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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

February 12, 1990

Mr. Robert Healy
City Manager
Cambridge City Hall
785 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

RE: City Council Order for a Report on Cambridge Housing Authority's
Handicapped Accessibility Study of Federally Assisted Developments

Dear Mr. Healy:

This letter serves to respond to the above mentioned City Council Order, dated January 29, 1990. It is my understanding that this Order was issued to address concerns raised by residents of the Cambridge Housing Authority's John F. Kennedy Apartments at 55 Essex Street who were worried that improvements aimed at increasing handicapped access would affect CHA's response to the development's daily maintenance demands.

As background, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued new, more expanded regulations (to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended) in June 1988 which prohibits discrimination against individuals with physical or mental handicaps. These regulations require that the CHA survey all its federal housing stock and prepare a detailed plan to ensure that a sufficient number of apartments and all common area are accessible to people in wheelchairs. It was on the basis of these requirements that CHA (with assistance from Gail Enman, Director of the Cambridge Commission on Handicapped Persons) hired Epp Associates of Boston, MA to conduct a survey of our federal developments and to prepare a report detailing the type of necessary improvements and the associated costs.

Last October, we began this effort by meeting with residents at each federal development to explain HUD's requirements and the survey process. The survey of common facilities (entries, community rooms, laundry rooms, elevators, access to trash disposal, and grounds and parking areas) was recently completed, and meetings with the residents were again held to present Epp's findings, recommendations, and cost estimates. The cost estimates for the required changes to the common areas at Kennedy Apartments totalled \$77,000.

We mentioned at the meeting with Kennedy residents that CHA would be requesting modernization funds in our FY 1990 funding application to implement many of the improvements recommended by Epp Associates for

Healy/Wuenschel
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upgrading handicapped accessibility. We stressed, however, that these improvements would be contingent upon the receipt of federal modernization funds, and would not be implemented at the expense of other needed improvements which affect the health and welfare of all tenants. The survey and any resulting modernization plans will not affect CHA's response to the daily demands for maintenance and repairs at Kennedy or at any CHA developments.

Please do not hesitate to call me at 864-3020 if you should have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Wuenschel
Executive Director



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

February 26, 1990

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 21, relative to the John F. Kennedy Apartments at 55 Essex Street, attached please find a response from Daniel J. Wuenschel, Executive Director of the Cambridge Housing Authority.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
enclosure

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Agenda # 3

S-194A

Awaiting Report Item Number 21,
regarding the John F. Kennedy
Apartments at 55 Essex Street.

In City Council,

February 26, 1990

Placed on file