



12/9/74

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
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Barbara Ackermann
City Councillor

REPORT ON 1974 CONGRESS OF CITIES

I General.

The National League of Cities is our union, the means by which we lobby Congress for programs that are good for the cities. Most lobbies represent private interests. The League of Cities and the Congress of Mayors are almost the only powerful lobbies that represent the public interest. Private interests offer financial support. Our power is in numbers. The League, with representation of Republican and Democratic mayors and councillors across the nation, claims to speak for eighty percent of the American people.

To these two organizations we owe revenue sharing, the mass transit bill President Ford signed last week, the new housing bill, the Comprehensive Employment Training Act. These programs are worth millions of dollars to Cambridge.

I believe Cambridge should continue to send a strong delegation to League meetings:

- 1) to maintain a strong organization;
- 2) to help develop and shape the goals for the year ahead. This is one organization where the platform is not just rhetoric. For instance, Cambridge had a lot to do with the fact that the new transportation bill includes not just money for expansion of transit but money for operating costs, money to reduce the local tax share.

3) to meet the people from Washington who administer the programs and allocate the funds.

4) to attend seminars on where the new programs are and how to apply for them.

II. 1974

This year I served on the nominating committee, with ten other delegates out of the four thousand who attended. I found there were many candidates and fierce campaigning for the officers' jobs and for seats on the board of directors. Massachusetts has not had an elected official on the board of directors since 1967. If I had not been there it still wouldn't, but as it was we gave a seat to the Massachusetts nominee, Edgar Gadbois, the able young mayor of Marlboro. I also had the pleasure of helping elect the first woman vice-president of the organization, Phylliss Lamphere of Seattle, and of voting for Mayor Carlos Barcelo of San Juan, Puerto Rico, for president. Mayor Barcelo will be a strong and able spokesman for the cities.

The keynote of the conference was urban conservation. It is always interesting to find that cities across the nation have identified the same problems we have and are looking for the same kinds of solutions. For instance, nobody wants to build more large blocks of public housing. The emphasis now is on rent subsidies and federal money to rehabilitate and revive old houses and old neighborhoods. Secretary James T. Lynn of HUD made it clear that he would respond to this need.

We passed resolutions in the fields of transportation, community development, human resources, effective government, public safety, and environmental quality. The League will lobby for continuation of revenue sharing, and for a strong program of ~~energy~~ conservation and protection of the environment.

One area where not much work has been done is the area of national health insurance and support for community health clinics like ours. I discussed this matter with several officials at the conference, including

the incoming vice-president. If I find that I can help shape national health policy to conform to the goals that the Cambridge City Council has set, I shall be looking to go to the next meeting, in Washington in March.

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Report of Division
Constitution

Submitted by
L. Ackermann

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