



The Small Property Owners Association of Cambridge
287 Huron Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 354-5533

July 21, 1992

Ms. Margaret Drury, Acting City Clerk
Office of the City Clerk
795 Mass Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Ms. Drury:

Please enter the attached letter as a communication to
the Cambridge City Council for the Aug. 3, 1992 meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Batchelder
Corresponding Secretary

CAMBRIDGE MA.

1992 JUL 23 AM 10:20

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OFFICE OF CITY CLERK



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City Hall
795 Mass. Ave.
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To the Honorable City Council:

I would like to respond to the June 4, 1992 communication submitted to the City Council by Michael H. Turk, Co-Chair of the Cambridge Tenants Union (CTU).

In his letter, Mr. Turk criticizes the council for discussing Harvard University's decision to house a Danish Prince in rent-controlled housing "before gathering all the requisite facts". This order was first introduced on May 18, 1992. Two weeks is sufficient time for anyone who was interested to obtain the facts. A fact is that Cambridge offers no incentives for owners of rent control property to rent to low or moderate income tenants. A fact missing from Mr. Turk's letter is that the current legal maximum rent of \$1905/month for this unit is not permanent. As the amortization periods for the capital improvements on this unit mature, the rent will decrease substantially. The city of Cambridge will spend staff time and money monitoring the rent decreases. They will then send letters to the prince and to Harvard advising them of the new rent. The princely rent will decrease and someone will try to explain to his highness that this unit is part of Cambridge's affordable housing stock and that it is important to the people of Cambridge and to the city's housing policy for the city to monitor and be concerned that the prince does not pay Harvard more than the legal maximum rent control rent for his Cambridge castle. If the facts of this case are that this unit should be exempt from rent control, then the CTU should so state.

In his letter to the Council, Mr. Turk alludes to a "tie between HRE (Harvard Real Estate) and SPOA, to which Mr. Noble alluded at Monday's council session". We would like to know what this tie is. It is certainly not Harvard's TAP (Tenant Advocacy Project) clinical program. This program which is sponsored by Harvard Law School causes a great deal of grief to our members. TAP was preceded by SPIL which was equally oppressive. These programs are so abusive that our association has picketed Harvard Law School the past two years. Once again SPOA is given blame and/or credit for something it has not done. SPOA will cut any of it's so-called ties with HRE if the CTU cuts it's ties to the Harvard Law School and TAP.

Landlords are unfairly blamed for the failings of a perverted housing policy. We would prefer less divisiveness in Cambridge. The City Manager's Housing Cabinet is currently attempting to improve the city's housing policies. Their conscientious efforts will be stalled and resisted by the intransigence of those who insist on maintaining the status quo and prefer to bash the housing providers for the errors of this most bizarre system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan Batchelder".

Susan Batchelder
Corresponding Secretary

Consent Comm. # 30

S-615

Comm. from Susan Batchelder, Corresponding Secretary, Small Property Owners Association of Cambridge, responding to a communication received from the Cambridge Tenants Union on June 4, 1992.

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In City Council,

Aug. 3, 1992

Placed on file