



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

831 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139  
TEL (617) 349-6161

## RENT CONTROL BOARD

TERRENCE P. MORRIS,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## MEMORANDUM

To: Robert Healy, City Manager  
From: Terrence Morris, Executive Director CRCB  
Re: Council Order #8 dated 2/8/93  
Date: February 25, 1993

When John Natale contacted me about the remark shortly after the Board meeting, I advised him to write to Mr. Jacks for clarification, before taking any further action. Apparently due to an irregular schedule, Mr. Jacks did not receive the letter, which had been left at the Rent Board, in a timely manner. When the response was not forthcoming for reasons unknown to Mr. Natale, the matter unfortunately escalated to its current posture.

Attached you will find a copy of Mr. Jacks' response to Mr. Natale's letter. After having met with both the Chair, Florrie Darwin, and Mr. Jacks to discuss the matter, I accept without reservation Mr. Jacks' explanation of his remarks. That explanation is simply that the statement was misconstrued. Contrary to the manner in which it was received, the statement was intended to acknowledge what Mr. Jacks believes he has often heard while serving on the Board, i.e., some owners see themselves in "desperate" circumstances when trying to balance their budgets.

The inference drawn from this statement was that Mr. Jacks was somehow suggesting that owners, in their "desperation" would circumvent the law to stay solvent. Mr. Jacks unequivocally disavows such suggestion. The context was even more highly charged because the subject matter dealt with lead paint and children. Emotions were further strained because of a legitimate difference of opinion over the size of the recommended abatement for this condition.

While differences remain, I believe that Mr. Jacks response should put this controversy to rest.

cc: Board members

**Joshua Jacks**  
45 River Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617-492-3348

February 18, 1993

John F. Natale  
SPOA Member  
92-4th St.  
Cambridge, MA 02141

Dear Mr. Natale,

I received your letter dated January 27 at the time of the February 10 rent control hearings.

My impression, based largely on testimony at public policy hearings, especially those related to the general adjustment, was that many landlords do feel themselves to be quite desperate. The comment you spoke of was meant to acknowledge that perception on the part of many landlords. I think you will find, if you review the records of the general adjustment hearings, that at least some landlords do see themselves as being in desperate circumstances. So, though you do not feel desperate, it may be worth our while to acknowledge that others may. Unfortunately, some of those landlords also attribute their difficulties to the system of rent control in Cambridge. With this, I do not agree. The landlord in the case you refer to made no objection to my statement, though he certainly had ample opportunity to speak. Thankfully, Chairperson Florrie Darwin always makes sure of that.

You describe my and Tim Connor's records as "an unblemished record of anti-owner votes." You ignore the countless rent increases Mr. Connor and I have voted for and the certificates of eviction that we have voted in favor of.

Sincerely,



Joshua Jacks

cc: Terry Morris



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 349-4300  
FAX. 349-4307

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
ROBERT W. HEALY  
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI  
Deputy City Manager

March 1, 1993

To The Honorable, The City Council:

With reference to Awaiting Report Item No. 29, regarding an investigation of a letter from John Natale relative to a comment by a Member of the Rent Control Board, please find attached a response from Terrence Morris, Executive Director of the Rent Control Board.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mev  
attachment

Consent Agenda # 16

S-105

Awaiting Report Item Number 29 regarding  
an investigation of a letter from John  
Natale relative to a comment by a member  
of the Rent Control Board.

See Order # 22 of  
2/8/93

In City Council,

March 1, 1993

Placed on file