

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

of the

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WASHINGTON ELMS RESIDENTS

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A survey of Washington Elms residents was conducted between July 28th and August 1st on the basis of a questionnaire prepared by the Relocation Subcommittee of the Washington Elms Tenant Council. There are approximately 158 current residents; 142, or 90%, were reached. Preliminary results for selected questions are presented below. The complete results will be made available to Washington Elms residents and to the public as soon as they are ready.

Question #1

"How many years have you lived in Cambridge?"

Results: Average: 25 years; Range 3-64 years
More than half of present W.E. residents
responding have lived over 20 years in Cambridge.

Question #2

"How many years have you lived at Washington Elms?"

Results: Average: 12.5 years; Range 3-35 years
More than half of present W. E. residents
responding have lived over 10 years at W.E.

Question #3

"At this time do you want to move out of W.E. or do you want to stay in W.E.?"

Results:	Stay:	97	68%
	Move:	40	28%
	Not sure:	5	4%

Nene Pohn

Question #5

"If you are staying at W.E., will you relocate to another W.E. apartment during construction?"

<u>Results:</u>	Yes:	93	66%
	No:	21	15%
	Blank:	27*	19%

*Only Questions 1-4 were completed on one questionnaire.

Question #8

"If you want to move out of W.E. now, do you want to move back in when remodeling is complete?"

<u>Results:</u>	Yes:	87	62%
	No:	20	14%
	Not sure:	21	15%
	Blank:	13	9%

Question #9

"If you do move out of the Elms, do you want to be guaranteed an apartment to move back into when comprehensive modernization is complete?"

<u>Results:</u>	Yes:	115	82%
	No:	18	13%
	Blank:	8	5%

Question #10

"Do you believe all present W. E. residents should be guaranteed an apartment in the "new" W.E. if they want one?"

<u>Results:</u>	Yes:	105	75%
	No:	27	19%
	Blank:	9	6%

Question #16

"How many units do you think there should be at W.E.? (There are currently 324 units) (please circle one)"

Results:

150	175	200	225	250	275	300	324
3	7	5	5	16	18	21	39

Not sure: 27

150 - 225: 20 14%

250 - 324: 94 67%

Not sure: 27 19%

Weighted average: 278 units

Question #17

"Do you believe buildings at W.E. should be demolished for 'on-site' parking?"

<u>Results:</u>	Yes:	25	18%
	No:	103	73%
	Blank:	13	9%

August 4, 1980

Statement on Washington Elms -- Meeting of Cambridge City Council
on August 4, 1980

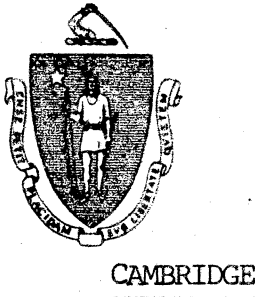
From: Frances Wirta, President
Cambridge League of Women Voters

The Cambridge League of Women Voters is concerned that the final plan of the Cambridge Housing Authority meet the present and future needs of all of the tenants at Washington Elms. The League of Women Voters has a long standing National position of fair and equal housing for all citizens.

We of the Cambridge League are concerned:

1. that relocation of tenants is not wanted by the majority since there is no assurance that Section 8 certificate will gain them better housing anywhere, and that it may require moving out of Cambridge;
2. that relocation is not necessary in order to modernize and redesign--that tenants can be temporarily moved into existing vacancies and another 50 units can become vacant by those 50 families who wish to move;
3. that the tenants voted a year ago against any demolition and that this is an expression of their will and needs;
4. that the present architectural plans for redesign reduces the number of low income housing units and will require generally a higher income bracket to afford the remodeled units;
5. that monies existed with CHA during the last two years which could have been spent to not only improve Washington Elms as to building maintenance and re-opening up the long time existing vacancies, but also these monies could have been used to provide greater ongoing social services of all kinds for the welfare of the tenants and the overall improvement of the daily psychological and esthetic life of the entire project;
6. that the H U D monies may not be assured over a long period of time and that in the end the whole project could be closed.

See Statement - Read by M. Houlley -



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Public Welfare

COMMUNITY SERVICE AREA ADVISORY BOARD

August 4, 1980

STATEMENT BEFORE CITY COUNCIL

By: Vivian Katz, Chairman

The Cambridge Welfare Advisory Board is opposed to the plans that have been submitted by the Cambridge Housing Authority for a "NEW" Washington Elms. The projected structure will house one hundred fifty (150) households, twenty-three (23) fewer than the one hundred seventy-three (173) now in residence and one hundred seventy (170) fewer than the full complement of three hundred twenty (320) that the present structure could accommodate if the one hundred forty-seven (147) apartments which have been boarded up for ~~over a~~ year were released.

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In view of the long list of Cambridge applicants waiting for admission to Public Housing, there would appear to be little justification for reducing that now available; nor is it clear that to rehabilitate Washington Elms it is necessary to evict all the tenants and demolish the buildings. Surely some way can be found to remodel without dislocating one hundred seventy-three (173) families.

An expenditure of \$8 Million in taxpayers' money, for the purpose of reducing the complement of public housing in Cambridge, is an effort in the wrong direction. There are other ways to upgrade Washington Elms. Efforts should be invested in solving the in-house problems rather than by displacing one hundred seventy-three (173) households and closing the waiting lists. The one hundred forty seven (147) boarded up units, said to be habitable by the Cambridge Housing Authority, should be restored for occupancy. More and better use should be made of the many Social Services available in Cambridge. To improve project housekeeping and to instill a sense of responsibility in the tenants themselves, tenant selection should be liberalized and tenant self-government encouraged and strengthened. Bricks and mortar do not erase problems; let us try our minds and hearts.

447 Recd at Registry 8/4/1980 PEH



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
BOSTON AREA OFFICE CITY CLERK
BULFINCH BUILDING, 15 NEW CHARDON STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114 '80

AUG 1 1980

REGION I

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1.1HMA

Mr. Joseph E. Connarton
Deputy Chief Clerk
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. Connarton:

Thank you for your invitation to attend a public hearing on the Cambridge Housing Authority proposal for modernization of the Washington Elms Housing Project.

The federal involvement in modernization programs is primarily one of financing eligible proposals and, to that extent \$2.35 million has been provided to Washington Elms over the past five years. The current request by the Authority for \$8.8 million to remedy problems of high density, high vacancy, minimal unit size, and poor image has been forwarded to HUD, Washington, D.C., for review and approval by August 15, 1980. If approved, the Authority will be required to complete the project within three years and it is expected that Washington Elms will require no additional modernization funding for ten years and will remain a viable housing resource for at least twenty years.

This information should be of help to you in the upcoming public hearing but it is felt that our attendance would be inappropriate since consideration of the proposal is basically a matter of local concern.

Sincerely,

Edward A. Clark
Area Manager

DEPUTY

511 / Pend 4/2/80

CAMBRIDGE COMMITTEE OF ELDERS, INC.

15 Pearl Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
868-0800 868-1996

Eugene Parker
Founder

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING A COMPREHENSIVE MODERNIZATION OF WASHINGTON ELMS — AUGUST 4, 1980

The City of Cambridge, residents of public and "private" housing alike, and those in need of housing have reason to be encouraged by the fact that the Cambridge Housing Authority is attempting to gain \$8.8 million for modernization of public housing, specifically Washington Elms in this instance. Renovation and improvement of living quarters are always very welcome, and with this major funding the prospect becomes most attractive.

The extensive renovation proposed for Washington Elms, however, necessarily imposes some hardship on the present residents of Washington Elms. This renovation may also impose seemingly unnecessary hardships as the Cambridge Housing Authority has decided that all residents of Washington Elms must get out of their apartments as work proceeds. The CHA plans for a total evacuation of all units, the present tenants to be given priority for vacancies in other CHA projects, if they so desire. CHA will make this possible by disregarding waiting lists for both elderly and families. Those residents of Washington Elms who prefer to leave public housing will receive Section 8 certificates to relocate in private-housing units which they are to find in Cambridge or elsewhere. (There is a consultant to perform miracles in this area for the equally hard to believe sum of \$50,000).

There are problems and responsibilities for us all in reviewing these proposals. The Washington Elms Tenants Council disagrees on at least two points with the CHA: 1) the necessity of moving all occupants away from WE during modernization; 2) the proposal of CHA to readmit only a percentage (minimum of 30%) of the present tenants to the renovated units, a procedure that institutes discrimination against and virtual eviction of the great majority of present tenants. The Tenants Council claims that by moving families within Washington Elms as sections are completed the CHA can avoid total evacuation. The Washington Elms Tenant Council also insists on the return of all present occupants who wish to be back. By no means should present and long-term tenants of established public housing be tossed about at the whim of a Housing Authority applying to a "renovation" program HUD guidelines intended only for new developments. A feasibility study now being prepared concerning the matter of tenants remaining within Washington Elms during renovation may shed some light

on the renovation question. However, this feasibility study will be made under assumptions contained in the original CHA proposal which certainly limited future options and constrained possibilities for the newly renovated Washington Elms.

A problem that concerns the community at large involves the reduction in the number of residential units at Washington Elms. Washington Elms comprises approximately 325 units of which only about half are now occupied. CHA halted rentals at least two years ago in its response to problems and has not reopened the buildings in spite of pressing demands for low-income housing. The number of units proposed for the renovated Washington Elms is 168, a net loss of nearly 160 subsidized units of low-income housing.

In the face of the extreme need for decent housing at all levels, especially lower-income, have we the right to eliminate nearly 160 habitations for the sake of a grandiose scheme that is "promised" to remain public housing for the next 20 years. It's a short time looking back! If the total of 325 units really presents a density problem and if there is need at Washington Elms for an increased number of large (more bedrooms) units, some decrease may be indicated, but a decrease of nearly 50% in overall units is unacceptable.

Foresight in planning is indispensable—a look toward future needs—but, as elders, we strongly urge a care for the present needs. There is an old admonition: take care of today and tomorrow will take care of itself; an admonition to be heeded now to avoid trouble in the days ahead. This proposal, aside from the effort to gain \$8.8 million is an affront to low-income persons in need of housing. Its time has not yet come! Specifically the Committee of Elders urges:

1) That the present residents of Washington Elms shall not be moved from Washington Elms during the renovation process, unless they agree with full knowledge of their options, to relocate elsewhere. Space provided by the buildings now unoccupied plus units vacated by tenants wishing to leave will, with proper and creative planning, make the procedure entirely feasible, and will avoid the total disruption of the Washington Elms community;

2) That all residents of Washington Elms who wish to remain in the renovated housing be allowed to do so;

3) That the renovation be carefully and thoughtfully planned to avoid any drastic reductions in the number of residential units, including no demolition of any existing buildings.

Certainly we elders want modernization at Washington Elms. With \$8.8 million to spend we must certainly let our consciences be our guide, and remember always that this money is for good housing for the people who need it.

passed in joint session of the
Executive and Advocacy Committee
of the Cambridge Committee of Elders Inc.



OFFICE OF
THE CITY CLERK

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 • (617) 498-9017

July 14, 1980

Dear Resident:

Pursuant to the attached City Council Order as introduced by Councillor David Wylie, please be advised a public hearing will be held on Monday, August 4, 1980 beginning at 4:00 P.M. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

The purpose of this hearing will be to fully discuss the Cambridge Housing Authority's proposed conversion of Washington Elms.

All interested individuals are invited to attend.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paul E. Healy". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "P" and a trailing flourish.

Paul E. Healy
City Clerk

PEH:nh

Enc.



City of Cambridge

11.

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 30, 1980

COUNCILLOR WYLIE

ORDERED: That this City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, August 4, at 4 p.m. on the Housing Authority's proposed conversion of Washington Elms; said hearing to provide an opportunity for all of the affected residents, the City Council, and other concerned citizens and officials to become informed and to have an opportunity to evaluate and comment upon policy, and that the following persons shall be individually invited by a letter sent by the City Clerk:

1. Each resident of Washington Elms
2. Housing Authority Members
3. Superintendent of Schools
4. Chief of Police
5. Welfare Advisory Board
6. Those officials of the State and the Federal government who are directly involved in the policy formation.
7. Robert Harlow
8. Cambridge Property Owners Association.

In City Council June 30, 1980.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of 8 members.

Attest:- Paul E. Healy, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:

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