

Cambridge City Council
795 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge, Ma, 02139

Jeff Ivestone
67 Pleasant St.,
Cambridge, Ma.
02139

To Whom it May Concern:

This past month I experienced a great tragedy when my cat, whom I have raised and loved for many years was hit by a car and killed near my home in Cambridge. Any devoted pet owner knows that the profound grief and loss experienced when a pet dies is very similar to losing a child. Unfortunately my dealings with the City of Cambridge regarding my cat greatly and unnecessarily exacerbated this most painful situation.

The morning after we discovered the cat missing I called the Cambridge Police Dept. They told me to call Animal Control. Animal Control promptly returned my call, said they had not found my cat, and advised me to call the MSPCA and the Animal Rescue League.

Throughout the next two weeks of the cat's absence I spoke numerous times to these agencies, placed ads in two Cambridge newspapers, put fliers in every mailbox, and posted signs around my neighborhood, worried, waited, hoped, and cried.

At the end of the two weeks an acquaintance mentioned that I should call the Dept. of Public Works because if the cat had been killed Public Works would have picked him up and kept a record of it.

I called Public Works. They had, in fact, picked up my cat the very first night he was missing!

Why, I wondered, had no one at the Cambridge Police Dept., Cambridge Animal Control, the MSPCA, or the Animal Rescue League advised me to call Public Works in the first place! Had I been informed of this standard operating procedure I would have known about my cat within 24 hours of his absence instead of agonizing for two weeks! It was horrible.

Secondly my cat was wearing a flea collar, a regular collar, a reflector tag, a name tag, and a bell. Obviously, this was a cat that belonged to somebody who really cared about him. I realize that picking up dead animals is an unpleasant job. But couldn't somebody have taken 60 seconds to jot down the owner's phone number and give a call at their earliest convenience?!? It would have made an enormous difference to me.

Had I known about my cat earlier I could have retrieved his body, collars, tags, etc. as I would have wanted. ~~Two~~ Two weeks after he was picked up, however, he'd been taken off to some animal crematorium. It may not seem like much to you but it would have meant a great deal to me and others who loved him.

I hope in the future that staff at the previously mentioned departments and agencies will be instructed to add Public Works to the list of places to call when a pet is missing. In addition this letter could be posted at DPW in the hopes that staff there would act more compassionately when picking up animals wearing ^{name} tags.

I would appreciate a response from a representative of the ~~DPW~~ department responsible for dealing with this type of procedural policy.

For many anonymous animals out there, there are several human beings who are very attached to them. It is very important that procedures for handling dead + injured pets involve some compassion + decency.

cc Public Works
Animal Control
Rescue League
MSPCA
TAB
Chronicle

Sincerely,

Jonifer Firestone
67 Pleasant St.
Cambridge, Ma. 02139

S-740

Comm. from Jenifer Firestone, 67 Pleasant St., regarding dissatisfaction with the Police Dept., Animal Comm., and Public Works Dept., regarding circumstances surrounding her missing cat and recommending changes in notification to pet owners of the loss of an animal in the City.

In City Council,
December 21, 1987

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK
1987 DEC 10 AM 11:43
CAMBRIDGE MA.

Referred to the City Manager

*12/21/87 - Referred to the
City Manager - copy sent
to the City Mgr 12/23/87 mch*