

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MASSACHUSETTS

WATER DEPARTMENT
250 FRESH POND PARKWAY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02138

Nancy E. Barnes
Managing Director
DATE:

617-349-4770

October 28, 1992

TO: Robert W. Healy

FROM: Nancy E. Barnes *Nancy*

RE: Council Order #15, dated 10/19/92, RE: Color of Tap Water.

CC: Cambridge Water Board

The recent color in Cambridge water results from the presence of manganese. Manganese is naturally present in our raw water - in varying concentrations at different times of the year. Its removal has always presented a challenge. However, manganese does not pose a health hazard.

When the discoloration first appeared in early October 1992, the Water Department immediately took steps to remedy the condition. We eliminated the direct use of Stony Brook Reservoir water, where the manganese levels are highest, and instead routed it through Fresh Pond. (We believe that the aeration system in Fresh Pond helps to put the manganese into a form which can be removed by the treatment process.) We drew only Fresh Pond into the treatment plant. It took a number of days for these actions to take effect. By the week of October 19, 1992, the discoloration was ended throughout most of Cambridge.

Our existing facilities limit our ability to control manganese discoloration. Therefore, it is possible that there will be a recurrence of this event unless facility improvements are made.

We are considering alternatives to prevent future recurrences. The alternatives include: 1) Rehabilitating the aeration system in Fresh Pond, 2) Installing an aeration system in Stony Brook Reservoir, 3) Modifying the chemical treatment of the water and 4) Providing raw water pumping capacity to facilitate 100% Fresh Pond intake.

Option 1 will be implemented over the next two weeks since we believe that it will eliminate or greatly diminish the possibility of recurrence of a manganese problem. We have budget to accomplish Option 4 and will give priority to this project. We need to investigate Option 2 to determine if it would be effective in reducing the high manganese levels in Stony Brook Reservoir. Option 3 involves the introduction of new chemical treatment and, therefore, should be approached carefully. This option will require funding, design, installation and time to implement.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

250 FRESH POND PKY., CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138 • TEL. 498-9070

OFFICE OF THE WATER BOARD

Donald F. Hornig
President

Thomas J. Begley

Ruth C. Birkhoff

Walter N. Conlon

A. Paul Flynn

October 29, 1992

Mr. Robert W. Healy
City Manager
795 Mass. Avenue
City Hall
Cambridge, MA. 02139

Dear Mr. Healy,

The Cambridge Board, with the assistance of its Water Quality Committee, chaired by Professor Joseph Harrington, has reviewed the recent incident when the Cambridge water was discolored. It was most unfortunate and we regret the distress it brought to our citizens. However, despite the appearance, everyone should know that there was no threat whatsoever to the health of anyone.

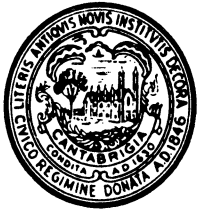
The Board would like to point out that the Managing Director and staff of the Cambridge Water Department responded promptly and effectively in clearing up the color problem and the water was back to normal in a short time.

We have also reviewed the plans for preventing a recurrence of the problem. The plans consist of a rehabilitation of the aeration system in Fresh Pond, the installation of an aeration system in Stony Brook Reservoir and the construction of a standby chemical system to deal with future emergencies related to the metal manganese. We believe all three should be implemented promptly.

We are satisfied that the problem has been dealt with competently and that the plans are adequate to prevent a repeat of the difficulty.

Sincerely yours,

Donald F. Hornig
President
Cambridge Water Board



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300

FAX 349-4307

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

November 2, 1992

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 35, regarding complaints from residents on the color to the tap water, received from Nancy E. Barnes, Managing Director of the Water Department, concerning this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachment

Consent Agenda # 3

S-877

Awaiting Report Item Number 35,
regarding complaints from residents
on the color of the tap water.

In City Council,

November 2, 1992

Referred back to
the City Manager
on motion of Mayor
Reeves.
Copy sent to City mgr.
11/4/92 @