



# PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**REVISED CALL OF MEETING.** The Public Safety Committee will hold a public hearing to discuss close circuit cameras and other surveillance technologies in addition to the 2024 Annual Surveillance Report.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3:06 PM
Joan Pickett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Public Safety Committee was held on Wednesday, May 29, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Toner. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

**At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent\*

Councillor Pickett – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote

**Present – 4, Absent – 1. Quorum established**

\*Vice Mayor McGovern was present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 3:06p.m.

\*Councillor Wilson went from remote participation to in person.

The Co-Chair, Councillor Toner offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss close circuit cameras and other surveillance technologies in addition to the 2024 Annual Surveillance Report. Present at the meeting was Police Commissioner Christine Elow, Superintendent Frederick Cabral, Superintendent Pauline Wells, Deputy Superintendent John Boyle, Deputy Superintendent Michael Medeiros, Director of Professional Standards, James Mulcahy, and Acting City Solicitor, Megan Bayer. There were numerous members of the Cambridge Police Department who joined via Zoom. Jack Pontious and Melissa Dooher from

ShotSpotter also joined via Zoom. Co-Chair Toner noted that Mayor Simmons and Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler were in attendance, in person and via Zoom.

**Co-Chair Toner opened Public Comment.**

Alex Marthew, 28 Temple Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to the Surveillance Report.

Aneeqa Abid, 111 Locust Street, Woburn, MA, offered comments regarding discriminatory surveillance, cameras, and streetlight cameras.

Emiliano Falcon-Morano, One Center Plaza, Boston, MA, offered comments on surveillance and covert cameras.

Saul Tannenbaum, 385 Chestnut Hill Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke against the use of ShotSpotter.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Commissioner Elow who introduced her team. Commissioner Elow provided an overview of the Surveillance Report, which was included in the Agenda Packet, as well as surveillance technology within the Cambridge Police Department (CPD). Commissioner Elow pointed out that CPD has a policy within the Department that guides Officers on how they are to use surveillance technology with respect to the Surveillance Ordinance and ensuring that Officers are upholding individual civil rights.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who offered comments on ShotSpotter, BRIC, and covert cameras. Vice Mayor McGovern shared that he is hearing from community members that they want more surveillance and noted how the Surveillance Report is an opportunity for the City to be transparent with its residents.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Wilson who had clarifying questions regarding ShotSpotter. Commissioner Elow responded by sharing the ShotSpotter is advancing their technology and that CPD is intentional about going into the communities and working with community members to educate and receive feedback. Commissioner Elow highlighted that she has not seen a negative impact with the use of ShotSpotter. Co-Chair Wilson had additional questions regarding the use of cameras and if there were alternatives to not using them. Commissioner Elow and Superintendent Cabral both responded, noting that areas of housing have invested in more cameras and lighting where there have been problems. Co-Chair Wilson asked if there was any information that could be shared regarding the recent shooting at Donnelly Field. Commissioner Elow shared that they are still investigating and will have more information for the community soon.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Siddiqui who asked if more information could be shared on U.S. Senators asking for an investigation about whether the ShotSpotter technology is accurate and if it discriminates against low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Melissa Doohar responded and provided a brief overview, noting that it is ongoing and that it relates to the placement of the technology with the use of federal funding.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Pickett who asked for more information on camera footage storage. Deputy Superintendent Mederios responded and shared how the collection of camera footage is stored internally, used for evidence collection, and then discarded. Councillor Pickett asked how CPD and ShotSpotter decide where cameras and sensors are placed. Commissioner Elow responded by noting it is data driven, while Jack Pontious discussed how and where sensors are used, noting that the sensors could be moved if needed and the City has the option to add additional sensors. Melissa Dooher shared that from a 2022 report, the 33 sensors in Cambridge cover 1.3 square miles. Councillor Pickett had clarifying questions on whether surveillance technology can be used for traffic violations. Commissioner Elow and Megan Bayer responded by noting it is currently not allowed under state law. Deputy Superintendent Boyle shared that the State Police Crash Team uses a drone to document fatal or serious motor vehicle accidents and that is one way technology could be used relative to motor vehicle surveillance.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who shared that she does not see ShotSpotter as an invasive tool nor has she heard from the community that it is. Mayor Simmons pointed out the importance of continuing conversations with the community to be transparent. Mayor Simmons asked to what degree does CPD use drones. Commissioner Elow responded and shared that it is not a technology that is currently used within the Department and Deputy Superintendent Boyle offered suggestions on ways a drone could be used without violating civil rights. Mayor Simmons asked how additional surveillance technology would be introduced to the community. Commissioner Elow shared that it would be better to start small and conservative to get the community comfortable with the technology and to have discussions within the community to receive feedback and suggestions. Mayor Simmons noted the importance of having surveillance and that is something that should be controlled to keep residents informed and safe.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Pickett who asked if there have been updates on surveillance body cameras for CPD. Commissioner Elow shared that a vendor has been picked and Superintendent Cabral shared they are currently working with the vendor to upgrade infrastructure and software. It was noted that CPD is still in active discussions with the Unions regarding negotiations and believes that they are making progress.

Co-Chair Toner asked if ShotSpotter was invented in Cambridge. Jack Pontious shared background information on ShotSpotter and noted that it was developed in Cambridge. Co-Chair Toner shared that ShotSpotter is a very useful technology to have and would also be supportive of overhead cameras as long as they do not violate civil rights. Co-Chair Toner highlighted how surveillance could have a positive effect for certain activities that take place in Central Square. Co-Chair Toner asked if there is any information regarding the option of taking pictures of license plates for drivers who run red lights. Commissioner Elow and Megan Bayer responded, with Megan Bayer sharing that any type of record the City creates, or becomes in possession of, can become a public record. Co-Chair Toner shared that he looks forward to more discussion and ideas, noting that the community is asking for more not less. Co-Chair Toner agreed that it is important to educate and be transparent with the community about the impacts of surveillance and certain technologies that are available.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Wilson who had a follow up question regarding the 33 sensors that are placed in the City, noting that it seems like a lot for a 1.3 square mile, and asked if these numbers are like other cities in terms of size. Jack Pontious was available to respond and shared that the number of sensors varies from community to community based on the density of buildings. Melissa Dooher provided additional information on how the sensors work together.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Siddiqui who requested that a formal response be sent to CARE about covert cameras from the Law Department. Commissioner Elow shared how the cameras in question were used for property and vandalism crimes. Megan Bayer shared that she will review the written testimony and work with the Commissioner to discuss if there is something the City can put in writing to address their concerns.

**Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Wilson who made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motin passed.**

**The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:33p.m.**

Attachment A – The City Clerk’s Office received two written communications.

**Clerk’s Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/764?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/764?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to the Annual Surveillance Report concerning City Departments’ use of Surveillance Technology or Surveillance Data.**

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Pursuant to Chapter 2.128, Section 2.128.060 of the Cambridge Municipal Code, I hereby submit the City of Cambridge Departments’ fourth Annual Surveillance Report concerning City Departments’ use of Surveillance Technology or Surveillance Data.

The Annual Surveillance Report is organized alphabetically by department. Departments’ reports and the Surveillance Technology referenced in those reports is as follows:

<b>N o.</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Technology</b>
1.	Cambridge Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media Monitoring - Meltwater</li> <li>• Social Media Monitoring - Meltwater Engage (Powered by Sprout Social)</li> </ul>
2.	Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media Monitoring - Meltwater</li> <li>• Social Media Monitoring - Meltwater Engage (Powered by Sprout Social)</li> </ul>
3.	Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations/Case Management Software</li> </ul>
4.	Department of Human Service Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IP Address Collection Platforms</li> <li>• Media Monitoring - Meltwater</li> <li>• Social Media Monitoring - Meltwater Engage (Powered by Sprout Social)</li> </ul>
5.	Election Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic Poll Pads</li> </ul>
6.	Emergency Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid SOS Emergency Data Integration System</li> <li>• Digital Evidence Management System</li> <li>• Landline Location Technology</li> </ul>
7.	Emergency Communications - Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trespass Tracking Database</li> </ul>
8.	Executive/City Manager - Public Information Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media Monitoring-Meltwater</li> <li>• Social Media Monitoring-Meltwater Engage (Powered by Sprout Social)</li> </ul>
9.	Finance - Assessing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atlas RMV Portal</li> <li>• MUNIS Tax Modules, MA</li> <li>Environmental Police Registration</li> <li>• LexisNexis</li> </ul>
10.	Finance - Revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atlas RMV Portal</li> <li>• MUNIS Tax Modules</li> </ul>
11.	Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laryngoscopes</li> <li>• Social Media Monitoring - Meltwater Engage (Powered by Sprout Social)</li> </ul>
12.	Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IP Address Collection Platforms (Multiple)</li> </ul>

1 3.	Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WestLaw Public Records Search function</li> </ul>
1 4.	Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media Monitoring - Meltwater</li> <li>• Social Media Monitoring - Meltwater Engage (Powered by Sprout Social)</li> <li>• Social Work Case Management Software-CharityTracker from Simon Solutions</li> </ul>
1 5.	Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body Worn Cameras</li> </ul>
1 6.	Police - CID and Professional Standards Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Cracker</li> </ul>
1 7.	Police - CID Days, DV/SA & Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPS tracking devices (2)</li> <li>• Digital Intelligence Workstation</li> <li>• Dell Laptop BCERT</li> <li>• Magnet Forensics-Axiom Cellebrite</li> <li>• Shotspotter</li> </ul>
1 8.	Police - Crime Analysis & CID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BRIC Omega Dashboard</li> <li>• CrimeTracer (formally Coplink)</li> <li>• QED</li> <li>• Incident Database</li> <li>• CLEAR for Law Enforcement</li> <li>• LexisNexis - Account for Law Enforcement</li> <li>• LENS</li> </ul>
1 9.	Police - Crime Scene Services, Booking & Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morpho Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) with camera (Massachusetts State Police (MSP) System)</li> <li>• Live Scan (3 devices)</li> </ul>
2 0.	Police - EOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wireless Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) robots with cameras: Robotex Avatar II 2 (3); Foster Miller Tallon 4; Foster Miller Dragon Runner 4; Remotetec F6A 4 with fiberoptic</li> <li>• Tactical Electronics VF52 Fiber Scope</li> <li>• ATF Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS)</li> </ul>
2 1.	Police - Fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prisoner Transport Security Cameras (Transport Wagon 236, 237 &amp; 240)</li> </ul>
2 2.	Police - PIO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X Pro (formerly TweetDeck)</li> <li>• Media Monitoring-Meltwater</li> <li>• Social Media Monitoring-Meltwater Engage (Powered by Sprout Social)</li> </ul>
2 3.	Police - Professional Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infracore</li> </ul>
2 4.	Police - CIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covert Cameras (Keltech Covert Streetlight Camera)</li> </ul>
2 5.	Police - SRT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throwbot XT</li> </ul>
2 6.	Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAVEN (Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network)</li> </ul>
2 7.	Public Schools - Information, Communications & Technology Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securly for Chromebooks Web Filter</li> <li>• LightSpeed System (Web Filter)</li> <li>• IP Address Collection Platforms (Sonicwall Firewall; Windows Server; Apache Web</li> </ul>

		Server; Crowd Strike; Graylog)
2 8.	Public Schools - Safety & Security, Transportation	• Bus Video Recorders • GPS Devices • Edulog Transportation System
2 9.	Public Works	• Social Media Monitoring - Meltwater Engage (Powered by Sprout Social)
3 0.	Traffic, Parking & Transportation	• Atlas RMV Portal (Parking Management) • Traffic Signal Detection Cameras (Street Management Division) • MioVision Traffic Count Mobile Camera Units (Street Management Division)
3 1.	Water	• Automated Meter Reading (AMR) System • AMR Consumer Engagement Tool

I look forward to answering any questions you may have concerning the enclosed Annual Surveillance Report.

Very truly yours,



Yi-An Huang  
City Manager

**From:** Emiliano Falcon-Morano <efalcon@aclum.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 4:37 PM  
**To:** Azeem, Burhan; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Pickett, Joan; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Simmons, Denise; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha  
**Cc:** City Council; Kade Crockford; City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** ACLUM Public Comment - Public Safety Committee meeting - May 29, 2024  
**Attachments:** ACLUM - Testimony Cambridge PS Committee - 5-29.pdf

Dear City Councilors,

Please find attached ACLUM's written testimony containing our public comment at the Public Safety Committee meeting on May 29, 2024.

ACLUM looks forward to continued engagement with the City Council on these important matters. Thank you very much for your public service and commitment to accountability, transparency, and oversight.

Best regards,

Emiliano


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**Emiliano Falcon-Morano**

Pronouns: he, him, his

Policy Counsel  
 Technology for Liberty Program  
 American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts  
 617.482.3170 x402 | [efalcon@aclum.org](mailto:efalcon@aclum.org)

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ACLU of Massachusetts  
One Center Plaza, Suite 850  
Boston, MA 02108  
617-482-3170  
www.aclum.org

May 29, 2024  
Cambridge City Council  
Public Safety Committee Meeting

**RE: Public Safety Committee Meeting – 05/29/2024 - CMA 2024 #28: A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to the Annual Surveillance Report concerning City Departments’ use of Surveillance Technology or Surveillance Data.**

Dear Public Safety Committee,

My name is Emiliano Falcon-Morano, and I am the Policy Counsel for the Technology for Liberty Program at the ACLU of Massachusetts (“ACLUM”). We are pleased to continue working with the City Council as the city implements the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology ordinance, offering our expertise in surveillance technologies and related civil rights issues.

*First*, we were troubled to read that the Cambridge Police Department used covert surveillance devices to monitor protesters of Elbit Systems for approximately two months. Covert cameras are invasive technologies that should be used pursuant to a warrant in the most serious criminal investigations. It is unclear why the police would use such invasive technology to monitor public protests, and the public and the council deserve more information about this troubling deployment.

*Second*, the report lacks data about the effectiveness or reliability of ShotSpotter, technology that purports to discern when and where gunshots have been fired. The report doesn’t mention the number of alerts or whether those alerts led to evidence of gunfire, investigations, police stops, or arrests.

Multiple independent investigations into ShotSpotter have shown it is an unreliable and ineffective technology. As a result of these reports and other problems with the technology, many cities have stopped using ShotSpotter. Among those cities are Charlotte, North Carolina; San Antonio, Texas; Fall River, Massachusetts; and Chicago, Illinois. Other cities, like Atlanta, Georgia, and Portland, Oregon, tried ShotSpotter but found that it was not a helpful tool and did not adopt it. In order for the City Council and the public to understand whether ShotSpotter is right for the City of Cambridge, the Police Department must provide more information about its performance and use.

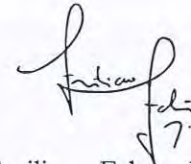
*Third*, the reports mention that the police department is developing its body-worn camera policies. We recommend that the department look at the statewide body-worn camera task force recommendations, particularly as they pertain to when and how police officers involved in incidents can review body camera footage. The state task force recommended that police officers should **not** review footage before writing an incident report. I had the pleasure of serving on the statewide task

force and would be delighted to work with the City of Cambridge to help craft a policy to govern this technology.

*Finally*, we have the following comments:

- The section of the report on the technology's costs should be more detailed. For example, in many cases, the reports mention that the cost of the technology is a "subscription cost" but don't include a dollar figure.
- The report on cameras used in school buses should be more detailed about who has access to the footage and under what circumstances.
- It would be helpful if the reports incorporated the number of overtime hours dedicated to police officers using or engaging with surveillance technologies because that is also part of the "cost" of these technologies. This would help assess whether a technology's benefits outweigh its cost.

ACLUM looks forward to continued engagement with this committee and Cambridge City Council on these matters. Thank you very much for your public service and commitment to accountability, transparency, and oversight.



Emiliano Falcon-Morano  
Technology for Liberty Policy Counsel  
ACLU of Massachusetts



## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Saul Tannenbaum <saul@tannenbaum.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024 8:14 PM  
**To:** Toner, Paul; Wilson, Ayesha; Siddiqui, Sumbul; McGovern, Marc; Pickett, Joan  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** To the Public Safety Committee regarding the Annual Surveillance Report and ShotSpotter

To Chairs Toner and Wilson, Members of the Public Safety Committee:

Cambridge, to its everlasting credit, treats every gun crime as a tragedy and each cluster as an event requiring a community response. It can do this for many reasons, most important of which is that those incidents remain extremely rare. Surveillance systems intended to detect rare events have to be almost magical in their properties to provide a perceivable benefit. ShotSpotter is many things, but it isn't magic. Thus, it should come as no surprise that it has saved no lives, solved no crimes, mitigated no injuries, nor has it materially increased the safety of the community. You can be sure that's true because, if it had done any of those things, the Cambridge Police Department, as well as ShotSpotter, would be singing its praises.

The mismatch between ShotSpotter's intended market and Cambridge's reality has been true since ShotSpotter's installation. At the time, Oakland, a city that was then installed ShotSpotter, had more gun incidents in a single day than Cambridge had in a year. Cambridge didn't get ShotSpotter because someone in Cambridge saw a need for a gun surveillance system and ran a rigorous procurement process that served to vet that the system performed as promised. Indeed, few, if any, actual ShotSpotter installations happened this way. Failing to sell their system to actual police departments, the company lobbied Congress to fund grants and then trained police departments on the grantsmanship required to obtain this money. It is through one of these regional grants that ShotSpotter arrived and has stayed here.

Since the approval of the Surveillance Oversight Ordinance, the City Council has had the power and responsibility to approve all uses of designated surveillance technology in the City. This year the CPD asserts about ShotSpotter that:

“Yes, the technology has been effective in realizing the stated purpose. The technology has effectively detected gunshot activity and allowed officers to more efficiently repond [sic] to relevant crime scenes. The evidence derived from this technology has also been utilized [sic] in several new criminal investigations this year. The technology has been particularly useful again in the past year identifying incidents of gunfire, retaliatory shootings, leading to the identification and/or prosecution of perpetrators [sic] for crimes of violence.”

This text, word for word identical including the spelling errors, appears in the last three years of Annual Surveillance Reports. It seems fair to ask the Cambridge Police what process, if any, they use to asses the effectiveness of ShotSpotter.



Besides the Annual Surveillance Report, the Cambridge Police also produces an excellent, detailed Annual Report, deeply analyzing crime trends in Cambridge. The most recent report available, for 2022, on page 23 shows a map of all 14 gun shot incidents for the year, and whether or not there was a ShotSpotter alert. It would be helpful to compare the incidents with and without ShotSpotter alerts to demonstrate actual benefits beyond cut and paste boilerplate. The failure to do so in a report that exhaustively and rigorously analyzes trends and patterns strongly suggests that there's no measurable difference.

Having spoken against ShotSpotter since its installation and provided research and comments to multiple Public Safety Committee meetings, I'm under no illusions that the Council will take what seems to be the common sense step and disapprove ShotSpotter. But I would ask this Committee and the Council to answer two questions:

1. At what threshold will the Council find a surveillance system to be objectionable? ShotSpotter failed in the marketplace, exists only by dint of corruptly obtained federal subsidies, is a complete mismatch for the needs of Cambridge, and provides benefits that are, at best, so undistinguished that the CPD simply cut and paste them from year to year. If that's truly enough for the Council, it should be clear about its choices.
2. What does "oversight" really mean? Surely allowing the CPD and the Manager to submit identical responses that would fail spellchecking year after year is not effective oversight. At the very least, if the Council is going to assess the risks, costs and benefits of surveillance systems, it should insist the City do the work to provide substantive information. If complying with the Surveillance Ordinance has become an undue burden on City departments - and, quite honestly, reviewing Annual Surveillance Reports suggests it is - the Council and the City should review the Ordinance and modify it to make oversight meaningful.

Finally, I would urge the City find a place on its web site for each Annual Surveillance Report. Finding previous years' reports seems to require navigating the Council's truly awkward search system to find the right attachment to the right City Manager agenda item.

I'll note that complaining about the City's web site was one of my gateways to civic activism. As some of you know, I'm no longer a resident of Cambridge and my involvement is an exception, rather than a constant annoyance. It somehow seems fitting to end this comment where I began, complaining about the City's web site.

Saul Tannenbaum  
Boston, MA

cc: City Clerk for inclusion in the Council record

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Saul Tannenbaum saul@tannenbaum.org @stannenb Past President, Society for Industrial Archeology