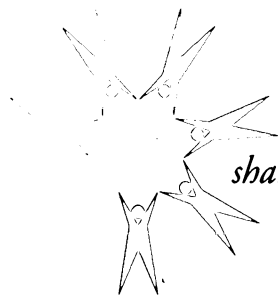


Department of Human Service Programs



sharing resources...building community

Jill Herold
Assistant City Manager

Ellen Semoroff
Deputy Director

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services

SUBJECT: Council Orders #16, dated 6/22/00
#17, dated 6/22/00
#18, dated 6/22/00
#19, dated 6/22/00
#44, dated 8/7/00
Mediation and Negotiation Services

Childcare

Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Community and Youth

Community
Learning Center

Coordinating Council for
Children, Youth and Families
(Kids' Council)

Council on Aging;
Elderly Services

Low Income
Fuel Assistance

Multi-Service Center;
Homeless Services

Office of Workforce
Development

Planning & Development

Recreation

DATE: August 29, 2000

Mediation and negotiation resources available to tenants and landlords in Cambridge include the following:

- The Community Development Department has a contract with Just-A-Start in the amount of \$62,400 for the Mediation for Results program, which offers landlord-tenant mediation as well as assistance for public disputes and small business matters. Generally, the parties to the mediations are not charged a fee.
- The Cambridge Dispute Settlement Center offers mediation on a variety of issues, including tenant/landlord disputes, on a sliding scale fee basis. Fees range from \$25 to \$150 per session, depending upon individual income. Fees may be reduced or waived depending on particular financial situations. No fees are charged for cases referred through the Cambridge District Court.
- Several Multi-Service Center staff, including those with multilingual capabilities, have been trained in mediation by the Cambridge Dispute Settlement Center. Often staff are called upon to negotiate informally with landlords to accept or maintain specific tenants in housing, or to negotiate conditions of tenancy such as rent level, lease or tenant at will agreements and resolution of outstanding problems. No fees are charged for these services. Historically it has been a strength



of the Multi-Service Center that while staff clearly are acting on behalf of individual tenants, landlords are often willing to accept MSC involvement. Many staff have long-standing good relationships with landlords through successful housing placements, as well as instances of problem resolution. That staff do not involve themselves in tenant organization or legal matters *per se* is helpful in maintaining an effective role. The Department of Human Service Programs has contracts with the Community Legal Services and Counseling Center (\$20,000) and with CASLS (\$50,000) to provide housing-related legal assistance to income-eligible individuals when necessary.

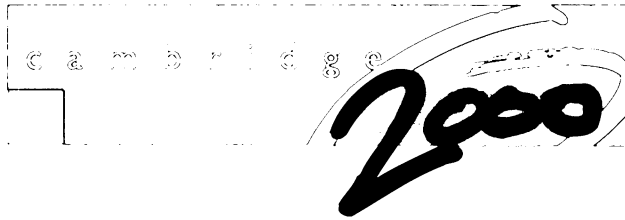
The status of discussions on several specific landlord/tenant matters is as follows:

Council Orders #44 (August 3) and #19 (June 19) – 65, 65A, 65B and 71 Dana Street-Multi-Service Center staff have been in communication with Jane Rich, chair of the tenants' association at this address, another tenant, the Mediation for Results program at Just-A-Start and the tenants' legal representative at Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services. Dual concerns have involved the amount of the rent increases and the one-year term of the leases the owners have offered. Ms. Rich indicated that she would contact the MSC staff again once the tenants' association had met again. A representative of Mediation for Results has initiated a discussion with the landlord on increasing the lease term to two or three years at the proposed rent, with possibly a small increase in year three. The landlord, who is currently away, prefers that his attorney and the CASLS attorney for the tenants' association, also away till early September, discuss the issue of lease term once all parties are available. The eviction proceedings are scheduled for court in mid-September.

Council Order #17 (June 19) – 7 Craigie Circle-Multi-Service Center staff have been involved in working with the landlord to reduce the proposed rents and to obtain Cambridge Housing Authority agreement to new rents under the Section 8 program. CASLS has been involved in negotiating a multi-year lease with the landlord for the Craigie units. Agreement has been reached between the landlord, the CHA and one of the tenants in question, pending resolution of a related legal matter that will be resolved upon the return of the CASLS attorney. The Multi-Service Center will also supply some supplementary funds associated with initiation of the new lease. The situation is unresolved for a second tenant because of her disagreement with CHA over the appropriate apartment size.

Council Order #16 (June 19) – 124 Oxford Street – Multi-Service Center staff have been in contact with a number of the tenants and with Mediation for Results staff who believe that the landlord has offered adequate compensation to tenants displaced by the fire. Two of the tenants have accepted financial settlements and have chosen to relocate permanently to other housing.

I will keep you apprised of future developments as they occur in each of the specific cases.



4.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

September 11, 2000

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 00-51, regarding a report on what steps have been taken to facilitate negotiations and settlement of the landlord/tenants dispute at 65, 65a, 65b and 71 Dana Street, received from Assistant City Manager for Human Services Jill Herold.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachments



2000 Things to Do in 2000

Consent Agenda #4

Relative to AW Rpt. #00-51,
regarding a report on what steps have
been taken to facilitate negotiations
and settlement of the landlord/tenants
dispute at 65, 65a, 65b and 71 Dana
Street.

In City Council September 11, 2000

PLACED ON FILE