



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JAMES L. SULLIVAN
City Manager

August 6, 1976

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In accordance with the request of the City Council I have during the past weeks reviewed in detail the material generated by the two public hearings conducted by the City Council and also the material provided by both the proponents and opponents of D.N.A. genetic research. The Council has requested that the City Manager establish a Cambridge Experimentation Review Board and prepare a plan for the organization of the Board.

Many recommendations have been made to me from many sources concerning the make-up of the board. There were those who felt that the board should consist of both proponents and opponents to the experimentation and some neutral citizens. After some deliberation I rejected this approach because it would tend to set up antagonistic positions on the committee whose approach would be to attempt to sway neutral members. Others felt that since the experimentations to take place were of a scientific nature and extremely complex that the committee should consist of knowledgeable scientists, biologists and geneticists who would approach the problem scientifically and come to a conclusion. I rejected this approach as well for the issue is before us because of a dispute within the scientific community as to the hazards involved and it would be extremely difficult to find knowledgeable scientists who did not have preconceived views on the subject.

Since the issue has been raised by many who have expressed concern about the potential hazards of experimentation to the citizens of Cambridge, and the problems that can be generated by scientists who have a self interest in experimentation controlling the experimentation, it seemed only reasonable to create a committee of Cambridge citizens who could approach the subject in an unbiased manner and insure that the public safety is at all times the foremost consideration.

I therefore contacted a number of Cambridge residents from different walks of life and different parts of the Community to request that they consider service on the committee. I am pleased to state that the following citizens have agreed to serve:

1. Dr. Francis Comunale - Commissioner of Health and Hospitals, chairperson.
2. Mary Nicoloro - 15 Harding Street, member Wellington-Harrington Citizens Committee, Board of Directors of Cambridge Family and Children's Services.
3. Sr. Mary Lucille Banach - 799 Concord Avenue, Secretary to the Board of Directors, Sancta Maria Hospital.
4. Sheldon Krinsky - 59 Sacramento Street, Associate Director, Program in Urban, Social, and Environmental Policy, Tufts University.
5. Daniel J. Hayes - 60 Rindge Avenue, vice-chairperson, Businessman, former Mayor and City Councillor.
6. William J. Le Messurier - 94 Brattle Street, Partner - Le Messurier Associates - Structural Engineers.
7. Cornelia Wheeler - 123 Coolidge Hill, former chairperson Health and Hospitals Committee; former City Councillor.
8. Dr. John L. Bruschi - 831 Massachusetts Avenue, Medical Doctor, Board Certified in Infectious Diseases.
9. Constance Hughes - 24 Gorham Street, Public Health Nurse and Social Worker.

Responsibility of the Board

The broad responsibility of the Experimentation Review Board shall be to consider whether research on recombinant D.N.A. which is proposed to be conducted at the P3 level of containment in Cambridge may have any adverse effect on public health within the City, and for this purpose to undertake, among other studies, to:

- (a) review the "Decision of the Director, National Institutes of Health to Release Guidelines for Research on Recombinant D.N.A. Molecules" dated and released on June 23, 1976;
- (b) review but not be limited to the methods of physical and biological containment recommended by the N.I.H.;

- (c) review methods for monitoring compliance with applicable procedural safeguards;
- (d) review methods for monitoring compliance with safeguards applicable to physical containment;
- (e) review procedures for handling accidents (e.g. fire) in recombinant D.N.A. research facilities;
- (f) advise the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals on the reviews, findings and recommendations.

Powers of the Board

In carrying out their responsibilities the Board shall be empowered to:

- (a) employ such scientific and other consultants and such clerical assistance as it may determine is necessary to assist it with the approval of the City Manager;
- (b) through its chairperson it may ask for and receive reports from the biohazard committee of Harvard and M.I.T.;
- (c) through its chairperson it may ask for and receive information from other relevant sources;
- (d) may ask for and receive plans for laboratory designs and modifications for P3 level containment;
- (e) may call upon the advice and counsel of those in the employ of the City with the approval of the City Manager;
- (f) should establish a procedure whereby the committee may request and receive advice, reports, and opinions from federal, state and local officials and from citizens of Cambridge and other interested people;
- (g) may also receive and respond to questions and concerns of citizens of Cambridge regarding recombinant D.N.A. research.

Relationship of the Board to the Internal Bio-Hazard Committees at Harvard and M.I.T.

In addition to the relationships between the Board and the Biohazards Committees of Harvard and MIT that are already built into the functions

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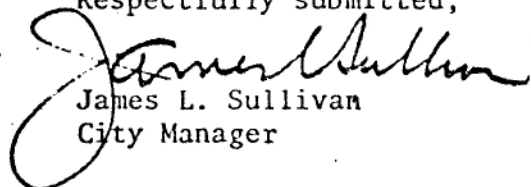
of the Board itself, the following additional relations are to be requested of the Universities:

- (a) The Commissioner of Health and Hospitals or his representative shall be invited to attend any and all meetings of the Harvard and MIT Biohazards Committees;
- (b) Notices of all meetings, whether regular or special, of the universities' Biohazards Committees shall be sent to the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals;
- (c) Copies of all local guidelines for practices and procedures related to recombinant D.N.A. research at all levels shall be sent to the Commissioner;
- (d) Copies of the minutes of all meetings of the universities' Biohazards Committees shall be sent promptly to the Health Commissioner;
- (e) All plans for designs and modifications of containment facilities, if any, shall be sent to the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals and the Cambridge Building Commissioner;
- (f) Each of the universities' Biohazards Committees shall render to the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals in summary form at the close of each academic year an annual report of their principal activities.

The Committee has been provided with copies of the NIH guidelines and substantial material on both sides of the issue. The members have been advised to review the material provided. They will hold their first meeting at the call of the Chairman, Doctor Francis Comunale, Commissioner of Health and Hospitals. As has been outlined in the descriptions of the responsibility and powers of the Committee they are free to call upon assistance from many sources in the course of their study.

It is my belief that the Committee as constituted will thoroughly review the subject and will provide the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals valuable insights into the problems with reasonable recommendations for a course of action to be adopted by the City Government.

Respectfully submitted,


James L. Sullivan
City Manager