



City of Cambridge

O-22.

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 14, 2001

COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council on the following items:

- What signage exists for public access toilets;
- Can letters be written by City Manager to private enterprises that discriminate against non-customers of their establishments from using their facilities;
- Could signage be done by the City where there are public access toilets provided by private enterprises, such as a mall;
- An inventory be provided of the facilities available and the signage used; and
- Investigate the public access option used in the boathouses along the river.

In City Council May 14, 2001.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Margaret Drury". The signature is written in a cursive style.

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

SEE COMMITTEE REPORT #3.

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City of Cambridge

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair

Councillor Kathleen L. Born

Councillor Jim Braude

In City Council May 14, 2001

The Health and Environment Committee conducted a public meeting on Wednesday, April 25, 2001 at 7:16 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of a plan for the establishment of permanent public toilet facilities.

Present at the meeting were Councillor Davis, Chair of the Committee; Councillor Braude; Councillor Born; Robert W. Healy, City Manager; Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City Manager; Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services; Michael Muehe, Director of Commission of Persons with Disabilities; Harold Cox, Chief Health Officer; and Donna P. Lopez, Deputy City Clerk.

Also present were the following members of the Public Health sub committee: Lynn Schoeff, Jeff Walker, Dr. Melvin Chalfen, Irene Umana-Maxwell, Leroy Cragwell, William L. Cobham, Jolyon Cowan, Carol Cerf, Daniel Curley, Stephanie Ackert, Susan Marine, Ellen Kramer, Ricki Lacy, Sam Lipson, Virginia Chomitz and Susan Feinberg.

Councillor Davis opened the meeting and stated the purpose. She stated that Mr. Cox would give a report on the issue of public toilet facilities.

Mr. Cox, Chief Health Officer, stated that the City has been looking into the toilet access issue. Public toilets, he said, are needed for tourists, the general public and the homeless. A need was identified for the homeless to have sufficient places to take care of themselves, he said. He presented a video which explained the access and cleanliness of Automatic Public Toilets (APT).

Councillor Davis asked if the City of Boston has APT's. Mr. Cox responded that Boston is in the process of acquiring APT's. The APT's are timed and the city established the time frame.

APT's are offered by street furniture companies. The companies that offer APT's are:

- Wall - Germany
- Adschel - USA
- JC Decaux - France
- Infinity Outdoor - USA
- Exeloo Limited - New Zealand.

The issues that were reviewed were design, maintenance accessibility, safety and cost, she said. Ms. Feinberg proceeded to outline the design and maintenance aspects of APT's. APT's, she said, are owned and operated by street furniture companies. The APT's are visually stunning, large and weigh between two and eight tons. The companies maintain and supply the APT's.

On the issue of accessibility, she stated that APT's are compliant with the American Disabilities Act. The wall company ran into difficulty with the Architectural Access Board but approved the design due to pressure from the disabled community. "Smart cards" which allow access to the APT's for the homeless can be utilized.

An emergency access button is provided on the APT's. This safety feature sounds an alarm. The Police Department expressed concern about false alarms. The police were also concerned for their safety due to an ambush. The APT's, she stated, are graffiti resistant, weigh two tons and are three feet deep which eliminates the issue of vandalism.

The cost issue of the APT's was next discussed. Ms. Feinberg stated that if the APT's were purchased, the cost would be \$90,000. If leased, APT could cost \$50,000 to \$65,000 per year which includes maintenance and service. Street furniture companies also have an advertising agreement that provides APT's at no cost with exclusive rights to display advertising on the APT's or other street furniture. APT's, she said, are the companies most expensive furniture.

Councillor Born asked do we have to get the whole line of outdoor furniture. Ms. Feinberg stated that the city has choices to use only useful items.

Mr. Cox stated that the recommendation would be to get APT with maintenance. The advertising would pay for the APT's.

Councillor Davis asked how much advertising is it. Mr. Cox stated that the company has not given much information until the city signs a Request for Proposal (RFP). Three toilets can be supported through advertisement. Advertisement would pay for the installation and maintenance.

Councillor Davis asked where would the 8 x 10, 2 ton APT be located. Mr. Cox responded Harvard, Central and Porter Squares. He stated that he wanted to hear from the City Council on the siting process. Councillor Braude suggested the mall side of the Street at Porter Square. He also stated that the MBTA shelters are disgusting and go unnoticed. APT's could be located in areas that will also make them become unnoticed. Ms. Feinberg stated that the location will dictate the advertising money.

Councillor Born stated that the APT's should be placed off to the side, but convenient. Mr. Cox stated that siting issues need more discussion.

Councillor Braude stated that there should be a list of public access toilets around the city. He asked if businesses are only required to provide access to toilets for their customers. He asked what facilities exist for non-customers. Ms. Feinberg stated that all public buildings have public access toilets. Public access toilets are located at the Police Department, libraries, City Hall and the Senior Center. Councillor Braude stated that there is a colossal need for public access toilets and the city needs to move quickly. He suggested that there should be a logo for the APT's. Store owners and hotel establishments are unkind to non-customers who want to use their toilet facilities.

Councillor Davis asked if we know what the street furniture companies are demanding from the city in the area of advertising. We need more information on this issue, she said.

Ms. Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, stated that the whole package needs to be reviewed - procurement, installation, maintenance and repair. The city, she said, does not have the capacity to take on the maintenance of three APT's.

Councillor Davis stated that she would not be supportive of APT's until more is known about the advertisement piece. Mr. Cox stated that Boston's RFP was specific to advertisement - no smoking advertisement.

Councillor Davis stated that the city does not publicize that there are public toilets, New buildings are now designed with public toilets.

Ms. Cerf stated that maintenance is a major consideration. The company needs to be tested in this country, she said.

Mr. Eli Yarden, 143 Pleasant Street, asked if there was going to be a public hearing on this issue. Councillor Davis stated that when there is a proposal before the City Council there would be a public hearing. Mr. Yarden stated that APT's do make for a more desirable urban environment and APT's need to be well identified. APT's are usually never used, he said. Toilets should be a pleasant, civilized or social place. He objected to no human maintenance and privatization of basic civic functions.

At this time Councillor Born made the following motion which was amended by Councillor Davis to add the last two items:

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council on the following items:

- What signage exists for public access toilets;
- Can letters be written by City Manager to private enterprises that discriminate against non-customers of their establishments from using their facilities;
- Could signage be done by the City where there are public access toilets provided by private enterprises, such as a mall;
- An inventory be provided of the facilities available and the signage used; and
- Investigate the public access option used in the boathouses along the river.

Mr. Cobham stated that there is a sign at the Post Office which lists the locations of the public facilities.

Mr. Cox informed the committee that a report would be sent to the City Council on this matter before the summer meeting.

Councillor Davis stated that no one is committed yet to the APT's.

Councillor Born asked if there was an option to pay a business for APT's for a business to be paid an amount of money to provide signage and maintenance for APT's and have the APT's open from 7:00 a.m. Ms. Feinberg stated that APT's can be leased for \$50,000 per year per toilet and the company provides no maintenance and no advertisement. Councillor Born stated that if APT's are difficult to locate it may be better to have the option with an existing facility.

Councillor Braude asked if there could be a zoning ordinance relative to toilets. Councillor Born stated that there are public amenities in current zoning.

A discussion ensued about advertisement. Councillor Davis stated that some advertisement can be used. Such as a news stand. Mr. Cox stated that advertisement could be used as a bulletin board. Bus shelters could be included in a toilet program.

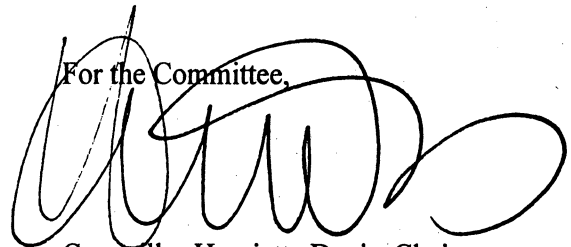
City Manager Robert W. Healy, stated that capital and maintenance is an important part of the RFP. Maintenance, he said, should be part of the provider contract. "A" frame signs are approved every week by the City Council, he said. Advertisement is an important component but should not hinder the First Amendment Rights.

Councillor Davis stated that the short-term response is to do the signage for the public toilets.

The Committee heard from Michael Muehe, Director of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, who stated that APT's are accessible and acceptable.

Councillor Davis thanked all who attended the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

For the Committee,

Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair

City of Cambridge

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

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Councillor Jim Braude*

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For the Committee,

Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair

2115

Committee Report #3

Committee Report from Councillor
Henrietta Davis, Chair of the
Health and Environment
Committee for a meeting held on
April 25, 2001 to discuss the
implementation of a plan for the
establishment of permanent public
toilet facilities.

In City Council May 14, 2001

Report Accepted

PLACED ON FILE

ORDER ADOPTED