



# City of Cambridge

2.

IN CITY COUNCIL

September 28, 1998

COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU  
COUNCILLOR DAVIS  
COUNCILLOR BORN  
VICE MAYOR GALLUCCIO  
COUNCILLOR RUSSELL  
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN  
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Assistant City Manager for Community Development and the Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs to report back to the City Council as to what incentives not available in Cambridge that other Massachusetts and Rhode Island communities offer to private owners who are providing affordable housing in the areas of real estate taxes, reduced fees for rubbish pickup, as set forth in the attached letter. Please contact the letter writer for any other specific examples.

In City Council September 28, 1998.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury  
City Clerk

**Keen Development Corporation**

Two University Road  
P.O. Box 2589  
Cambridge, MA 02238-2589

#2

Telephone: (617) 661-9100  
Facsimile: (617) 547-6201

**MEMORANDUM**



**To:** Cambridge City Council  
**From:** Bob Kuehn/ KDC  
**Re:** Affordable Housing  
**Date:** July 30, 1998

My company recently received a copy of the attached City Council resolution. This resolution encouraged private property owners to lease apartments through the Cambridge Housing Authority to low and moderate income residents under the federal Section 8 or state MRVP programs for rental assistance. Our company does not need to be prompted since we already participate in these programs at Chapman Arms in Harvard Square and Kennedy Lofts in Cambridgeport as well as at 929 House, which our affiliate manages for the McNeil Group.

Indeed, our company has been committed throughout its history to providing attractive and affordable housing, often through the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. At last count, we developed or now manage mixed-income housing in 25 communities across the Commonwealth and in Rhode Island. Notwithstanding the Council's worthy proclamation, I have to tell you that Cambridge is far and away the least supportive environment in which we have worked. A sampling of the problems encountered in the City are as follows:

- (1) In most communities, public funding is extended to assist in achieving affordable housing objectives. Cambridge has never invested a public nickel in our private endeavors to support affordable opportunities in the City and even charges us a "reverse linkage fee" at Chapman Arms for the privilege of providing housing assistance.
- (2) In most communities, reasonable real estate taxes are assessed in light of the public purposes being served. In Cambridge, we have had to appeal our taxes every year since the City Assessors refuse to recognize the unique nature of regulated housing and attempt to tax us at full market value.
- (3) In most communities, basic municipal services are provided as a matter of course. In Cambridge, the sewer systems flow in the wrong directions during heavy rains, causing extensive disruption to our residents and properties; we have incurred over \$1.5 million in damages at Kennedy Lofts alone. Other communities also pick up the trash for single family homeowners and rental residents alike, but Cambridge requires private collection for multifamily housing.

**Re: Affordable Housing**

July 30, 1998

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I could go on, but I think the above examples provide the flavor. The provision of affordable housing requires a public/private partnership to support this important objective, especially in light of market constraints. In Cambridge, public support is woefully lacking in the equation, which will continue to limit the availability of affordable opportunities. Not only are positive incentives lacking in the City, but an attitude also prevails which creates significant disincentives to achieve the purposes.

I respectfully suggest that the City Council draft another proclamation to its City Departments, requesting that they re-evaluate their policies which now negatively impact on the climate of cooperation for affordable housing in the City.



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Consent Order #2

CM434

Councillors Triantafillou and Davis  
re: incentives not available in Cambridge  
other communities offer to private owners  
who are providing affordable housing in  
the areas of real estate taxes and reduced  
fees for rubbish pick up.

In City Council September 28, 1998

**ORDER ADOPTED**