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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: James L. Sullivan, City Manager, City of Cambridge

FROM: Daniel J. Wuenschel, Executive Director, CHA 

SUBJECT: City Council Order No. 12 of May 22, 1978

DATE: June 7, 1978

The CHA currently manages about 2,600 units of family and elderly housing at 16 sites. An estimated 70% of the refuse from these sites is disposed of in conventional flue fed apartment house incinerators of which 136 are presently in use.

These incinerators do not meet state and federal standards for air quality (specifically emissions of particulate matter), and the regulatory agencies are requesting that they be upgraded or preferably shut down. Since these incinerators provide a high degree of convenience to the tenants, it has been a difficult problem for the Authority to identify and select an alternative for implementation which meets both air pollutant emission standards and criteria consistent with other aspects of public housing including: safety, low risk of health hazard, dependability of operation, tenant convenience, and economics.

Authority personnel have sought guidance from the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering Section of the Metropolitan Boston Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development in dealing with this matter. The nature and scope of the problem provided no quick or easy solutions, either of a technical nature or of funding levels.

In the Fall of 1977 the Authority retained the Arthur D. Little Company of Cambridge to study the problem on a city-wide basis and to analyze alternative systems for the disposal of refuse. As part of the study, ADL has reviewed the present disposal situation at each development and has estimated the current cost of disposal. They have reviewed relevant statutes regulating emissions from refuse incinerators and have identified all the alternatives which they consider commercially developed and available for purchase with a reasonable performance guarantee.

A final report from ADL will be forthcoming to the Housing Authority in early July which hopefully will identify and suggest viable alternatives for the use of the incinerators. At that point, the Authority must decide on the particular alternative(s) and seek appropriate funding from HUD and DCA modernization sources as well as CDBG funds. In the past requests have been made of these funding entities and success for funding levels has been quite limited because of the lack of specificity as well as generally depressed funding levels.

James L. Sullivan

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June 7, 1978

In summation, the problem is a complex one for which there are no easy or inexpensive solutions. The Authority is hopeful that a consultant with the credentials of Arthur D. Little can provide a starting point towards a solution.

DJW/cg



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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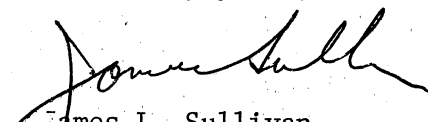
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JAMES L. SULLIVAN
City Manager

June 12, 1978

To the Honorable, the City Council:

With respect to Awaiting Report No. 13 relative to disposing of solid waste, enclosed please find memorandum from Daniel J. Wtenschel, Executive Director of the Cambridge Housing Authority.

Very truly yours,


James L. Sullivan
City Manager

JLS/mbf
Enc.

Agenda #5

IS-274

Response to Awaiting Report No. 13 re: disposing
of solid waste at various projects of the Cambridge
Housing Authority.

In City Council,

June 12, 1978

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