



City of Cambridge

3.
Amended Order

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 2, 1997

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
VICE MAYOR BORN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR DUEHAY
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO
MAYOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Commissioner of Public Works and the Executive Director of Veteran's Services with the view in mind of reviewing the attached letter from Dale Alan Diefenback and institutionalizing a system for proper and respectful care of the flags at Flaggstaff Park and Tobin School; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report on where city flags are flown with the view in mind of determining whether some flags can be raised and lowered each day.

In City Council June 2, 1997

Adopted as amended by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



City of Cambridge

3.
Original Order

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 2, 1997

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Commissioner of Public Works and the Executive Director of Veteran's Services with the view in mind of reviewing the attached letter from Dale Alan Diefenback and institutionalizing a system for proper and respectful care of the flags at Flaggstaff Park.

TT
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May 19, 1997

Mayor Sheila T. Russell
5 Hawthorne Park
Cambridge MA 02138

Dear Mayor Russell:

You may recall in the Spring of 1995 I brought before the attention of the City Council the ongoing problem of serious neglect in the maintenance of the flags flown at Flaggstaff Park, near the Common. Council passed a resolution directing the City Manager to rectify the situation.

In reality nothing changed. It seemed to fall to me to report that flags were in bad repair before any action would be taken. Frankly, I had forgotten that Councillor Duehay had written me that the City Manager had placed responsibility for the flags with the Department of Public Works. (I only saw that recently in re-reading my file of correspondence on that matter.) I continued to report problems to the Veterans' Affairs unit which I suppose must have passed on the information to DPW. The average response time to reporting "bad" flags was about 2-3 days, discounting weekends. Not terribly good, considering that by the time I spotted the problems, they were in sad shape (meaning in streamers).

The most recent situation developed as follows. About six weeks ago, I called up to say that the regular size flag that was being flown was hanging by just one corner, the lower one. The response I got was that they had run out of flags that size and they would have to wait until a new shipment would come in. I unfortunately blew my stack at the poor woman on the other end, saying that they should at least remove the current one. Eventually, a new flag was raised, one too small for that tall a pole. But it was a flag. By the end of April, it too was dangling by one corner, the upper one. *That same flag has remained clinging like that for at least 3 weeks.* I called the Mayor's office on 3 occasions in early May. In all fairness, the woman who took my call on the last occasion said she would mention to the City Manager's office that this was my third call. As I recall, on my second call, another woman mentioned that they had received complaints from several other persons as well. **So here we are one week before another Memorial Day and no action.**

I have just retired from Harvard Law School and will soon be moving to Texas. (Nobody treats flags like that in Texas, I can assure you!) Gone is your spotter and gadfly. What would Cambridge do to institutionalize proper care for banners at Flaggstaff Park?

As I suggested two years, try to find some group that will accept responsibility for seeing each and every day that the flag is in good condition. Have that private group (veterans' organization, etc.) report the problem to DPW who should have a team that is ready to at least lower the flag, even if it can not immediately replace it. Two or three days is not an adequate response time if a flag is in bad repair.

I realize that the problem primarily relates to the fact that Flaggstaff Park is an ideal location to catch the wind, and catch it it does with a vengeance. By choosing to fly a flag 24 hours a day, you, of course, only shorten its life, esp. with the fierce winds of winter. Ideally, I'd like to see the flag raised and lowered each day. That is the only way to truly see the condition of a flag, something I was used to from my Armed Forces experience. The problem is that the flags normally flown from the pole at Flaggstaff Park are mammoth and requires several men (and a ladder) to handle them with dignity. Not a task for bunch of cub scouts or even aging veterans, however patriotic. If we can not find a team to do it every few weeks, where are we to find a group on a daily basis? Perhaps the Harvard Police would be willing to handle the job on a daily basis if the city was willing to supply the flags. If Harvard is a possibility, I would start at the top with a request to President Rudenstine.

My earnest plea is that for the present Cambridge not fly flags there at all until something can be worked out. Admit for the present that the city is unable to do so without a real plan of action. Far better to have an empty pole than one serving up a mockery of the idea that a flag is supposed to represent.

Sincerely,

Dale Alan Diefenbach

cc:

city councillors

#3

rec'd
5/20/97

TT

Ordered: That the City Manager confer with the Commissioner of Public Works and the Executive Director of Veterans's Services with the view in mind of reviewing the attached letter from Dale Alan Diefenbach and ~~developing~~ institutionalizing a system for proper and respectful care of the flags at Flaggstaff Park



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June 2, 1997

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

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Born, Davu, Duhan, Calluccio, Russell
Consent Order #3 Sullivan CM-310

Councillor Toomey re: A system for proper
and respectful care of the flags at
Flagstaff Park.

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In City Council June 2, 1997

ORDER ADOPTED

As Amended