

April 27, 2015
City Council Meeting
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HERE TO TALK ABOUT NOISE

We need not trade quality of life and diminished health for prosperity in Cambridge. It would be ironic indeed if in welcoming innovators we failed to put in place the required innovations available to protect the health and quality of life of our citizens. The technology is available.

Noise enforcement is for the most part been complaint driven in Cambridge. We need to move to a **more proactive effort.**

Examples:

I support city **noise mapping...**

as well as an open period for targeted reporting by citizens of continuous violators. The **standing for submitting a report should include disturbance experienced from a public way** and NOT require being an abutter.

Set up a reporting system, like that for potholes and un-shoveled snow, provide the resources and equipment to follow up and fine violators... **continuously** till the noise is remediated...this program will pay for itself!!

New installations of air handling equipment should be tested BEFORE permission is granted for operation. The signed affidavit and distribution of the Noise Ordinance when seeking a permit have been useful initial steps.

The city **should provide a sample green landscaping contract** that citizens can use as a model in negotiating for responsible landscape care from these companies.

Owners who allow the landscaper noise violations on their property should be fined along with the companies

A timeline should be organized to phase out blowers entirely....they are an environmental and health scourge.

Their use should not be privileged over educational, creative and outdoor activities that are disrupted by the noise and dust produced...not to mention the deafening of the workers...in a city that professes our values.

With regard to **actual decibels level maximums of 50 decibels at night** cited in the Ordinance:

I would like to bring your attention to grant funded research, for which I served as PI/senior author published 2012 in the Annals of Internal Medicine with colleagues also members of the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School. We exposed sleeping subjects to a series of noises (recorded at a hospital site) at rising decibel levels in all stages of sleep, while tracking their arousals, brain waves and heart rate changes. **In stage 2 sleep in which adults spend substantial parts of the night as many as 80% of sleepers were awakened by some noises as low as 45 decibels.**

There are several mechanisms through which noise can damage health and well-being. **Along with sleep disruption, noise has also been implicated in delayed reading acquisition in school children, in decreased work efficiency, lowered moods, declines in helping behavior.**

A growing body of research implicates noise in circulatory and cardiac problems including hypertension (elevated blood pressure), angina (heart-related chest pains), and increased heart rate. While not viewed as a direct cause of mental illness, noise stress **may intensify and accelerate existing mental health problems.**

Let me repeat:

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