

Ms. Keller described the graduate housing picture. She stated that 4063, or thirty-eight percent of all graduate students live in affiliate housing. Ninety percent of those who live in affiliate housing are graduate students. Sixty-two percent of Harvard graduate students do not live in Harvard housing. Of these students, twenty-nine percent live in Cambridge. Thirty-three percent live outside of Cambridge. Presently, Harvard is starting a process to build additional housing in Allston; 418 additional beds are planned. The expectation is that Business School students will want to live there and this will open Cambridge units. Also, Harvard is negotiating for ten additional units at the Cambridge-Somerville border. Fifty percent of Harvard's formerly rent controlled space is now occupied by Harvard affiliates. Harvard is still housing protected tenants. Harvard also owns two Mt. Auburn Street and the land at the corner of Mt. Auburn and DeWolf on which there are Cambridge Housing Authority SRO units.

Councillor Davis asked whether Harvard expects the number of graduate students housed in non-affiliate housing to go up or down. Ms. Keller stated that the expectation is that it will go down.

Councillor Davis asked about the rents charged for affiliate housing and what effect rent increases have. Ms. Keller stated that there is more demand than can be accommodated. Ms. Keller said that the University leases to students from far away and does not require them to pay first and last month and security deposits. There is a lottery for the housing, but there is a preference for families with three or more children because they will have the hardest time finding housing in the area. Also, particular programs may set aside housing because the people are coming from so far away and could not otherwise be able to secure housing market rates. Ms. Keller stated that affiliates are charged market rate rents. She said that the philosophy of the market pricing is that the housing cost is computed at market rate. Financial aid comes from individual schools. Market rate is computed by taking market rates and entering them into a regression analysis to come up with a recommended rent. So the pricing follows the trends of the Cambridge market retrospectively rather than prospectively.

Ms. Keller stated that the university is interested in having students live close to the institution. Ms. Power stated that the university is interested in hearing the City's view on this issue. There are advantages in having students live close by campus, for example, less traffic, etc. Ms. Power stated that Harvard has no plans for significant expansion.

Councillor Davis suggested increasing efforts to locate Harvard students who are in Boston, for example, at the Boston School, in housing in Boston rather than in Cambridge housing.

Councillor Triantafillou stated that she would like the specifics of how much of the Cambridge rental housing stock Harvard uses.

Councillor Davis asked what happened to Harvard students since the end of rent control. Ms. Power stated that it has impacted the quality of life of students who are spending more because they want to live near the school.

Councillor Born stated that it has been posited that it was the explosion of university professional schools that led to the increase in student population, the increase in demand, then to students doubling up, paying higher rents, and ultimately to the institution of rent control.

Ms. Power noted that not all roommate households are student households. Ms. Keller stated that the graduate student population is getting older.

Vice Mayor Galluccio stated that he has been approached by graduate students who are frustrated by the higher rents.

Ms. Power stated that Harvard shares the City's interest in having Harvard be able to provide more housing for graduate students.

Councillor Triantafillou asked if the problem would be solved if Harvard could house the 3200 graduate students who now live in Cambridge in housing not owned by the university.

Ms. Power said no, that still would not house 100% of the students.

Vice Mayor Galluccio stated that this is an issue for the whole Boston area. He asked if there is a master plan for solving the problem.

Ms. Keller stated that the current plan is for the Allston units and for ten additional units in Somerville.

Ms. Power stated that the university is interested in housing more graduate students, but the options are limited and have downsides that the community will find troubling, for example, acquisition of existing units.

Ms. Power referred to the Town Planning Board report, and stated that to the extent that Cambridge has a master plan, it is contained in that document.

Councillor Born noted that in Ithaca, Cornell provided shuttle bus service from private housing located at some distance from the university.

Councillor Born then invited public comment.

Robert Winters, 366 Broadway, stated that Harvard should build intensely in Allston and reshape that part of the city. He noted that financial aid has to be taken

into account in any measurement of the actual rent burden students face. Mr. Winters stated that his experience is that the shape of universities has changed enormously in the last ten years with the concomitant growth of peripheral professional people – lab directors, etc., who are neither graduate students, undergraduates, nor faculty.

Ms. Power stated that the Cambridge town/gown report provides information on staff. Harvard has 6300 staff in Cambridge. 3300 Cambridge residents work in Cambridge at Harvard.

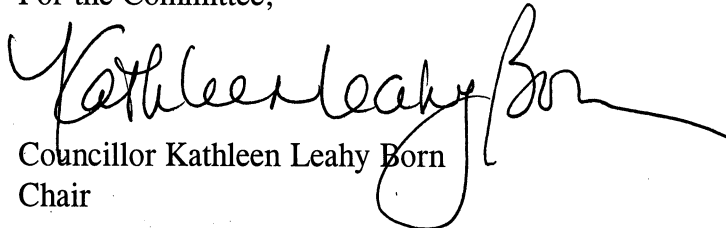
Councillor Born stated that some of the displacement in the Agassiz and Peabody neighborhoods since the end of rent control involve Harvard employees.

Robert LaTremouille, 875 Massachusetts Avenue, said that when 888 Massachusetts Avenue increased rents sharply last year, they said it was because of a deal with Harvard. Ms. Keller stated that she knows nothing about this. In response to his question, Ms. Keller stated that Harvard does not own 10 Ware Street, the former telephone building. In response to a question from Vice Mayor Galluccio, Ms. Keller said that most graduate students do not have cars, and that Harvard certainly discourages car ownership. Mr. LaTremouille asked about 2 Mt. Auburn Street. Ms. Keller stated that Harvard has not given any notices to the Cambridge Housing Authority about any change to the arrangement regarding the building at 2 Mt. Auburn Street.

Councillor Born asked about the tax-exempt status of affiliate housing. Ms. Keller stated that some are exempt and some are taxed directly, based on their history. The in lieu payment that the University makes to the City for its exempt affiliate units is based on rents.

Councillor Born thanked all those present for their attendance.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

For the Committee,


Councillor Kathleen Leahy Born
Chair

City of Cambridge

In City Council April 5, 1999

The Housing and Community Development Committee held a public meeting on March 2, 1999, beginning at 5:50 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of discussing Harvard University's housing impact statement.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Kathleen Leahy Born, Chair of the Committee, Vice Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Katherine Triantafillou and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were Elizabeth Sternberg, Housing Planner, Community Development Department; Mary Power, Director of Community Relations for Harvard University, Susan Keller, Director of Residential Real Estate, Harvard University, and Tom Dingham, Assistant Director for Administration, Harvard College.

Councillor Born convened the hearing and explained the purpose. She thanked Mary Power and the other members of Harvard's staff for being here and providing information about the impact of the University's housing arrangements on Cambridge and its housing market. Councillor Born noted the housing crisis engendered by Cambridge's hot real estate market. She stated her hope that this kind of statement will be offered on an annual basis.

Councillor Born introduced Mary Power, Harvard's Director of Community and Government Relations, and requested that Ms. Power introduce other Harvard staff present. Ms. Power introduced Tom Dingham, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Administration and Susan Keller, Director of Residential Real Estate. Ms. Power submitted a packet of information and discussed this information.

Ms. Power noted that Harvard compares quite favorably with other universities (Attachment A). Harvard houses virtually all of its undergraduates and thirty-seven percent of its graduates, an aggregate of about sixty percent.

Mr. Dingham stated that all freshmen are required to live on campus. Fewer than three percent (240-200) of upper class students live off campus, with 160 in affiliate housing. He noted that this compares favorably with the undergraduate population housed in other urban colleges. Undergraduate housing on campus is tight. Programming is centered around the houses, which is a big reason that undergraduates want to live on campus.

Councillor Davis asked if Harvard is expecting any need for additional undergraduate housing. Mr. Dingham said that additional dorms are not a high priority and significant undergraduate expansion is not expected.

Committee Report #1

2575

A report from Councillor Born,
Chair of the Housing and Community
Development Committee, for a meeting
held on March 2, 1999 for the purpose
of discussing Harvard University's
housing impact statement.

In City Council April 5, 1999

Report Accepted.

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