



City of Cambridge

O-21.

IN CITY COUNCIL

October 2, 2000

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR BRAUDE
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR DECKER
MAYOR GALLUCCIO
VICE MAYOR MAHER
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Assistant Director of Community Development to research and report back to the City Council on the possibility of developing a program similar to Jamaica Plain where homeowners donate some of their profits to help low-income tenants in the area, as described in the attached **Boston Globe** article.

In City Council October 2, 2000.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

MAS

9/28

11:06

0-21

A. ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to research and report back to the City Council on possibility of developing a program similar to Jamaica Plain where homeowners donate some of their profits to help low-income tenants remain in the area. (~~Globe front page~~)

as described in the attached Boston Globe article

J. J.

Jamaica Plain's renters get boost

Money from sales of homes donated

By Tatsha Robertson
GLOBE STAFF

In an unprecedented response to Boston's soaring housing prices, dozens of homeowners who have cashed in on the recent housing boom in Jamaica Plain are now donating some of their profits to help low-income tenants remain in the area.

"It's an unusual and wonderful gift," said Sally Swenson, resource development director at Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation. "Thousands of people who helped make Jamaica Plain a more attractive place now can't afford to stay here."

Today, Jamaica Plain housing advocates will announce two major donations from families whose property values rose during the city's housing boom. The donations, totaling \$21,000 will be used to hire an organizer who will help low-income tenants battle evictions, said neighborhood officials.

Inspired by the Campaign of Conscience, a housing movement started by City Life/Vida Urbana, a neighborhood organization, a stream of home-sellers who gained hefty profits began walking into the group's office with checks to help those hurt by rising rents, said Steve Meacham, the City Life/Vida Urbana housing organizer.

"We have seen a number of people give smaller donations like \$1,000 to our housing fund but the last two donations happen to be the largest yet," said Meacham.

Since rents began rising in Jamaica Plain in the mid-1990s,

Home-sale profits go back to neighborhood

► HOUSING

Continued from A1

transforming a middle-income neighborhood to one of the most expensive in the city, hundreds of Latino and African-American residents have been forced to leave the area or move into smaller units, said City Life/Vida Urbana officials.

"One of the things we've valued most about Jamaica Plain is the economic and cultural diversity," said Deborah Eisenbach-Budner, one of the two largest donors. "Seeing that diversity decrease has been discouraging, so we hope that this donation and others like it will help stem the tide."

This month, Eisenbach-Budner, a massage therapist, and her husband Steve, a carpenter, will leave Jamaica Plain for Oregon.

Despite the increasing number of home-sellers making donations, officials said more funds are needed to continue helping low-income families remain in their apartments. During a news conference today, Meacham and Eisenbach-Budner will encourage more sellers to make donations.

"We are saying, 'You made out well in this market from selling your home or your condo. Now why don't you give some back?'" said Meacham. "That is our message."

Initially, the Campaign of Conscience fund was created to help low-income families cover the security deposits on rental apart-

ments. But then rents rose so high in the neighborhood that many families were priced out completely. Soon the campaign, driven by protests and pickets, expanded to help cover the legal costs of low-income tenants fighting rent increases and evictions.

"This money will help us move the campaign into a higher gear," said Meacham. "Right now there is no way we can respond to all the calls we are getting from tenants whose rents are going up by hundreds of dollars."

'Seeing diversity decrease has been discouraging, so we hope that this donation and others like it will help stem the tide.'

DEBORAH EISENBACH-BUDNER
Moving to Oregon

So far, advocates have used the funds to help hundreds of low-income families remain in Jamaica Plain, said Jennifer Marshall, fund-raising coordinator for City Life. In one case, the group is helping dozens of local artists fight condominium conversion plans of the building's new owner.

"The new owner wants to raze the building and develop luxury condos," she

said. "They are fighting to stop the eviction."

In some cases, the funds have enabled tenants to stop landlords from evicting them. In one case, the funds helped a group of tenants become their own landlord.

"On a material level the families gained security, to be able to provide shelter for their family," said Marshall. "But in the larger sense, they learned that there is strength in fighting against injustice and with their neighborhoods."



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Order #21

Program similar to Jamaica Plain
where homeowners donate some of
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Councillor Sullivan

In City Council October 2, 2000

ORDER ADOPTED