



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS
CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

September 12, 1977

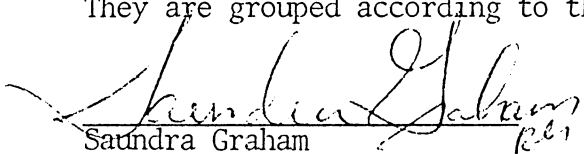
Committee Progress Report

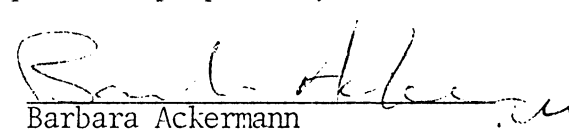
Joint Committee on Condominiums, Rent Control and Housing Committees

The Honorable, The City Council:

Enclosed for your consideration is a progress report on the various proposals offered at the July 13, 1977 joint meeting on condominiums of the Committees on Rent Control and Housing.

They are grouped according to the disposition proposed by the chair.


Sandra Graham
Chairperson
Housing Committee


Barbara Ackermann
Chairperson
Rent Control Committee

1. The Rent Control Board should send out an informational notice informing tenants of their rights concerning the condominium process.
2. Prepare an informational booklet on condominiums which would be helpful to prospective purchasers.
3. An amendment was proposed to Regulation Series #50 of the Rent Control Board. (A copy of this proposal is attached.)

PROPOSED DISPOSITION:

- (1) A similar informational notice was requested by the City Council in May. That it has not gone out yet is inexcusable. It has been prepared and I am told it should go out this week.
- (2) Ken Griffin, with the Attorney General and his Consumer Protection Division, and the Justices of the Third District Court, is working on such a booklet for the use of landlords, prospective buyers, and tenants.
- (3) The attached amendment should be endorsed by the City Council and forwarded to the Rent Control Board.

4. The new owner of a condominium should not be able to evict a tenant against the tenant's wishes.
5. Restrict condominiums to newly constructed buildings and to vacant units.
6. If a tenant is to be evicted for condominium conversion, he/she should first be offered an alternative unit which the tenant deems satisfactory.
7. We should investigate the applicability of the N.Y. condominium law to see if perhaps 10%-35% of the units in a building being converted to condominiums should be retained for elderly tenants already living there.
8. Check to see if there is anything in the Rent Control legislation which might be reinterpreted in such a way as to alleviate the eviction problems arising from condominium conversions.
9. Tenants who are evicted because of condominium conversion should have their moving expenses paid for by a fee which is assigned to the price of the condominium.

10. The city should investigate the legality of some of the letters of eviction which have been sent out to tenants.
11. Investigate to see if all older buildings are in fact capable of being converted to condominiums.
12. Be careful to insure that the problems of nonelderly residents as well as elderly resident are given due consideration.

PROPOSED DISPOSITION:

John Henn, the attorney appointed by the City Manager, is preparing written alternative proposals for the Council on these suggestions. His report should be ready by September 22.

13. The city of Cambridge should buy units occupied by the elderly in lieu of constructing more elderly housing.
14. The Cambridge Housing Authority should consider scattered site purchases to protect the elderly from conversion problems.

PROPOSED DISPOSITION:

These proposals should be discussed, if the Council wishes, with the Housing Authority and representatives of the Community Development Department.

15. The city should make sure that the Rent Board is functioning effectively.
16. The Rent Board should insure that landlords are properly compensated for all their expenses through adequate rents.

PROPOSED DISPOSITION:

The Council has a Task Force investigating these matters, among others. The preliminary report will be ready the middle of October.

17. The city should be more diligent in its code enforcement.

PROPOSED DISPOSITION:

Refer to City Manager for comment and action.

18. Replace the Rent Control Board with a Rent Grievance Board.
19. The Board of Assessors should not upwardly revalue property after improvements are made.
20. The City Council should establish a sub-committee whose sole purpose would be to view the proceedings of the Rent Board and then report back to the City Council.
21. The city should establish a committee of tenants, landlords, and bankers to work on the issue of condominiums
22. Do nothing to limit the condominium conversion process.

PROPOSED DISPOSITION:

No recommendation.

Proposed amendment to the Regulations of the Cambridge Rent Control Board (Regulation Series No. 50):

Every notice to quit, notice terminating a tenancy, or similar notice by a landlord to a tenant in possession of a controlled rental unit shall contain the following language in conspicuous type and in a conspicuous place:

"IMPORTANT NOTICE OF YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

THIS LETTER DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU MUST MOVE OUT OF YOUR APARTMENT. UNDER THE LAW, THE LANDLORD CANNOT FORCE YOU TO MOVE OUT UNTIL BOTH THE RENT CONTROL BOARD AND A COURT DECIDE THAT HE HAS THE RIGHT TO DO SO. YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO TELL YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY AT THAT TIME.

For more information, contact the Cambridge Rent Control Board, 661-0400. If you need a lawyer and cannot afford one, call Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services, 492-5520, or the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, 495-4408."

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DISCUSSION

The purpose of the proposed regulation is to notify tenants effectively of their legal rights and of the means for enforcing them, at a time when it is meaningful to do so. The Boston Rent Board already has a similar regulation.

The authority for this regulation is Acts of 1976, ch. 36, § 5(c), (e), which authorizes the Board to promulgate regulations to carry out the Cambridge Rent Control Act. Violation of the regulation would be a crime under Section 12(c) of the Act if willfull, and would require denial of the Certificate of Eviction under Regulation 50-04.

David E. Sullivan

Comm. from Saundra Graham, Chairperson, Housing Committee and Barbara Ackermann, Chairperson, Rent Control Committee transmitting the Committee Progress Report of the Joint Committee on Condominiums, Rent Control and Housing Committees.

In City Council,
Sept. 19, 1977

*Placed on File -
Copy to King 10/10*

Copy sent 9/20/77 CS