

M. Clerk - Please list

67 Highland Avenue, Apartment 2
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
December 22, 1976

City Council
City of Cambridge

I hereby give my strong thanks to Councillor Ackermann and the City Council for the prompt action on the Line Street trees. I further thank City Manager Sullivan for his unconditional promise to replace those trees, and I thank David Vickery for his subsequent, unsolicited, promise that the lot would be screened.

Neighborhood residents have been concerned about the procedures prior to destruction of street trees because of several incidents, including this, in which valuable trees have been needlessly slated for destruction. In the recent past healthy trees on Fayette and Antrim Streets were attacked without prior notice, and one was destroyed before residents could prevent it.

After the destruction on Line Street, I was concerned to see emergency No Parking signs on trees near 43 Highland Avenue with the notation "tree work", or something similar, in the last few days. I carefully looked for posted legal notices of pending destruction but saw none.

Today an unposted tree just north of 43 Highland Avenue was destroyed over my objections. I complained to the City Manager's Office, Miss Bruno, who, very efficiently, got on another line, and then informed me that the tree was "dead and dangerous". Francis Fox Spinks, the landscape architect who has worked for the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, on less than five minutes notice, came with me to the tree, where he informed me that it was probably dead, and, in any case, had been cut to such an extent that it was too late to save it. On his advice, I ceased my efforts, but did ask Mr. Forgone the standards which he applies for posting. I have attended a hearing concerning posted trees on Ellsworth Street. I was informed that trees are not posted unless they are considered "alive and healthy", and that no provisions are made for possible errors.

The statute, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 89, section 1 and following, seems to me to place an exactly opposite emphasis. It calls for a hearing with one week posted notice prior to destruction, and calls for exceptions under emergency conditions or conditions where other prior hearings have been given. This notice requirement appears to be minimal. If the situation today was an emergency, "Tree Removal" could easily have been placed on the "No Parking" signs as some sort of warning to distinguish from pruning. A limited number of errors and one allegedly amazing coincidence have occurred in the recent past in just a four square block area. It is extremely unlikely that these are isolated circumstances.

I hereby call for you to require compliance with what I consider the law: advance posting and hearing prior to the destruction of all trees except for unusual circumstances where ten days delay would constitute a clear danger to public safety.

Robert J. La Tourette
Robert J. La Tourette

cc: James Leo Sullivan, David Vickery, Mr. Forgone, Francis Fox Spinks, MCNA, Cambridge Conservation Commission

S-594

Comm. from Robert J. La Tremouille showing
his appreciation to the Council for their
prompt action on the Line Street trees.

In City Council,
December 27, 1976

12/27/76

Placed on File-

C. Ackermann Requested
Report from City
Manager as previously
Requested-