

Who Wants Yesterday's Papers?



Before Danehy Park



Can you Identify this Site?



Bring back the Honey Wagon!



Many Cambridge backyards still show the evidence of food waste recycling (for piggeries).

The MRFs are Coming

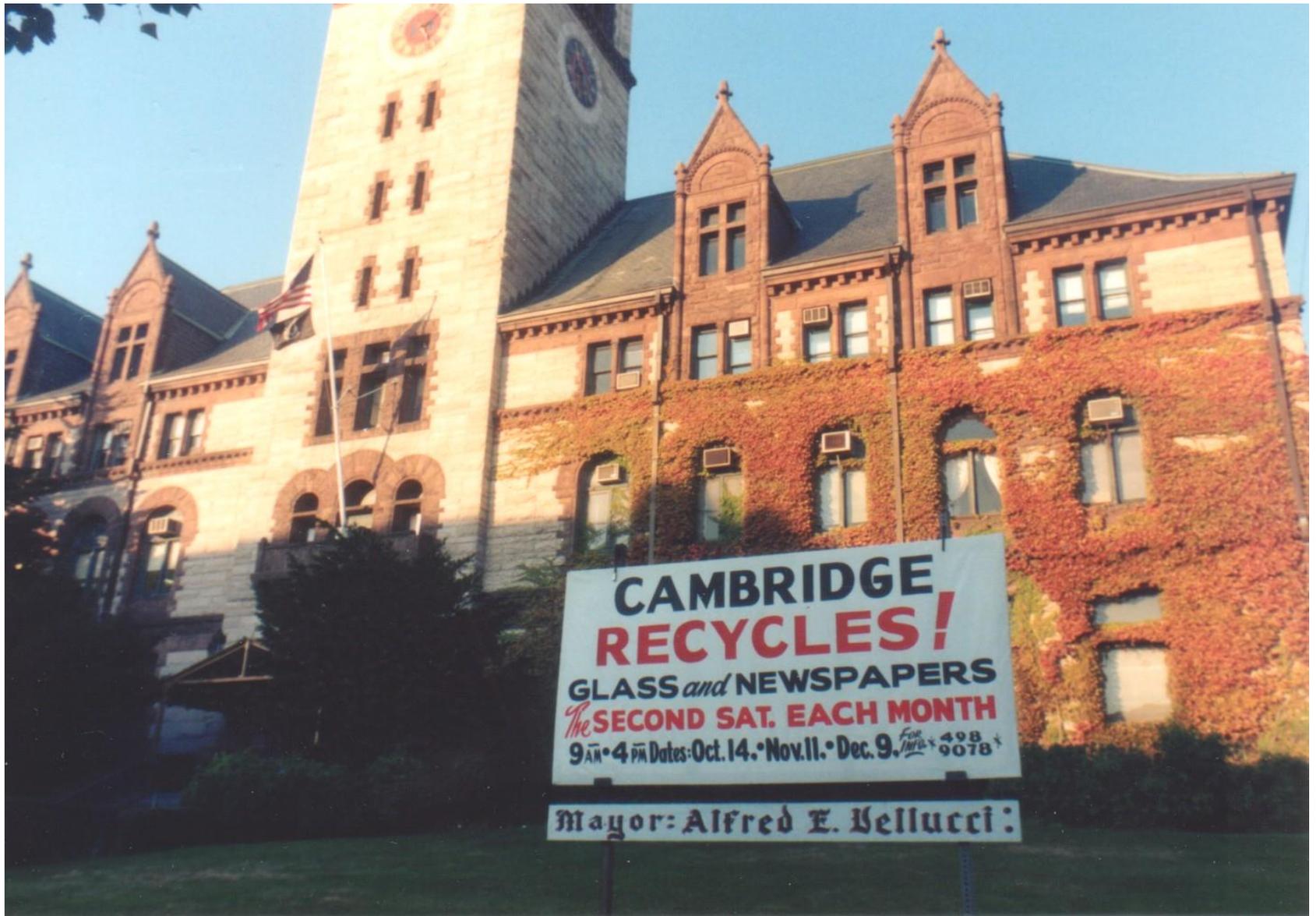
By 1989, the State had plans to build 13 Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) to process recyclable materials from cities, towns, and counties across the Commonwealth. One of those facilities was proposed to be located at the Mabardy site in Cambridge (now Mich-Lin) off Concord Ave. in the Alewife Quadrangle.

This spawned the idea of initiating an “interim” drop-off recycling program.

Though the idea of curbside recycling was discussed in DEP’s Division of Solid Waste Management, this was not yet anticipated by Cambridge officials or residents.

After several public meetings (April-May 1989) with interested residents and Maura Smith of the Manager’s Office, plans were made to operate an all-volunteer program at two sites: Sherman Street in West Cambridge and at the BFI Transfer Station on East Street (North Point), later moved to the Public Works Yard.

Note: Only one State MRF was ever built (in Springfield).



City Hall (1989)



American Gothic
(1st day of drop-off)

The all-volunteer recycling drop-off was held on the 2nd Saturday of each month from June 1989 until early 1991. It began as a dedicated group of at most a couple dozen people and grew into a small army of nearly 500 volunteers. Many worked every month for long hours. Among these were Vici Casana, Jane Lewis, Dan Newberry, Annette French, Lori Segall, John Reinhardt, Marla Rhodes, Stella Tarnay, Mary Beth Hayes, Shepley Metcalf, Robert Winters, Sumner Martinson, Fred Small, Mary Vise, Peggy Biggs, Pepper, Andy Brandt, Kristine Lessard, Paula Lenzi, Powell Woodward, Ethan McMahan, Doug Dodds, Ann Curby, Tom Fitzgerald, and many, many others.

For some, the job was a lot more than one long workday per month. Making arrangements with Public Works, purchasing supplies, moving equipment, redeeming deposit bottles and cans, answering phone calls, and contacting and scheduling volunteers in multiple shifts required almost daily attention.

It was like a barn-raising. It led to great friendships, bitter disputes, personal injuries, career paths, and even marriages. It transcended age, gender, and politics.



Maura Smith and Sumner Martinson



Vici Casana and Bill Sommers



Jane Lewis



Peggy Biggs



Mary Wise



Doug Dodds, John Reinhardt, Lori Segall



Pepper



Andy Brandt



Doug, Paula, Lori, Vici, Fred, and others



If You Build It, They Will Come

Residents came in droves. At peak there were about 1,000 vehicles arriving at each of the two sites, many loaded with recyclables from multiple households. The long lines of cars and equally long waits proved to be a very potent form of lobbying for curbside recycling.

In 1990, City Councillor Frank Duehay asked Kennedy School student (Mark Corrales) to do a study for a curbside recycling program for Cambridge. That plan called for a pilot program in part of the city to collect newspaper and glass.

City Officials (led by Richard Rossi and Lisa Peterson in the City Manager's Office) responded with plans for a comprehensive citywide curbside recycling program.

In early 1991, the City Council passed a Municipal Recycling Ordinance and hired a full-time Recycling Coordinator, Jan Aceti. An RFP was issued and a contract signed with Laidlaw. Curbside recycling arrived in Cambridge (for buildings of 12 or fewer units) in July 1991.

Curbside Recycling Milestones - I

1990-1991

**Study for limited curbside recycling pilot program – Mark Corrales.
City opts for comprehensive citywide curbside recycling.**

March 1991

City Council passes the Mandatory Recycling Ordinance. The Ordinance set a goal of recycling 15% of our refuse within two years after the start of the curbside program and 25% after five years.

April 1991

The City establishes a permanent Recycling Drop-off Center in the Public Works Yard.

July 15, 1991

A Curbside Recycling Program for 27,500 households in buildings with 12 or fewer units begins. Materials collected are: glass, metal and plastic containers (#1 & #2) and newspaper. Materials are picked up by Laidlaw Waste Systems and taken to Jet-A-Way to be sorted, baled and marketed.

October 1991

Curbside collection of leaves and yard waste begins.

Curbside Recycling Milestones - II

December 1991

First large building with 13 or more units is included in the Curbside Recycling Program.

April 1992

Cambridge Recycling, Inc. begins selling home composters to Cambridge residents at cost.

May 1992

The Recycling Drop-off Center begins to accept corrugated cardboard, and white and colored office paper.

Fall 1992

Magazines and catalogs are added to the Curbside Recycling Program. All Cambridge businesses are sent the Cambridge Commercial Recycling Guide and asked to prepare a Recycling Plan.

January 1993

Prins Recycling Corporation opens MRF in Charlestown.

Curbside Recycling Milestones - III

Spring 1993

Paper grocery bags added to the curbside recycling program. The Recycling Drop-off Center now accepts household batteries and plastic grocery bags and opens a free book exchange.

Fall 1993

Recycling Drop-off Center begins accepting telephone books year round, as well as junk mail, many office papers, cereal and shoe boxes and used clothing.

July 1994

Phone books, office papers, junk mail and corrugated cardboard added to Curbside Recycling Program. Browning Ferris Industries (BFI) takes over the collection of recyclables from Laidlaw Waste Systems.

Fall 1994

The Recycling Drop-off Center now accepts #3-#7 plastic containers, beverage cartons, drink boxes, Styrofoam and food service items.

Free compost and wood chips are made available to Cambridge residents. The Recycling Drop-off Center begins accepting recyclables from small businesses at no cost.

Curbside Recycling Milestones - IV

January 1995

All 315 residential buildings in the City with 13 or more units now included in the Curbside Recycling Program. All 42,000 households in the City now have access to convenient recycling services.

February 1995

Cambridge receives a "B" grade on the state's first recycling report card for recycling between 20% and 30% of its trash.

Spring 1995

Polystyrene Recycling Programs are launched in the cafeterias of the Peabody and Kennedy elementary schools.

June 1995

The City begins to receive revenue for the recyclables it sends to the Prins Recycling Facility.

Fall 1995

Beverage cartons, drink boxes, plastics #3-#7, paperboard boxes and empty aerosol cans added to Curbside Recycling Program.

Curbside Recycling Milestones - V

Winter 1995

City Hall Annex building at 51 Inman Street is first city government building to begin recycling mixed paper.

January 1996

Prins Recycling Facility stops paying revenues to the City.

March 1996

Cambridge receives an "A" grade on the state's second annual recycling report card for recycling at least 30% of its trash.

April 1996

The City begins an innovative new curbside recycling program for businesses - 25 business customers sign up.

Eleven out of fifteen Cambridge public schools are now recycling polystyrene trays and cups in their cafeterias. Nine public schools have begun mixed paper recycling programs.

Curbside Recycling Milestones - VI

July 2000

City establishes CRT Recycling program in which residents and businesses can put one computer monitor or television at the curb on their trash/recycling day for collection. Hard drives and keyboards are accepted. Residents must pay \$15 for monitors/televisions with a diagonal screen length of 20" or more.

December 2000

The Recycling Drop-Off Center begins accepting fluorescent light bulbs.

And the story continues.....