComElectric, Nynex or a cable bill dated for service at your residence within thirty days. Mail the bill along with the applicable fee as described in Section D.

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**F. Hours of Operation:**

Monday through Friday 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

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**G. Revocations:**

If a visitor permit has been revoked in the past, you will not be eligible for a new visitor permit. A request for reinstatement of visitor permit privileges must be made in writing. You will be notified in writing when a decision has been made.

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**I. Important Numbers**

- Administration 349-4700
  - Ticket Information 349-4700
  - Resident Parking 349-4700
  - Pay by Phone (617) 491-7277
  - FAX 349-4747
  - Street Closing/Obstruction Permits 349-4721
  - Traffic Signal Problems 349-4715
  - Winter Parking Ban 349-4700
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**FEEDBACK:**

In an effort to provide more information and better serve our residents, we welcome any comments on how we can make our web pages more informative and useful. Please mail us with your suggestions. We will try and respond where appropriate.

Thank you.

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1998 OCT 15 A 11:43

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

October 15, 1998

Cambridge City Council  
City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Cambridge City Council Members:

My name is Joanne Karpowicz and I am a lifelong resident of Cambridge, a graduate of its public schools, presently work in Cambridge and live on Dana Street in a home belonging to my family for many years near the Youville Hospital on Cambridge Street. I read the attached story in the Sunday, October 10<sup>th</sup> Boston Globe's City Weekly section about the Cambridge resident, James Cusack, who experienced an unfortunate incident with the Police over noise and am totally empathetic. As a result, I am writing to you to request the Council's aid. There are unfair and nonuniform practices being permitted which frustrate me even after I've tried to get them corrected by calling the office of the Mayor and the Traffic Department (to date the Director has not returned my calls).

Issue #1 - Noise from Construction

Do you ask yourself how an individual reaches the level of frustration as described in Sunday's City Weekly section. Well let me attest to the validity of the facts of noise of that story. I've listened to the loud noise all summer long in the very early hours of the morning. Being startled awake by loud noise has become a frequent occurrence. The steel plates that are placed in Cambridge Street are placed at the back end of the work day and are not placed securely. Being started from a sound sleep one night at 4:30 A.M., I attempted to discover the source of the noise. I saw a Royal Launcry truck going at least 35 to 40 MPH down Cambridge Street over the steel plates which produced the noise I was hearing. I went home and tried to get back to sleep but was woken at 6:15 A.M. by the noise from heavy equipment moving. Yes, 6:15 A.M.. Working people are having a lot of trouble getting sleep and although I agree that it is important to get the construction work done, it should not be begun before people get a decent nights sleep. I would suggest 7:00 A.M..

- a. Why aren't city officials more quick to monitor and protect residents' rights of quite enjoyment.

Consent Communication #15

CM 532

A communication was received from Joanne Karpowicz, transmitting concern over various issues relating to traffic and parking in the City of Cambridge.

10/19/98  
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In City Council October 19, 1998

Referred to the City Manager *for response.*

**ORDER ADOPTED**