

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

831 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
TEL (617) 349-6161

RENT CONTROL BOARD

TERRENCE P. MORRIS,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Terrence P. Morris, ^{TPM} Executive Director

Re: Council Order re Rent Control Mailing

Date: January 31, 1996

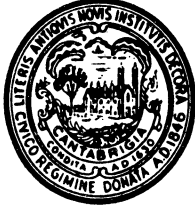
This memo will provide you with a summary of the activity generated by the recent mailing to tenants in formerly rent-controlled properties. The Rent Control Board received forty-four calls in response to the mailing. All but one were from tenants. The one landlord call was simply to inform the board that he was not contemplating either eviction or a rent increase. He asked the staff to contact him in the event his tenant called the board with a problem.

The forty-three tenants who called were referred to the Cambridge Dispute Settlement Center (CDSC) for possible mediation. Despite the referral, the Board remained active with three of the tenants and succeeded in resolving their problems. Two of these were settled by negotiating with the property owners on behalf of elderly tenants. The third was concluded with a determination that the property was in fact still controlled until December 1996.

The cases involving the two elderly tenants vividly illustrate the impact of rent control's demise. They also underscore the current need for a Board presence, albeit diminished, to assist those most vulnerable. One situation concerned an 86 year old woman who had lived in her apartment since 1939. The other was a 96 year old widow who was already paying over one-half her income toward rent. Both were facing rent increases that created severe emotional trauma. I am pleased to say that this office was able to obtain relief from their respective landlords due, in part, to working relationships that had been established over time.

Of the forty tenants that were left for resolution with CDSC, several requested a delay in contacting the property owner. CDSC contacted, by letter or telephone, owners of the units in which the remaining thirty-five tenants resided to ascertain their interest in mediation. Approximately one-

half (17) of these units were either owned or managed by one landlord who indicated that he would negotiate directly with the tenants and therefore declined mediation. Four other owners also declined mediation for different reasons. In two cases the owner was already negotiating with the tenant; in one case the owner had begun the eviction process and in another the owner simply declined offering no reason. Finally in fourteen instances, the owner either did not respond or did not give a definitive answer.



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 349-4300
FAX. 349-4307

February 5, 1996

To The Honorable, The City Council:

With reference to Awaiting Report Item No. 6, regarding a report on recent mailings by the Rent Control Board, please find attached a response from Terrence Morris, Executive Director.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
attachment

Consent Agenda #5

S-32

Relative to Awaiting Report Item
Number Six, regarding a report on
recent mailings by the Rent Control
Board.

In City Council February 5, 1996

Placed on file