



Mystic River Watershed Association, Inc.

June 27, 1981

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re.: Open sewers and Alewife
Rindge Avenue development

Gentlemen:

We call your attention to the concentrations of sewage in the channel and river close to where people are planning to develop space for offices. The sewage comes from a pipe draining the Normandy Street area of Cambridge to Wellington Brook, which flows into Little River. It comes from two combined sewer overflows now discharging into Little River behind Frasse Steel and just downstream from Arthur D. Little Co. People working near there will smell the odor from the polluted water.

Mr. Fagone and the Public Works Department expects to correct the combined sewer overflows with E.P.A. financing about 1990. E.P.A. is looking for alternative sources of funding. The discharge into Wellington Brook apparently is very difficult to more than temporarily modify.

People in contact with this water may endanger their health. I have had inoculations to protect me for work removing debris from the river and guiding and teaching. The smell is most unpleasant and the dark thick matter accumulates on boots, ropes, gloves, and canoe. Our association has been working on the problem for several years. People living near the brook downstream in Arlington, Somerville, and Medford suffer from the degraded water.

We urge you to have the sewer overflows and discharges corrected before any more development takes place other than something like a recycling facility. If funds are not available require the developers to pay into a capital fund for that purpose before they develop. Construction in the 1940s lacked careful attention to these matters. That is evident from the records in Mr. Rice's office. In the last century according to William Brewster's Birds of the Cambridge Region, which appears to be the oldest continuous record of natural history in the United States, the Fresh Pond Marshes at the location near MBTA garage construction contained water "sweet and good to drink."

While we continue to work on the problem, more responsible government and private groups must join in the commitment. Responsible people aware of the situation could require that the condition be corrected and the difficult unpleasant task be

Communication from:

Stewart Sanders, VP, Mystic
River Watershed Association, Inc.
relative to Open sewers and Alewife
Rindge Avenue development

completed before beginning the more exciting, rewarding work
building and renting. It may be the only way to get the job
done.

Yours sincerely,

Stewart Sanders

Stewart Sanders, Vice-president

sanders

73 Fairmont Street
Belmont, MA 02178

In City Council

August 3, 1981

8/3/81

*Referred to the
City Manager*