

38

**18 Fayette Street
Cambridge, MA 02139**

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

96 JUL 25 PM 4: 56

CAMBRIDGE MA.

July 25, 1996

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

To the Honorable City Council:

I am writing to urge enactment of Councilor Reeves' motion of June 24 with regard to Harvard's formerly rent controlled housing and the need for further discussions between Harvard and the affected neighborhoods about maintaining a residential character and stability in the Prescott-Ware Street area now that the City Council has endorsed a major expansion of the Harvard Campus in that neighborhood.

In addition to the arguments I articulated before the City Council on June 24, I would urge the Council to consider an additional point in favor of the motion. By its vote of June 24, the Council has endorsed a communication from Assistant City Manager Susan Schlesinger, dated June 19, regarding "Review of City Policies and Report Recommendations Related to Harvard, Formerly Rent Controlled Properties." This communication was part of the report that was accepted by vote of the Council.

Ms. Schlesinger's discussion of the policies of the *Growth Policy Document* concludes, "On balance, however, the proposal as it has been constructed substantially advances not only basic city housing, land use, and transportation objectives, but many fundamental elements of our institutional objectives." This conclusion is based on her rewriting of Policy #52, which reads in part,

The major educational institutions of the city should be encourages to provide housing for their respective faculties, students, and staff through additions to the inventory of housing units in the city. Effective use of existing *land* [emphasis added] holdings should be a tool in meeting this objective...

The communication summarizes the recommendation as follows:

the institutions provide housing for all affiliates, *preferably* [emphasis added] with new construction, using existing holdings...

The addition of the word "preferably" and omission of word "land" completely changes the force of the recommendation, which is in no way advanced by the proposal.

Further, it should be noted, that the letter makes no reference to the Neighborhood Study of the neighborhood which is most impacted by the proposal, namely Mid-Cambridge. This study, though not finalized, has been in process since 1993. According to my notes, this study received repeated, unrebutted recommendations from residents about the need for an adequate transitional area between university affiliate housing and neighborhood residences.

For these reasons and those I stated in June, I respectfully urge the City Council to enact Councilor Reeves' motion at the earliest opportunity. The problems that will be created by the imminent expansion of the Harvard Campus will not go away. The abutters and other neighbors have no choice but to face these problems. They need your support.

Sincerely,


John Pitkin

Consent Communication #38

S-377

Communication was received from John Pitkin, 18 Fayette Street, requesting support from the City Council regarding Harvard's formerly rent controlled housing in the Prescott-Ware Street area.

In City Council July 29, 1996

Placed on file