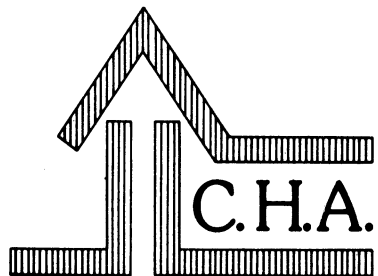


CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY



C A M B R I D G E
M A S S A C H U S E T T S
02139
(617) 864-3020

TO: James L. Sullivan, City Manager
FROM: Daniel J. Wuenschel, Executive Director, C.H.A.
SUBJECT: City Council Order No. 18 of 10/30/78
DATE: November 13, 1978

The above-referenced order requests information on vacant apartments at each of the Cambridge Housing Authority developments and further requests dates when these units will be available for occupancy.

I would like to begin this report by explaining that vacant apartments and their re-occupancy is a relatively complicated matter that begins with turnover and its reasons; the preparation of vacated apartments for re-occupancy; and the offering of these units (once ready) to eligible applicants according to HUD and DCA regulations, including special criteria for racial balancing and emergencies.

- A. Turnover rates vary, as you might expect, with each development. Among the family developments, the smaller projects where assignment or placement is most desired--rates of turnover are low. In the case of some of the larger family developments which have "image" problems among our applicants--turnover rates tend to be of higher frequency. This situation is further compounded by the Housing Authority's more vigorous prosecution of both rent non-payment cases and "cause" evictions arising out of behavior by some residents which is injurious to the well-being of many others. Each eviction or voluntary move just prior to eviction results in another vacancy which needs preparation for re-occupancy.

In addition, we have begun to experience some turnover with some of our more stable and upwardly mobile residents. As the incomes of these folks increases so does the amount of their rent. At some point private housing becomes economically competitive and these families leave public housing. On the one hand such movement is good and desirable since it frees additional units for more needy applicants. On the other hand, the leaving of such families deprives the development of the stabilizing influence of the more affluent longterm resident and imposes the added burden of additional vacancies which need work before they can be re-occupied. The Authority is currently considering some incentives to keep such families at our more distressed developments.

Finally, in some instances at some developments an immediate attempt to re-fill vacant units is not made. This applies to Washington Elms which studies show suffers from too dense an environment and experience shows operates much more reasonably at two-thirds occupancy. Similarly ten apartments at Jefferson Park and three at Roosevelt Towers have not been immediately re-occupied for reasons of security.

- B. The preparation of vacant apartments is undertaken by two distinct work groups. One is the Authority's Vacancy Preparation/Paint Crew composed of permanent employees. The other is the CETA staffed vacancy reduction crew. Although not exclusively this latter group has concentrated its activities at Jefferson Park where it has refurbished nearly 100 units over the past year and one-half.

Impediments to greater volume production have been several. Lack of federal and state funding for sufficient materials and manpower has been overcome somewhat by the availability of CETA help. This source has, however, dwindled considerably in the past several months. CETA replacements have been unavailable and the demand for elderly security workers has resulted in both direct transfers from the vacancy reduction crew and the loss of "slots." Similarly, the Authority has been forced to divert vacancy preparation workers to cover an increasing number of lead paint citations. Finally, the decreasing CETA work force will undoubtedly result in our abandoning a project of painting occupied elderly apartments in the older elderly developments such as the Truman and Kennedy apartments.

- C. The offering and assignment of vacant units to eligible applicants must be done in strict conformance to the various HUD and DCA regulations which to further complicate matters, sometimes differ. For example, the state assisted projects (DCA) are subject to veterans preference; the federal program is not. The state income limits for admission to public housing are lower than the federal limits. Yet in the interest of fairness a single list of eligible applicants is administered centrally by the Authority. Additionally, as you know, certified emergencies take precedence over applicants on the chronological list(s). It is for this reason that the CHA defines quite narrowly the factors which constitute an emergency. Too much room here would obviate the chronological list(s) and all placements would be for emergency applicants alone.

Similarly, vacancies are often filled by transfers from within the same development. These are necessitated by situations of overcrowding, severe health code violations, etc.

All of this is offered to assist you and the members of the Council to understand the various factors involved in vacancy schedule which is attached. Finally, this picture and these figures are naturally in a constant state of flux with additional turnover and re-occupancy occurring continually; to attempt to see this situation in stated terms would be misleading.

RECEIVED
Nov 13 12 28 PM '78

OFFICE OF THE
CITY MANAGER

VACANCY REPORT AS OF 11-1-78

<u>Project</u>	<u># Vacant Units</u>	<u>#Units Available for Occupancy 11/1</u>	<u>Date Remaining Units Available For Occupancy</u>
Washington Elms	127	0	-----
Corcoran Park	5	2	11/30
Putnam Gardens	3	1	12/15
Newtowne Court	81	0	12/31 -- 10
Jefferson Park	20	2	11/30 -- 2
Roosevelt Towers	11	11	
Woodrow Wilson	4	1	11/30
Jackson Gardens	2	1	11/17
Lincoln Way	4	2	11/24
Millers River	6	6	
Truman	3	3	
Manning	3	3	
Burns	0	0	
Weaver	0	0	
Johnson	4	1	11/30
Kennedy	1	0	11/24
Scattered Sites	0	0	



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 876-6800

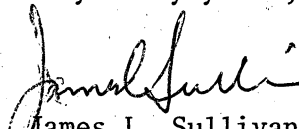
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JAMES L. SULLIVAN
City Manager

November 13, 1978

To the Honorable, the City Council:

With reference to Awaiting Report Item No. 7 of this date, I transmit herewith a communication from Daniel J. Wuenschel, Executive Director of the Cambridge Housing Authority, relative to vacant apartments at each of the Authority's developments.

Very truly yours,


James L. Sullivan
City Manager

JLS/b

Agenda #2

S-479

Response to Awaiting Report no. 7 re: number
of vacant apartments in each project under
jurisdiction of Cambridge Housing Authority.

In City Council,
November 13, 1978

11/13/78
-Placed on File-