

In response to further questioning from Councillor Walsh, Ms. Drury stated that although the Rent Control Board did not have specific income guidelines itself, it basically modeled those established by HUD and the C.H.A. She further stated that she believed Ordinance 966 protected Cambridge citizens and tenants, particularly of low and moderate income, who are entitled to protection, and further she believed the Rent Control Board acted properly in refusing requests for removal permits based on their interpretation of the Ordinance.

Councillor Walsh requested a copy of any recent studies done by the Board, relative to new housing units being developed in Cambridge. He further stated he believed it will show that the number of new units was far in excess of the 1970 figure and therefore, a housing emergency may not exist any longer.

Councillor David Sullivan stated for the record he believed the Rent Control Board has and continues to interpret the "Removal Ordinance" correctly and that the standards for such were very clear.

Vice-Mayor Vellucci proceeded to outline a specific rent-control problem he was working on, relative to the amount of rent a property owner was receiving and stated it was far too low for the type of tenants being in the building. He further stated this individual had gone to the Rent Control Board, but left out of frustration.

Ms. Drury outlined the process by which this case could be heard.

Councillor Walsh questioned whether or not the Rent Control Board felt any liability for not allowing to grant removal permits in the past, based on the Poladnick case.

Ms. Drury responded in the negative.

At this time, the Committee heard from Ms. Eva Spanos of 35 Cambridge Street, who outlined her concerns with Rent Control.

Ms. Drury stated in response to Councillor Walsh that she and her staff are working with Ms. Spanos and will continue to work with her.

Having asked Ms. Sally Ackermann, a member of the Rent Control Board several questions, Councillor Walsh requested Ms. Ackermann to submit to the Committee a list of changes she felt the Board could make in order to provide fair and equitable treatment to all concerned individuals.

Ms. Deidre Morris of Highland Avenue, questioned the amount of money raised through fines levied through violations of the Rent Control Ordinance.

Ms. Drury responded that rather than collect fines, the Board has, where appropriate, tried to have units restored to the rental market, where they either were removed illegally or had been vacant for more than 120 days.

Councillor Walsh stated he intended to conduct another meeting on March 31, 1987.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

For the Committee,

Wm. H. Walsh

Councillor William H. Walsh
Chairman.

City of Cambridge

In City Council..... March 23, 1987

The Rent Control **Committee** conducted a public hearing on Tuesday, March 10, 1987 beginning at 5:50 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall. The purpose of the hearing was to receive a status report relative to the ongoing study of the characteristics of tenants occupying rent-controlled units and to discuss Ordinance 966, its implementation and enforcement.

Councillor William Walsh, Chairman of the Committee, opened the meeting by requesting the representatives of Abt Associates, the consulting firm conducting the survey, to make their presentation.

At this time, the Committee heard from Mr. James Wallace of Abt Associates, who outlined the purpose and methodology of the survey. Specifically, he reviewed the geographic area by housing stock, by allocation, data sources as well as his findings to date. Mr. Wallace further explained the various problems his organization has encountered while conducting the survey; such as lack of appropriate street listing data, map and block material and with certain documents within the Assessors Office and the Rent Control Board. He stated that the next steps in the process are as follows: comparisons of census tracts, identifying important gaps in information, the design of the actual survey sample and the submission of an interim report during the week of March 23, 1987.

At this time, Councillor Walsh thanked Mr. Wallace and requested Ms. Margaret Drury to come forward in order to begin the second part of the hearing. Ms. Drury outlined the history of Ordinance 966 as amended and stated in response to a question by Councillor Walsh, the Ordinance did effect all rent-controlled property as of August, 1979.

Councillor Walsh further questioned the ramifications of the Ordinance based on the Poladnick case; a court decision relative to an individual purchasing their unit if it was occupied by them as a tenant after 1979.

Ms. Drury responded by stating the Rent Control Board was currently reviewing several cases pursuant to this decision.

Councillor Walsh questioned whether or not tenants who never bought a unit, but want to, have any rights. He further questioned whether or not a moratorium on granting conversion permits during 1981 and 1982 existed.

Ms. Drury responded by stating she was not aware of one and would be willing to come back in two or three weeks with further information.

Councillor Walsh further questioned whether or not any hybrid buildings were granted removal permits.

Ms. Drury responded in the negative. However, she further stated she was aware of units being joined together as living quarters which were granted permits.

REPORT

Committee on Rent Control

Re: ongoing study of the characteristics
of tenants occupying rent-controlled units
& Ordinance No. 966, its implementation &
enforcement.

In City Council,

March 23, 1987

Placed on file