



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT #4

City Hall Annex Inman & Broadway

Tabled by C. Graham

To Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From ~~KAS~~ Kathy A. Spiegelman, Assistant City
Manager for Community Development

Date March 6, 1984

Subject Council Order of January 9, 1984 Regarding Bridges Over
Public Ways

On March 6, 1984, I discussed with the Planning Board this proposal for how the City could consider applications for building bridges over public ways. The Board unanimously endorsed the approach presented below.

Throughout its history, Cambridge has been admired as having good places for people to walk and enjoy the life of the City. Cambridge parks, plazas, and sidewalks form a tremendous historic, cultural, and environmental resource. It follows that pedestrian bridges should be primarily discouraged because they tend to internalize this activity which is essential for the animation of a healthy City. With these concerns as the background for deliberation, the following outline suggests how the City might deal with requests for permission to build bridges over public ways.

1. PROCESS

Since the construction of bridges should be allowed only if such projects would be compatible with City plans for development and neighborhood protection, as embodied in the zoning ordinance, it would be logical to follow a process similar to the one for amendments to the zoning ordinance. Thus, the petitioner would request permission from the City Council, which would send the request to the Planning Board for a recommendation. The Planning Board would hold a hearing, and then send its recommendation to the Council. The full Council would hold a hearing, and then vote to allow or disallow the request. This process would insure citizen participation through the required hearings.

2. CRITERIA

In general, bridges over public ways should not be encouraged because the structures tend to be visually obtrusive; they cast shadows which may create unpleasant or hazardous spaces; and they take desirable pedestrian activity off sidewalks, in most cases. However, in unusual circumstances, bridges may be the best solu-

tion to particular pedestrian circulation problems. If, in such cases, the bridge can be shown to provide an overall positive impact, it should be approved. The following criteria should be assessed as a basis for acceptance:

A. The Benefit to the Public

There are public benefits to be derived from construction of the structure.

1. Significant public improvements are made at street level.
 - a. Reconstructed sidewalks
 - b. Landscaping improvements
 - c. Street trees
 - d. Expanded public park facilities
 - e. Improved street alignment
 - f. Private maintenance of impacted public facilities
2. Conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, which is dangerous and not subject to other solutions, is diminished significantly.
3. Public has use of cross-over in a generally unrestricted way.
4. There is significant financial income on payment to the city.

B. Safety Measures

Measures have been taken to protect users of the bridge, other pedestrians in the area, automobile and other vehicular users.

1. Any necessary signalization is provided.
2. Lighting to minimize shadow impacts and to illuminate structure (if appropriate) is provided.
3. Adequate clearance for vehicles is available (especially for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles).
4. Bridge and associated spaces are provided with adequate surveillance.
5. Bridge is adequately designed so as not to cause dangers from falling snow or ice.

C. Environmental Impact

There are minimal negative environmental impacts; negative environmental impacts are adequately mitigated; and/or the negative impacts are clearly outweighed by public benefits, as outlined above.

1. Do the shadows have a significant effect on existing public amenities--parks, sitting areas, or other amenities?
2. Are areas created which will collect waste, fail to grow plant materials, result in erosion, poor surface maintenance, etc?
3. Are significant existing amenities destroyed--street trees, etc.?
4. Is the site prominent on a major street or is it on a minor street?
5. Is the scale in keeping with the surroundings and uses--business areas, residential, etc.?
6. Could the structures provide shelter from rain, as for example at a street crossing location; will it aggravate wind problems at ground level?
7. Will the structure in any way hinder pedestrian or vehicle movement on public ways?
8. Will the numbers of people in the public streets be significantly reduced; will customary public use of adjacent public places be altered?
9. Are there any other positive external environmental benefits in addition to improving internal pedestrian flow?

D. Visual Design

Is the design of the structure such that it minimizes negative impacts or provides a positive contribution to the visual environment of its neighborhood? Is the structure an unmitigateable intrusion in the environment?

1. Are customary views of landmarks, major buildings, or open space amenities blocked?
2. Is the structure compatible with neighboring uses and structures in terms of materials, proportions, and height from ground?

3. The structure itself provides a positive aesthetic contribution to the environs.

- a. Gateway
- b. Monument
- c. Enclosures, etc.

3. FEES

To date, the City has charged an annual air-rights fee, calculated at \$.27/cubic foot, with a minimum charge of \$500. This fee structure is based on an analysis by the Board of Assessors of bridge and tunnel fees in other cities. While the basic rate may be reasonable, the fee should be adjusted for inflation, perhaps by an annual escalation factor determined by the consumer price index or by 2½% per annum.



City of Cambridge

13.

Healy S

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 9, 1984

COUNCILLOR WOLF

- WHEREAS:** Requests for permission to build bridges over public ways of the City of Cambridge may continue to be presented to this City Council for their consideration; and
- WHEREAS:** These requests often represent the desire to use our limited public space for largely private purposes; now therefore be it
- ORDERED:** That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to submit to this City Council a recommendation for:
1. A permanent process, including citizen participation, to review requests for bridges over public ways
 2. Clear, stringent criteria to be utilized in assessing these bridge proposals, including
 - A. The benefit to the public
 - B. Safety measures
 - C. Environmental impact
 - D. Visual design
 3. The level of fees to be charged or other benefits to be provided if such bridge meets the criteria and is approved by this City Council.

In City Council January 9, 1984.
Adopted by the affirmative vote of 9 members.
Attest:- Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

Paul E. Healy
Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

To Kathy Speigelman, Asst. City Manager for
Community Development

Date March 20, 1984

From Paul E. Healy, City Clerk

Reference

Subject City Council hearing on a process to review
requests for bridges over public ways

Pursuant to our telephone conversation of this morning, please be advised that the City Council has scheduled a public hearing for Monday, March 26, 1984 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chamber, to discuss a process to review requests for bridges over public ways in the City of Cambridge. Your presence is hereby requested at this time.

Your very kind cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated, both by this office and the City Council.

PEH/mh



City of Cambridge

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Attest:- Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul E. Healy", written over a horizontal line.

Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

City Hall Annex Inman & Broadway

To Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From ~~KAB~~ Kathy A. Spiegelman, Assistant City
Manager for Community Development

Date March 6, 1984

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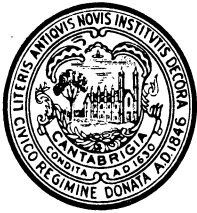
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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 498-9011

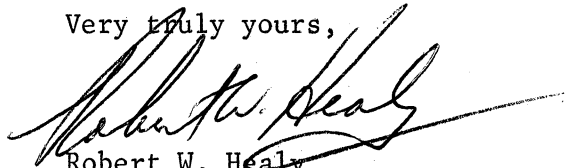
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

March 12, 1984

To the Honorable, the City Council:

With respect to Awaiting Report Item No. 7 relative to a process to review requests for bridges over public ways, enclosed please find copy of a report from the Community Development Department.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mbf
Enc.

Re: response to Awaiting Report Item No. 7
relative to a process to review requests for
bridges over public ways.

Hearing held by the City
Council 3-26-84

3/26/84

Introduced by E. Wolf

Called this Council

Kathy Spiegelman -

who will attend and

will check with Council

Representatives

Letter sent to Kathy Spiegelman inviting
her to hearing 3/21/84 ml

In City Council,

March 12, 1984

3/12/84

Hearing in 2

weeks - Proposed

ON MOTION OF

COUNCILLOR WOLF

Hearing 3/26/84

AT 6:30 PM

3/26/1984

After Hearing

This matter was

tabled on motion

of Councilor

Johnson

Sept 10/84

City -

Transcript took

Place on File.