

Proposed resolution by the Human Rights Commission

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We are aware of the serious housing crisis in our City. This crisis has been brought on by a combination of factors, including the end of rent control as well as cutbacks and deregulation by the federal and state governments.

We are aware that the City Council Housing Committee has met 4 times during January and debated a large number of affordable housing initiatives, including many from the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes, which seeks to protect of low and moderate income, formerly "protected status" tenants.

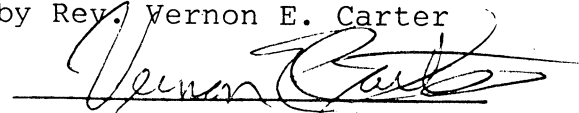
read carefully
We understand that the Council Housing Committee reported out favorably a "transfer fee", designed to tax sales of property to gain money which would be dedicated to affordable housing. We support passage of this transfer fee, which would include a threshold to exempt lower value properties owned by moderate income people. Prompt Council action to increase the revenue stream for affordable housing is urgently needed. Furthermore, this revenue stream would not conflict with other goals the City has which must come out of general revenue.

We understand that the Council Housing Committee considered at length a \$20 million bond order, which would provide a significant pot of "up front" money to purchase buildings which were formerly under rent control to create permanently affordable housing outside the pressures of the Cambridge real estate market. Although the Housing Committee did not vote on this, we urge passage of such a bond order, at this level or less. Money is urgently needed now. Buildings the City seeks to purchase will never be cheaper than they are now. And tenants in need could be driven out in a short time.

We are aware that the Council passed a resolution last November supporting the call of the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes that larger owners should "do what Harvard did" and continue protected status for the 15% of their former rent control tenants who have it. We urge the City to continue to seek ways to encourage large owners to do this, through contacting such owners and urging negotiation, through using newly hired case managers to advocate, or through discussing trade-offs around requested zoning variances.

This resolution was voted on and approved unanimously on Thursday evening, February 6, 1997. This resolution was presented to the Human Rights Commission by Commissioner Reverend Vernon E. Carter.

Signed by Rev. Vernon E. Carter



2/7/97

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Consent Communication #9

S-81

Communication was received from
Reverend Vernon E. Carter, transmitting
a copy of the proposed resolution adopted
by the Human Rights Commission regarding
the housing crisis in the City.

In City Council February 10, 1997

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