



City of Cambridge

CALENDAR ITEM # 3

IN CITY COUNCIL

September 23, 1991

ORDERED: That Rule # 25 of the City Council Rules be amended by striking the present Rule # 25 in its entirety and substituting in place thereof a new Rule # 25 which reads as follows:

RULE 25. All communications, petitions, or resolutions addressed to the City Council shall be filed with the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall place all new communications on the agenda for the next regular City Council meeting. Upon receipt of a communication that is a substantially unchanged copy of a previously submitted communication, the City Clerk shall not place the communication on the agenda and shall transmit said communication to the Mayor. All communications, petitions, or resolutions that do not meet the agenda deadline specified in Rule 20 shall be held over for the subsequent City Council agenda unless it is of an emergency nature.

In City Council September 23, 1991.

Adopted by a yeas and nays vote:-

Yeas 6; Nays 0; Absent 0; Present 3.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy; *Joseph E. Connarton*

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.



City of Cambridge

-36.-

CALENDAR ITEM # 2
IN CITY COUNCIL

~~-September 16, 1991-~~
September 23, 1991

COUNCILLOR WALSH

WHEREAS: The content of the attached letter of July 26, 1991 from the Board of Riverside/Cambridgeport Community Housing, Inc. regarding operation of fifty-nine units of low and moderate income housing in Cambridgeport emphasizes strongly the legitimacy of my repeated requests contained first in my Council Order of April 22, 1991, (sponsored with Councillor Russell and adopted by the City Council, certified copy attached) and again in my City Council Order of June 3, 1991 (adopted by the City Council, certified copy attached) that a full hearing on this matter be held before this City Council as soon as possible at a regularly scheduled City Council session; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That Her Honor, the Mayor, set a date for the ordered hearing as soon as possible prior to October 28, 1991, and that she invite the Board Members of RCCHI and an appropriate representative from Cambridge Savings Bank to be in attendance; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager, upon being advised of the date for the scheduled hearing, direct the following persons to be present and prepared to participate therein: Executive Director of the Rent Control Board; Members of the Affordable Housing Trust; City Solicitor; Assistant City Manager for Community Development; and be it further

ORDERED: That Her Honor, the Mayor, and the City Manager advise the City Council of the date certain for the scheduled hearing at our City Council Session on September 30, 1991.

REFERRED TO THE CITY MANAGER FOR A REPORT IN FOUR WEEKS.



City of Cambridge

36.

IN CITY COUNCIL

September 16, 1991

COUNCILLOR WALSH

WHEREAS: The content of the attached letter of July 26, 1991 from the Board of Riverside/Cambridgeport Community Housing, Inc. regarding operation of fifty-nine units of low and moderate income housing in Cambridgeport emphasizes strongly the legitimacy of my repeated requests contained first in my Council Order of April 22, 1991, (sponsored with Councillor Russell and adopted by the City Council, certified copy attached) and again in my City Council Order of June 3, 1991 (adopted by the City Council, certified copy attached) that a full hearing on this matter be held before this City Council as soon as possible at a regularly scheduled City Council session; now therefore be it

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ORDERED: That Her Honor, the Mayor, and the City Manager advise the City Council of the date certain for the scheduled hearing at our City Council Session on September 30, 1991.

CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR CYR



City of Cambridge

44.

IN CITY COUNCIL

April 22, 1991

COUNCILLOR WALSH
COUNCILLOR RUSSELL

WHEREAS: The attached news clip from the Chronicle about the impending auction and foreclosure on April 29, 1991 of properties (including 59 low and moderate income apartments) owned by Riverside Cambridgeport Community Housing, Inc. (RCCHI) at 53 Pearl Street, 45-49 River Street, 26 Pleasant Street and 33 Magazine Street conveys a very serious situation and calls for immediate intervention by City government; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That, given the gravity and emergency nature of the matter and the time restrictions for possible resolution imposed, Her Honor, the Mayor, call a special session of the City Council to meet before the close of the business day on Friday, April 26, 1991 for the purpose of providing a full hearing on this scheduled auction before the full City Council; and be it further

ORDERED: That Her Honor invite the Board members of RCCHI and an appropriate representative of Cambridge Savings Bank to be present and request the City manager to direct the following persons to be in attendance at the same hearing: Executive Director of the Rent Control Board; Members of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; City Solicitor and the Assistant City Manager for Community Development for the purpose of determining what action the City is able to take which may prevent foreclosure and enable the City to acquire ownership of the properties with the intention of providing affordable housing to low and moderate income families only.

In City Council April 22, 1991.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

Joseph E. Connarton

ATTEST:-

DATE: AUG. 05 1991

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with 12 dishes.
Akbar has a liquor license and
free parking on the premises.

cludes a copy of Schlesinger's book,
"The Thrill of the Grill." For more
information and to register, please
call 353-9852.

RCCHI goes on auction block

The apartments of a non-profit
housing organization will go on the
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cording to legal notices of a
foreclosure sale by Cambridge Sav-
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Buildings that include 59 low and
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Cambridge Savings Bank, acting
for a group of lending banks, issued
a foreclosure notice in February on
RCCHI, a wholly-owned subsidiary
of the 20-year-old Riverside Cam-
bridgeport Community Corp., after
several months of non-payment of
its mortgage.

Joe Beckmann, a tenant activist
who has organized against RCCC,
said he is hoping a non-profit will
buy the property, but he is hoping to
deter other buyers. In an effort to
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much work needs to be done on the
rent-controlled property.

More than a dozen tenants have
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far back as October, on the grounds
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CHRONICLE 4/18/91
page 15

Dole sells Chronicle

Continued from page 1

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The New School of Music is offer-
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The three two-week sessions will
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The fee is \$250 for each session.

The camp is 9 am to 2:30 pm Mon-
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School of Music, 25 Lowell St. More
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Call 628-1800 by 4PM Tuesday to place
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WEEKEND VACATION MAINE

WEEKEND THEATRE &
SPRING GOLF PACKAGES
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\$99



'Off-Season' Package Rates
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- Lodging Friday & Saturday
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facilities... heated pool, hot
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weather permits

▪ Ticket to Cabaret show
'STARTING HERE,
STARTING NOW'

Performances
April 20 & 27 May 4

BUY 3
BUY 6
BUY 9
BUY 12





City of Cambridge

29.

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 3, 1991

COUNCILLOR WALSH

WHEREAS: The saga surrounding disposition of Riverside Cambridgeport Community Housing Inc.'s properties, including 59 low and moderate income apartments along Pearl, River, Pleasant and Magazine Streets, is an outrageous display of RCCHI's insensitivity to the casualties of the stalemate, i.e., families of low and moderate income who have a need for a right to affordable housing; and

WHEREAS: The urgency for a full Council Hearing on this, as contained in April 22, 1991 Council Order (copy attached) and adopted by this Council, but delayed temporarily at the suggestion of Her Honor, the Mayor, has intensified now therefore be it

ORDERED: That Her Honor, the Mayor, schedule a date for that full Hearing before this Council as soon as possible prior to the last Council Session during the month of June, 1991. Further, that Her Honor invite the Board Members of RCCHI and an appropriate representative from Cambridge Savings Bank to be in attendance; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager, upon being advised of the date for the scheduled Hearing, direct the following persons to be present and participate: Executive Director of the Rent Control Board; Members of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; City Solicitor; Assistant City Manager for Community Development

In City Council June 3, 1991.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

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RCCHI goes on auction block

The apartments of a non-profit housing organization will go on the auction block at 10 am April 29, according to legal notices of a foreclosure sale by Cambridge Savings Bank.

Buildings that include 59 low and moderate income apartments belonging to Riverside Cambridgeport Community Housing Inc. will be auctioned off that day. The properties being auctioned are listed on four parcels: 53 Pearl St.; 45-49 River St.; 26 Pleasant St. and 33 Magazine St.

Cambridge Savings Bank, acting for a group of lending banks, issued a foreclosure notice in February on RCCHI, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the 20-year-old Riverside Cambridgeport Community Corp., after several months of non-payment of its mortgage.

Joe Beckmann, a tenant activist who has organized against RCCHI, said he is hoping a non-profit will buy the property, but he is hoping to deter other buyers. In an effort to deter bids, he is pointing out how much work needs to be done on the rent-controlled property.

More than a dozen tenants have stopped paying rent, some since as far back as October, on the grounds of inadequate maintenance.

Chronicle 4/18/91
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Continued from page 1

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WEEKEND THEATRE & SPRING GOLF PACKAGES STARTING AT:

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'Off-Season' Package Rates are per person/double occupancy and include:

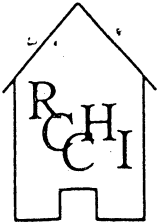
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April 20 & 27 May 4

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RIVERSIDE/CAMBRIDGEPORT COMMUNITY HOUSING, INC.
217 WESTERN AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
(617) 868-7230

Councilor William Walsh
City Council Office
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

July 26, 1991

Dear Councilor Walsh:

As you know, Riverside/Cambridgeport Community Housing Incorporated (RCCHI) operates fifty-nine units of rental housing in Cambridgeport, known as the Swartz properties. Since filing for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Act on April 17, much has been said and written about the situation.

We believe that you and the other city councilors would be interested and supportive in helping maintain these units as rental housing for the low and moderate income residents if indeed you knew all the facts.

The Chapter 11 filing was directly precipitated by the Cambridge Saving Bank's notice of foreclosure on a mortgage held by it and seven other local banks. The total mortgage held by them is under \$500,000, one-third the value of the properties as estimated by the bank's appraiser in this time of deflated real estate prices. The threatened auction of the RCCHI properties would have exposed these units to purchase by a developer not interested in affordable housing, or by the tenants whose strategy was to bankrupt RCCHI.

The auction would also have left RCCHI's parent organization, Riverside Cambridgeport Community Corporation (RCCC), with enormous debts and liabilities. It would have meant the dissolution of one of the country's oldest neighborhood-based Community Development Corporations.

RCCHI's inability to service its mortgage was a direct result of a rent withholding action by a significant minority of tenants. The tenants claim the withholding of rents was done to force repairs. However, nonpayment continues even in those cases where the City's Inspectional Services has certified that the code violations have been repaired. All together these tenants now owe over \$80,000!

The real aim of the withholding action as publicly stated in an August 1990 tenant newsletter is to force RCCHI into insolvency. By this action these tenants hope to force the sale of the properties at a fire sale price.

An illustration of RCCHI's problems: We started to make a repair in Mr. X's apartment. He then asked us to wait until he returned from a trip to Europe. After the repairs were made and his apartment was certified to be in good condition both by him and the city inspector, he continued to refuse to pay his rent and registered new complaints which were also then addressed. The tenant now disputes the approved legal maximum rent and continues to withhold rent and has an arrearage of several thousand dollars.

Under the protection of Chapter 11 we are addressing the financial needs of the properties through a plan of reorganization. Our maintenance crews are competently and cost-effectively making steady progress in not only eliminating code violations but also making needed capital improvements. Since April a number of tenants, previously withholding their rents, have resolved their difficulties with RCCHI and have begun paying their rent.

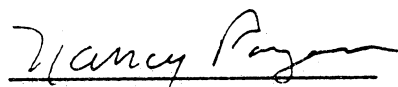
We at RCCHI believe in the concept of rent control. We believe that rents should be kept affordable for low and moderate income tenants. We also believe in decent housing for our tenants. However, no organization, no matter how capable and efficient, could possibly maintain decent housing without a reasonable and steady income: in our case the rent revenues as approved by the Cambridge Rent Control Board.

Obviously the best way to meet these challenges is to have the rent strike over. The dispute between this group of tenants and us as owners who are trying to maintain "low" rents is in no one's best interest.

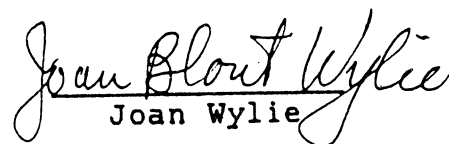
We urge you, as a city councilor, interested in working for affordable and decent housing in Cambridge, to consider RCCHI's situation and to use your good offices to assist us and the tenants in order to maintain good, affordable housing.

Respectfully,

The RCCHI Board


Nancy Pozar


Jeff Murray


Joan Wylie



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

(617) 498-9094

William H. Walsh
City Councillor

BY HAND

August 23, 1991

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Joseph E. Connarton
City Clerk

FROM: David Noonan, for
Councillor Walsh

RE: Council Order (NON-CONSENT AGENDA) for
September 16, 1991

Councillor Walsh requests that the enclosed Council Order regarding the Riverside/Cambridgeport Community Housing, Inc. matter be included in the NON-CONSENT AGENDA for the Council Session scheduled for September 16, 1991.

As usual, your courtesy and cooperation are appreciated.

(ENCLOSURES)

CC: Councillor Walsh



City of Cambridge

IN CITY COUNCIL

Councillor Walsh

September 16, 1991

- WHEREAS: The content of the attached letter of July 26, 1991 from the Board of Riverside/Cambridgeport Community Housing, Inc. regarding operation of 59 units of low and moderate income housing in Cambridgeport emphasizes strongly the legitimacy of my repeated requests contained first in my Council Order of 4/22/91 (sponsored with Councillor Russell and adopted by the Council, certified copy attached) and again in my Council Order of 6/3/91 (adopted by the Council, certified copy attached) that a full Hearing on this matter be held before this Council as soon as possible at a regularly scheduled Council Session; now therefore be it
- ORDERED: That Her Honor, the Mayor, set a date for the ordered Hearing as soon as possible prior to October 28, 1991, and that she invite the Board Members of RCCHI and an appropriate representative from Cambridge Savings Bank to be in attendance; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager, upon being advised of the date for the scheduled Hearing, direct the following persons to be present and prepared to participate therein: Executive Director of the Rent Control Board; Members of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; City Solicitor; Assistant City Manager for Community Development; and be it further
- ORDERED: That Her Honor, the Mayor, and the City Manager advise the Council of the date certain for the scheduled Hearing at our Council Session on September 30, 1991.

(ATTACHMENTS)



City of Cambridge

44.

IN CITY COUNCIL

April 22, 1991

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COUNCILLOR RUSSELL

WHEREAS: The attached news clip from the Chronicle about the impending auction and foreclosure on April 29, 1991 of properties (including 59 low and moderate income apartments) owned by Riverside Cambridgeport Community Housing, Inc. (RCCHI) at 53 Pearl Street, 45-49 River Street, 26 Pleasant Street and 33 Magazine Street conveys a very serious situation and calls for immediate intervention by City government; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That, given the gravity and emergency nature of the matter and the time restrictions for possible resolution imposed, Her Honor, the Mayor, call a special session of the City Council to meet before the close of the business day on Friday, April 26, 1991 for the purpose of providing a full hearing on this scheduled auction before the full City Council; and be it further

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In City Council April 22, 1991.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

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CHRONICLE 4/18/91
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Continued from page 1

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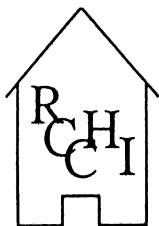


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RCCHI's inability to service its mortgage was a direct result of a rent withholding action by a significant minority of tenants. The tenants claim the withholding of rents was done to force repairs. However, nonpayment continues even in those cases where the City's Inspectional Services has certified that the code violations have been repaired. All together these tenants now owe over \$80,000!

The real aim of the withholding action as publicly stated in an August 1990 tenant newsletter is to force RCCHI into insolvency. By this action these tenants hope to force the sale of the properties at a fire sale price.

An illustration of RCCHI's problems: We started to make a repair in Mr. X's apartment. He then asked us to wait until he returned from a trip to Europe. After the repairs were made and his apartment was certified to be in good condition both by him and the city inspector, he continued to refuse to pay his rent and registered new complaints which were also then addressed. The tenant now disputes the approved legal maximum rent and continues to withhold rent and has an arrearage of several thousand dollars.

Under the protection of Chapter 11 we are addressing the financial needs of the properties through a plan of reorganization. Our maintenance crews are competently and cost-effectively making steady progress in not only eliminating code violations but also making needed capital improvements. Since April a number of tenants, previously withholding their rents, have resolved their difficulties with RCCHI and have begun paying their rent.

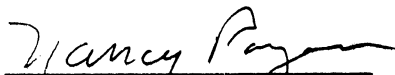
We at RCCHI believe in the concept of rent control. We believe that rents should be kept affordable for low and moderate income tenants. We also believe in decent housing for our tenants. However, no organization, no matter how capable and efficient, could possibly maintain decent housing without a reasonable and steady income: in our case the rent revenues as approved by the Cambridge Rent Control Board.

Obviously the best way to meet these challenges is to have the rent strike over. The dispute between this group of tenants and us as owners who are trying to maintain "low" rents is in no one's best interest.

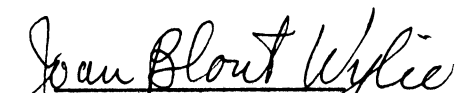
We urge you, as a city councilor, interested in working for affordable and decent housing in Cambridge, to consider RCCHI's situation and to use your good offices to assist us and the tenants in order to maintain good, affordable housing.

Respectfully,

The RCCHI Board


Nancy Pozar


Jeff Murray


Joan Wylie



City of Cambridge

36.

IN CITY COUNCIL

September 16, 1991

COUNCILLOR WALSH

WHEREAS: The content of the attached letter of July 26, 1991 from the Board of Riverside/Cambridgeport Community Housing, Inc. regarding operation of fifty-nine units of low and moderate income housing in Cambridgeport emphasizes strongly the legitimacy of my repeated requests contained first in my Council Order of April 22, 1991, (sponsored with Councillor Russell and adopted by the City Council, certified copy attached) and again in my City Council Order of June 3, 1991 (adopted by the City Council, certified copy attached) that a full hearing on this matter be held before this City Council as soon as possible at a regularly scheduled City Council session; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That Her Honor, the Mayor, set a date for the ordered hearing as soon as possible prior to October 28, 1991, and that she invite the Board Members of RCCHI and an appropriate representative from Cambridge Savings Bank to be in attendance; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager, upon being advised of the date for the scheduled hearing, direct the following persons to be present and prepared to participate therein: Executive Director of the Rent Control Board; Members of the Affordable Housing Trust; City Solicitor; Assistant City Manager for Community Development; and be it further

ORDERED: That Her Honor, the Mayor, and the City Manager advise the City Council of the date certain for the scheduled hearing at our City Council Session on September 30, 1991.

Col 72 F-519
Non-Consent Order # 36

Councillor Walsh re: operation of 59
units of low and moderate income housing
by Riverside/Cambridgeport Community
Housing, Inc.

In City Council,

Sept. 16, 1991

*Charter Right
exercised by
Councillor Cyr.
9/23/91
Referred to City
Manager for report
in 4 weeks.*