

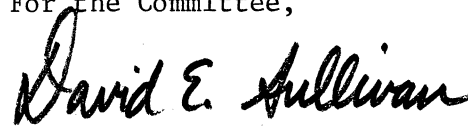
At this time Councillor Vellucci pointed out to those present, several cases in which, a fire occurred involving children living in substandard buildings.

The Committee also heard from Mr. William Noble, Robert Levite, Wanda Katz, and Doug Thayer, all of whom expressed varying points of concern relative to the program.

At this time Councillor David Sullivan requested that the city-wide inspection program be postponed until such time as a comprehensive program for assistance for tenants and property owners can be established and reviewed by this committee. This was agreed by both Mr. Rossi and Mr. Cellucci.

The hearing was adjoured at 6:56 PM.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David E. Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "S".

Councillor David E. Sullivan
Chairman

DES/smc

electrical malfunction or in a "no heat" situation. He further stated that only two such orders have been issued, one involving eight units and a second involving four units.

At this time Councillor David Sullivan stated that he believed that the first priority in any "no heat" call should be getting the heat back on rather than attempting to vacate a unit. He further stated that "we concede defeat if we vacate rental units."

He further stated that the City Solicitor's office should be requested to seek injunctions to get needed repairs done while allowing tenants to remain in the building.

At this time Councillor Vellucci questioned what would happen if an inspection is made in which it is determined that major repairs are required but the property owner has no financial resources from which to draw.

Mr. Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager, responded by stating that Commissioner Cellucci, Michael Rosenberg of the Community Development Department, Daniel Wuenschel of the Housing Authority, Roger Mervis of the Rent Control Board, and himself have held several meetings in an effort to address that very point. He further stated that the city should have in place a mechanism by which financial assistance is offered at possibly a federally subsidized rate to the property owner who can not seek or afford conventional financing. He further stated that within the next six months this group hopes to have such a proposal prepared and presented to the Commonwealth.

In response to questioning by Councillor David Sullivan, Mr. Daniel Wuenschel stated that the Housing Authority could and would be willing to serve as a resource in a couple of ways in terms of both temporary and/or permanent housing facilities as well as through housing subsidies. He further outlined to the committee his prior experience with a similar code enforcement program in Philadelphia. He stated that such a program must be placed in such a way so as not to have people displaced without either financial assistance and/or relocation facilities available. Furthermore, he stated that financial subsidies would allow for minimum relocation.

At this time the committee heard from Mr. Robert Irvin, a Harvard Law student, who outlined some of the economic problems resulting in the vacate order issued at 991 Massachusetts Avenue, not the least of which he said would result in an \$80.00 per month increase per apartment once the repairs are completed.

At this time in response to questions from Councillor David Sullivan, Roger Mervis, Executive Director of the Rent Control Board, stated that although the Rent Control Board has no policy on the program yet, the Board does generally tend to follow the lead of Commissioner Cellucci regarding such hazardous situations. He further praised the level of cooperation he has received from Mr. Cellucci's department and also the other members of the group working on this program. In further response to Councillor David Sullivan, Mr. Mervis stated that he feels there can be competing statutory responsibilities between the Rent Control Board and its purpose and that of the Health and Sanitary Codes.

City of Cambridge

In City Council March 19, 1984

The Committee on Rent Control conducted a public hearing on Wednesday, March 14, 1984 beginning at 5:30 PM in the Ackermann Room at City Hall. The purpose of the hearing was to discuss the city-wide inspection program by the city's Inspectional Services Department.

Councillor David E. Sullivan, Chairman of the Committee, opened the meeting by stating that his concern was with the city-wide inspection program as it relates to rent controlled housing. He further stated his concern for the potential of this program to displace many Cambridge residents due to issuance of "vacate orders" and to major repairs ultimately mandated by these inspections. At this time Councillor David Sullivan requested Joseph Cellucci, Inspectional Services Commissioner, to outline the basis for the program and the inspection criteria.

Commissioner Cellucci responded by stating that the city-wide program was actually mandated in 1975 with the adoption of the state Building Code, however it had not been done. He further stated his department will be looking to determine if the minimum life safety and sanitary standards for multi-family dwellings units exists. This would include checking for smoke detectors, building structure, plumbing and electrical works. Commissioner Cellucci further stated that it was not his intent to displace people and create vacancies, but to ensure safe and decent housing throughout the city.

Councillor David Sullivan questioned the number of units involved as well as the process of the actual inspections. Commissioner Cellucci responded by stating that approximately 2800 to 3000 buildings are involved. He further stated that it was his intention to conduct these inspections two days a week and it will be done by street in alphabetical order.

In response to a question by Councillor David Sullivan, Commissioner Cellucci stated that only two such inspections have been done based on complaints received in his office; specifically at property located at 69 Harvey Street and 991 Massachusetts Avenue. In further response to the Councillor's questioning, Commissioner Cellucci stated that once violations were identified, the appropriate law would be cited to the property owner with a specified time for said violations to be corrected. He further stated that depending on the severity of the violation would depend on the time in which the property owner would be given to repair same. An immediate life threatening situation he said, would obviously require immediate action.

In response to a question by Councillor David Sullivan regarding the exact circumstances under which a vacate order would be issued, Commissioner Cellucci stated that one would be issued only if a public safety threat existed such as an

REPORT

Committee on Rent Control
Re: City-wide inspection program by the
City's Inspectional Services Department.

In City Council,

March 19, 1984

3/19/84

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