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June 18, 1987

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Hall
639 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

To The Honorable; the City Council:

On May 14, 1986 the City Council Committee on Rent Control held a hearing on a three part agenda. Only the first item, a plan to remove rent-controlled units for sales to tenants of three or more years, was heard in part on May 14th. Over 200 tenants attended; many wished to speak.

After a little more than two hours, as he had announced earlier, the Committee Chair, Councillor William Walsh, stopped further statements and stated to all present that the hearing was continued to June 11, 1987.

A few days before June 11th, it was learned that the hearing date had been postponed to June 16th. On June 15, 1987 a letter was sent only to councillors (copy attached) informing them that the continued hearing was again postponed to June 25, 1987. As a result, members of CTU waited outside city hall on June 16th from 5:30 - 6:30 PM to explain to people who arrived why there wasn't a hearing.

We recount this history in detail to make clear to all city councillors that the chair of the Committee on Rent Control is not proceeding democratically and is not respecting members of the public who are directly affected by the Committee's deliberations.

On two occasions the chair of the rent control committee did not provide adequate, advance notice to the public: (1) postponement from June 11 to June 16 was noted only on the City Council Schedule, no public notice was provided for those who attended on May 14th; (2) official notice for the June 16, 1987 hearing was dated June 12th and was still up on the city hall bulletin board at 3:00 PM Tuesday, June 16th. There was no public notice of the postponement to June 25th.

As things stand, the chair of the rent control committee has postponed twice the continuation of a public hearing. This hearing bears on matters of direct and substantial interest to many Cambridge citizens. Some people have come to city hall on three separate occasions and still have not seen this hearing conclude; others have left work early to attend only to face another postponement.

We therefore request that the city council act immediately to reform these undemocratic hearing procedures. We also request that public notice of at least two weeks be given before action is taken by this city council on any matter originally scheduled for hearing on May 14, 1987 before the Committee on Rent Control.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely yours,

Kathleen Zsolnay

Kathleen Zsolnay

Geoffrey Gardner

Geoffrey Gardner
Co-Chairs

CAMBRIDGE TENANTS UNION



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

To Councillor Thomas Danehy
Councillor Sheila Russell
Councillor David Sullivan

Date June 15, 1987

From Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk

Reference

Subject Committee on Rent Control/Change of Date

Please be advised Councillor William Walsh, Chairman of the above-referenced Committee has informed me that he has been contacted by several people requesting a postponement of the Rent Control Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 16, 1987.

Consequently, the next meeting of the Committee will be scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 1987 beginning at 5:30 p.m. The agenda will be as follows:

1. The proposed revision to Regulation 72.03 to base fair net operating income for all units in the City on 1967 rents and expenses;
2. The advisability of allowing tenants of three (3) years standing the right to receive removal permits in order that they may purchase said units; and
3. To review the terms and qualifications of Rent Control Board members.

You are requested to attend at this time. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

JEC/mh

cc: Councillor William Walsh, Chairman
All Councillors

S-407

Comm. from Kathleen Zsolnay & Geoffrey
Gardner, Co-Chairs, Cambridge Tenants Union
Re: the May 14, 1987 Committee on Rent
Control hearing & its continuation; said
comm. requesting reform of hearing proced-
ures & that public notice be given 2 weeks
prior to action by the Council on any
matter which was scheduled for hearing on
May 14.

In City Council,

June 22, 1987

*Referred to the Committee
on Rent Control*

*Copy sent to Councilor Walsh, Chairman, Rent
Control Committee 7/31/87mk*