

To: Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Date: February 7, 1986

From: Jill Herold 
Assistant City Manager for Human Service Programs

Re: Councillor Walsh's Order of January 27, 1986 re.: Homelessness

The last five years have witnessed tragically steady growth in homeless population in Cambridge as well as some changes in the composition which impact on the visibility of the problem. At the same time a variety of community initiatives have begun to respond to some aspects of the problem.

Reliable estimates indicate that the number of homeless people in Cambridge on any given night hovers at 250. These estimates do not, in fact cannot, include those in the city, largely families, who though not technically homeless are living doubled (sometimes tripled) up with family or friends.

Cambridge has a strong network of shelter and services working daily to address the problem, though this network does not meet the entire need.

There are three primary overnight shelter facilities in Cambridge.

Shelter Inc. (with 23 beds for individuals, 5 beds for families; and one unit for a family located at the YWCA);

University Lutheran Church Shelter which operates only from December to April and offers 22 beds; and the

CASPAR EMERGENCY SERVICE CENTER on Albany Street which is funded for 35 beds, but generally accommodates 50 people each night;

Cambridge Red Cross which continues to focus its services on those families and individuals who are victims of burn-outs;

Though each shelter's experience is slightly different this winter season, there are common themes. Each shelter is seeing greater numbers and significantly more complex problems.

Shelter Inc., often the first shelter option for individuals, has this winter turned away, on the average, approximately 15 to 20 people a night. The agency reports a higher proportion of families seeking their assistance and some important changes in the kinds of individuals they serve. Increasingly, Shelter's guests are individuals with relatively recent and strong roots in the Cambridge community whose lives have been dramatically disrupted - for example a catastrophic illness or injury, a change of ownership of their apartment, a sudden lay off. Increasingly Shelter has confronted the need to extend their formal 3 day limit to accommodate the transitional housing needs of these individuals while they await an opening in elderly public housing, or a lodging house room, or set aside enough money to compete for an apartment. The net effect is a reduction in Shelter's ability to serve the more transient population.

The University Lutheran Church Shelter was established by the church congregation through the support of other Harvard Square Churches and a dedicated group of students and church volunteers in the winter of 1983. This shelter reports that it has turned away this winter approximately 8-10 individuals each night, up 2 or 3 from last year. This shelter reports it is also feeding an additional 15 to 20 people each night.

CASPAR's Emergency Service Center typically accommodates 50 to 52 people per night and feeds an additional 10 to 15. On a cold night, they must turn away up to 10 individuals. Their population has also changed in recent years. Guests in 1986 are more likely to be young (mid 20's to 30), have problems with drugs as well as alcohol, and on the whole, have more serious medical and emotional problems than those of a few years ago.

These experiences suggest that Cambridge reflects some national trends. A portion of the Cambridge homeless population, up to 50%, are individuals or families headed by individuals with significant emotional problems. In Cambridge, as elsewhere, "deinstitutionalized" is generally a misnomer for this population. In fact, recent initiatives, detailed below, have begun to address the needs of patients in the mental health system. Rather the chronically mentally ill and/or personality disordered individuals who head some homeless families are often too ill to seek help voluntarily yet beyond the legal definitions which would permit officials to insist upon treatment.

There have been several new initiatives to address the housing problems of those with such mental health problems. The most recent is a cooperative venture of CASCAP, Inc., the two Cambridge Y's, and the Cambridge Housing Authority. The program offers housing subsidies for single rooms (5 at the YMCA and 5 at the Cambridge YWCA) in addition to a variety of supportive services for Cambridge clients recently released from the State's Mental Health facilities. This effort complements the existing system of over 20 Ambulatory Care Service workers based at Cambridge Hospital; two day treatment centers; as well as the community residences managed by CASCAP.

To assist individuals who cannot or have not been integrated into the formal mental health system, several agencies initiated CHAPP, a group which draws together housing advocates and mental health professionals to coordinate case management for those individuals with both kinds of problems. A list of participants is attached.

The other half of the homeless problem is economics. The cost of living in most urban communities particularly the cost of housing has outstripped both most forms of public assistance as well as the incomes earned from minimum wage and/or unstable employment.

The average individual on SSI, largely elderly and/or disabled individuals, has less than \$200 a month for food, clothes, medications and other incidentals after they have paid for an average boarding house room in Cambridge. The margin for those on General Relief is less. Day programs which offer a meal and/or the food pantry network often provide an essential resource which allows very low income individuals to retain housing. The day programs, in particular, are also a critical need for homeless people since most shelters require their guests to leave during the day.

The Salvation Army offers a midday meal program on Mondays and Fridays which was originally established through a cooperative effort of the Army, the city's Department of Human Services, and Cambridge Community Services. The Harvard Square Meals Program offers a supper on Thursday evenings. There have also been important new initiatives from the recently established Cambridge Food Pantry Network (a list of participants is attached). This group is particularly critical in providing support and coordination to the small food pantries, based in churches and social service agencies, which are generally part-time volunteer operations.

In 1983, the City Council authorized the creation of the position of Emergency Services Coordinator. As an indication of the need in the community, in the past 5 months that staff person has seen a total of 69 clients, about half of whom were single individuals and half of whom were heads of families. Seventeen were already homeless, thirty-three had serious housing problems, and 12 were in immediate need of food or some other emergency items such as medications.

The network of agencies in Cambridge concerned directly with the problem of homelessness is wide and diverse. In January of 1983, the Governor's Office of Human Resources designated 26 agencies in the Commonwealth as convenors for the Homeless Initiatives. The city's Department of Human Services accepted that role for the Cambridge/Somerville area. A list of participants is attached. The Task Force has in deference to changing needs and multiple demands tried to retain flexibility in its structure and responses. It has, as necessary, met to address such issues as the allocation of FEMA funds within the community or the search for alternative sites for housing. On other occasions the groups has decided to work primarily through sub-committees and/or in conjunction with the Central and Harvard Square Ministry Associations. The next meeting has been scheduled to discuss the impact on the area of the current short fall in FEMA funds in this area.

DRAFT ALLOCATIONS 1985 - 86

Emergency Food and Shelter Local Board

Cambridge

(FEMA IV)

Under Public Law 98-88, approximately \$60 million has been made available nationally by the federal government for distribution by the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board, through its local counterparts. The local Board for Middlesex County is comprised of representatives of the Middlesex County Commissioner's Office, The Salvation Army, Massachusetts Bay Chapter of the American Red Cross, Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay. In addition, designated convening agencies, including a representative of the Cambridge Department of Human Services, sit in an advisory capacity to the Board.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>FEMA III 1984-85</u>	<u>FEMA IV 1985-86</u>
Harvard Square Meals Program	\$ 2500	\$ 2500
Department of Human Service Programs (heat emergencies)	\$ 7000	\$ 5500
Somerville/Cambridge Elder Services (week-end home delivered meals	-	\$ 2000
Transition House (battered women's shelter)	\$ 4190	\$ 4000
Shortstop (adolescent shelter)	\$ 4000	\$ 4000
Food for Free (emergency food deliveries)	\$ 3500	\$ 3500
Shelter, Inc.	\$ 4500	\$ 4500
CASPAR Emergency Service Center	\$ 9750	\$ 7000

Agency	<u>FEMA III 1984-85</u>	<u>FEMA IV 1985-86</u>
Catholic Charities of Cambridge/Somerville (eviction prevention)	\$12,000	\$12,000
Cambridge Red Cross (food pantry)	-	\$ 2,500
Committee of Elders (breakfast program)	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
CASCAP, Inc. (2 rooms at local Y's)	\$ 1,800	\$ 3,600
Salvation Army (food pantry and feeding program)	\$ 8,200	\$ 8,200

CAMBRIDGE FOOD PANTRIES

Holy Church of Cambridge
152 Columbia St.
Cambridge, Ma., 02139

C.H.A.M.A.
105 Windsor St.
Cambridge 02139

Margaret Fuller House
71 Cherry St.
Cambridge 02139

Cambridge Comm. of Elders
15 Pearl St.
Cambridge 02139

Catholic Charities
187 Central St.
Somerville 02145

Metropolitan Baptist
16 Beech St.
Cambridge 02140

Cambridge East End House
105 Spring St.
Cambridge 02141

Old Cambridge Baptist
1151 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge 02138

First Baptist Church
5 Magazine St.
Cambridge 02139

Morning Star Baptist
4 Putnam Gardens #37
Cambridge 02139

Salvation Army
402 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge 02139

Western Avenue Baptist
299 Western Ave.
Cambridge 02139

Bishop Hildebrand Outreach Center
41 Columbia St.
Cambridge 02139

Centro Presente
99 Bishop Allen Drive
Cambridge 02139

Church of God of Prophecy
41 St. Sauveur St.
Cambridge 02138

Church of the Nazarene
234 Franklin St.
Cambridge 02139

Antioch Temple Church
96 River St.
Cambridge 02139

St. James Episcopal/Somerville
69 Madison Ave.
Wakefield, Ma., 01880

Harvard Sq. Clergy Assoc.
Central Sq. Clergy Assoc.

Food for Free
c/o CEOC
11 Inman Street
Cambridge 02139

Cambridge Seventh Day Adventist

Cambridge Area Red Cross/
Pantry on the Commons
9 Waterhouse St.
Cambridge 02138

The Cambridge Food Pantry Network
11 Inman Street
Cambridge 02139

CHAPP (Clients with Housing and Psychiatric Problems)

Organizational Membership

Dept. of Human Services
City of Cambridge
51 Inman St.
Cambridge 02139

Ambulatory Care Service
Cambridge Hospital

Committee of Elders
15 Pearl Street
Cambridge 02139

Tenant Services
Cambridge Housing Authority
270 Green Street
Cambridge 02139

Council on Aging
51 Inman Street
Cambridge 02139

Shelter, Inc.
P.O. Box 516
Cambridge 02139

ECHO
186 Hampshire Street
Cambridge 12039

Geriatric Service
171 Third Street
Cambridge 02141

CASPAR Emergency Service Center
240 Albany Street
Cambridge 02139

Psychiatric Emergency Room
Cambridge Hospital
Cambridge 02139

Primary Care Unit
Cambridge Hospital
1493 Cambridge St.
Cambridge 02139

Schiff Day Treatment Center
129 Franklin St.
Cambridge 02139

Residence Program
Cambridge Family YMCA
820 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge 02139

C.H.A.P.P.

(Meeting about) Clients with Housing and Psychiatric Problems

C.H.A.P.P. held its founding meeting in November 1984. The group was formed out of a request from the City of Cambridge Department of Human Services to the Cambridge Hospital Department of Psychiatry for clinical consultation to Human Services staff who serve people with housing and psychiatric problems. At the early CHAPP meetings other social service, housing, health and mental health organizations serving this group of people in Cambridge were identified and participation was sought.

Goals

- to problem-solve specific cases
- to develop support between workers
- to increase problem-solving skills among members
- to identify systems problems related to these clients
- to cut red tape
- to impact upon policy-makers and program planners who design services for homeless and mentally ill people.

Methods

- case presentations (no client names) with emphasis on group problem-solving and concrete recommendations
- follow-up discussion of cases
- information, resources, and experience sharing
- discussion of difficulties between agencies, gaps in services, philosophical opinions
- representation in policy-making organizations

Characteristics of clients and their situations

- people of all ages
- single people and families
- people in shelters, public housing, private housing, and Y's
- people facing evictions or recently evicted
- people in need of support services, refusing services, or manipulating services
- people with psychiatric problems, drinking problems or both

Meeting schedule

Time: 2nd and 4th Thursday from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Place: Committee of Elders, 15 Pearl Street, Conference Room.

CAMBRIDGE

Homelessness Task Force

Department of Human Service Programs
City of Cambridge

Shelter, Inc.

Cambridge YWCA

Cambridge YMCA

Cambridge Somerville Legal Services

CASCAP, Inc. (Cambridge/Somerville
Cooperative Apartment Program)

ECHO (Elder Cooperative
Housing Options)

CASPAR

Cambridge Housing Authority

Cambridge/Somerville Mental
Health Center

Cambridgeport Problem Center

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Department of Social Services/
Cambridge/Somerville Area Office

Department of Public Welfare/
Cambridge/Somerville Area Office

University Lutheran Church

Harvard Square Meals Program

Cambridge Hospital

Cambridge Council for Children

Cambridge Organization of
Portguese Americans

Cambridge Public Library/
Central Square Branch

Somerville/Cambridge Elder
Services

Cambridge Committee of Elders

Cambridge/Somerville
Catholic Charities

C.L.O.E.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
TEL. 498-9011

16

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

February 10, 1986

To the Honorable, the City Council:

With respect to Awaiting Report Item No. 4 relative to the plight of the homeless in the City, enclosed please find copy of a report from Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Service Programs.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mbf
Enc.

Agenda Item No. 16

Re: response to Awaiting Report Item No. 4
on the plight of the homeless in the City.

2/10/86

Charlie

Right

By

Councilman

Dancy-

In City Council,

February 10, 1986

2/24/86

Placed on File