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CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

July 5, 1985

Cambridge City Council
City Council Office
795 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge, Ma. 02139

Dear City Councilors:

Christianity know no moral principle more fundamental than the dignity of the human person. Thus, the Church supports all endeavors to protect and enhance human life. Of critical importance at the present time is the endeavor to shelter the homeless. For without shelter, we cannot live.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston supports the proposal of Shelter, Inc. to renovate the Prospect St. Congregational Church in Cambridge to provide supervised transitional shelter to 20 homeless persons. We applaud the true Christian spirit shown by the congregation in choosing to sell their building to Shelter, Inc., at below market price, in order to heed Our Lord's message that, when we shelter the stranger in our midst, we shelter the Lord.

The Shelter, Inc. proposal is innovative. Its program goes beyond the simple charity of a "roof over one's head" and a decent meal for a few days by providing counseling and supervision for up to ninety days so that its homeless guests can break the cycle of homeless wandering and become productive members of the community.

Moreover, Shelter, Inc.'s proposed renovations will provide spacious individual rooms and ample common space so as to give concrete expression to the innate human dignity of its guests. This creative approach, both in programming and renovations, will become models for others to imitate as we strive for effective love of neighbor in the contemporary crisis of homelessness.

It is understandable that some might be apprehensive about this shelter. However, Shelter, Inc. has a reputable history of not only serving the homeless but also being sensitive to the needs and concerns of the neighborhood. In fact, Shelter, Inc. solicits and seeks the participation of the neighborhood in order to better serve its homeless guests, as well as the larger community.

Thus, we urge all of you--recognizing the desperate need of our homeless brothers and sisters, the enormous difficulty of locating a suitable and affordable site in Cambridge, and the proven integrity and commitment of Shelter, Inc.--to do all that you can to support this necessary and worthwhile proposal.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Francis X. Irwin
Rev. Francis X. Irwin
Secretary of Social Services

17.

S-574

Comm. from the Reverend Francis X. Irwin,
Secretary of Social Services for the Boston
Archdiocese in support of Shelter, Inc.'s
efforts to use the Prospect Street Church as
a shelter facility.

In City Council,

August 5, 1985

- Placed on File -