

ministry

Rat infestation and ~~the~~^{its} threat to public health safety is something I think we can all get behind. The question is how to develop and implement a policy that will be comprehensive, measure infestation over time, and involve entire neighborhoods. After researching what has been accomplished in other cities and talking to Cambridge city personnel and residents, in my opinion, the following is clear:

1. The City has responsibility and must take the lead in the development and implementation of a rodent-management strategy;
2. The plan must include active surveillance for rats, publication of findings, enforcement of abatement orders including charges and fines, and education and outreach to neighborhood groups and property owners. All of these are key components of a rodent control strategy.
3. Cities such as ^{Newton,} Melrose and Lowell, just to name ^{three} two, now have two trash cans per residence: one durable trash can for recycling and one for trash. This ensures that no food debris is exposed to rats because of a ~~trash can~~ cover that blew away, ~~broke or~~ was lost, Cambridge ^{or because the bottom of the can is penetrable by rats.} must do the same.
4. Inspecting entire neighborhoods for rat activity, rather than single properties alone, must be done to have an impact at the neighborhood level and avoid displacing rats from one property to another.
5. At the end of August 2009, New York City conducted three rounds of proactive indexing inspections for rat activity in an area of the Bronx. Results indicated that, among 29,996 properties, the percentage with severe rat infestation decreased 58%. If New York can do it, we can certainly do it.

This is a citywide problem. It requires that the city conduct a determined and sustained citywide educational campaign to inform and motivate individual businesses and residents to become part of the solution. The city must take the lead in developing and ENFORCING strict regulations, in

providing concrete assistance such as durable trash cans in addition to recycling trash cans, increasing trash pick-up at designated dumpster sites, and perhaps even additional personnel to ensure our public safety. We need to start now. Thank you.

Susan Markowitz