



City of Cambridge

Department of Human Service Programs

51 Inman Street Cambridge Massachusetts 02139 498-9076

To Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Date: April 1, 1983

From Jill Herold *J.H.*
Asst. City Manager for

Ref:

Subject Human Services.

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 14 of 12/20/82, I am forwarding minutes of a Task Force meeting held on February 11, 1983 to assess the needs of homeless individuals and families in the City of Cambridge and to detail current and projected services established on their behalf. The Task Force meeting also served as one of the twenty five meetings convened state-wide by the Governor's Advisory Committee on Homelessness and the Governor's Office of Human Resources. Mrs. Kitty Dukakis, co-chairperson of the statewide Advisory Committee attended the Task Force meeting.

Also attached for your information are materials prepared for distribution at the Task Force meeting which describe both longstanding resources to the homeless population in Cambridge, some new efforts initiated this winter, and indicators of the ongoing need.

In more recent developments, the Salvation Army Open House, began operations in Central Square on March 7, and is open each Monday and Friday from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. The Open House has been a joint effort of the Salvation Army which has provided space, food and other supplies; the Department of Human Services which has provided intermediate staffing and volunteer coordination; and Cambridge Community Services which has provided technical assistance in planning and fundraising. The Open House offers a hot meal, showers, information and referral particularly around housing, and some opportunities for socialization. Forty-five to fifty individuals and some families now use the center each day it is open.

The University Lutheran Church Shelter continues to serve its full capacity of 20 clients each night. This temporary shelter is scheduled to close April 17, 1983.

Robert W. Healy

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April 1, 1983

Shelter, Inc. is also continuing its search for a suitable facility for an additional shelter for 20 - 30 homeless clients.

Although the approach of warmer weather will bring some limited relief to homeless people, it is our intention to continue service development, particularly in the area of hunger needs, and to maintain the planning and development activities necessary to be prepared for next winter.

MINUTES

Hearing on the Homeless
held at
the Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School
February 11, 1983

Agencies represented: See attached listing

The hearing was called to order by Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager of Human Services in Cambridge. Opening remarks were made by Mrs. Dukakis who spoke of her role as liaison between the Task Force and the Governor's Office and of the need to "move cautiously" in recognizing the existing needs in each community.

Mayor Alfred Vellucci of Cambridge followed with remarks on the purpose of the hearing. He applauded existing efforts, but emphasized the need for additional housing for the homeless. Noting the absence of school officials, the Mayor expressed hope that they would be invited to the next meeting.

Echoing Mayor Vellucci's sentiments, Mayor Eugence Brune of Somerville added that government funding is needed to secure additional housing. He further suggested that we look into changing relevant laws and regulations and rethink our current methods and uses of monies. Ms. Herold then invited those agencies who provide housing to address the group and describe the services and programs they offer and the need as they perceive it.

Carolyn Bedell of CASPAR spoke first and gave a brief background on the Emergency Service Center. Constantly overpopulated, they provide up to 50 beds for alcoholics and are reimbursed for 30 people by the Department of Public Health, Alcohol Division. In addition, they receive donations of food and bread. But as Ms. Bedell explained, maintaining funding is an on-going problem. As a result, they are in need of additional funding and/or help in raising money and securing food. When asked what the city could do to help, Ms. Bedell replied, "a short term solution would be another trailer on the present site; long term, we would like a permanent, fixed shelter."

Addressing the group next was Isabella Hinds, Deputy Director of Human Services in Cambridge. She provided a brief history on Shelter, Inc. Currently, it serves anyone over 18 in an emergency situation and unable to afford private shelter, including families, and has a 20 bed capacity. Stay is limited to three nights. They recently acquired space at the YWCA for a family unit and are searching for a site in the Cambridge/Somerville area for a shelter to house 20-30 individuals. Ms. Hinds reported that the search has been going on for several months. She explained that Shelter has encountered problems concerning density and zoning in both cities and strongly urged anyone who might know of a site available in the area to contact David Whittey, the Director of Shelter, immediately. Emphasizing the urgency of their quest, Ms Hinds added, "if a place is not found shortly, they may be forced to look in another community.

This generated some discussion on possible sites. One suggestion made was to house the facility in one of the buildings slated to be torn down in Washington Elms. Dan Weunshel, Director of the Cambridge Housing Authority, voiced objection to this proposal, questioning the use of public housing to provide

shelter for those with problems that caused their homelessness, i.e., alcoholics.

He explained that CHA's position is that public housing is not always housing of last resort and that the agency has a responsibility to its tenants to make sure it doesn't become that. Mr. Weunshel suggested that, instead, we define homelessness and examine its causes as well, such as the need for housing production and other subsidies. He also informed the group of CHA's efforts to address areas of homelessness. Currently, they are working on a project to secure housing for a program for high school mothers and also are looking into securing 707 funds for a non-profit model lodging house. However, Mr. Weunshel expressed little optimism that the numbers on the CHA waiting list would be impacted within the next year.

In response to Mr. Weunshel's remarks, Nancy Kaufman from the Governor's Office of Human Resources provided the group with the definition of the homeless developed by the United Community Planning Corporation. They define the homeless as persons or families who on any given day do not have families, friends, or sufficient funds to provide for their elementary needs. Ms. Kaufman went on to state that various groups see the homeless differently. To the media, they are the chronic wanderers with problems; to the government, they are a problem that agencies have failed to solve and which the government needs to address; and to the shelter providers, they are those who make use of their facilities.

"The composition of the homeless is also changing" remarked Ms. Hinds. "At the Department of Human Services we are seeing people who use to be able to manage. They had pick up jobs, i.e., a bus boy at McDonalds. They need a room, not a community residence." She also reported concerns that Haitian, Hispanic, and Portuguese families are often reluctant to go to shelters. In order for these groups to be better served, cultural as well as linguistic barriers need to be addressed.

Following Ms. Hind's comments, Ms. Herold invited other agencies which see people in need of housing, but do not provide housing to address the group.

First to speak was Michael Granzen of the Harvard Square Church Project. He reported that the Churches are seeing an increasing number of people in search of a warm place and food, for whom the only alternative appears to be sleeping in subways. Consequently, the University Lutheran Church is opening up its basement for emergency shelter for 15-20 people. He estimated the cost at \$1200, adding that donations of food would be welcomed.

Phyllis Simpkins, Director of Cambridge Community Services, addressed the group next, providing a brief background on the agency. Funded by United Way to do planning, CCS is currently working on establishing a day Drop-in Center at the Salvation Army for the homeless. The idea for this project arose from concerned agencies and has been developed, in part, through ideas gathered in direct meetings with the homeless in Harvard and Central Squares. Ms. Simpkins stated that a most crucial element that is needed to make the project a success is the support and participation of other agencies in providing and coordinating ancillary services, i.e., employment counseling, housing assistance as part of the Center. She invited interested agencies to attend a meeting on Tuesday, February 15 at 10:00 a.m. at CCS.

Concurring with the observations made by Ms. Hinds concerning the changing composition of the homeless, Ginny Winters of the Department of Human Services in Somerville remarked that permanent solutions to the housing problem are needed. Currently, the homeless get caught in a shuffle between Housing Agencies which say they are a social service problem and Social Service Agencies which say they are a housing problem. She suggested that EOCD look at their policies regarding admission to the public housing program and 707 and that a coalition of private and public non-profit, family oriented agencies be formed to work on long term solutions.

Catherine Weisbrod of Cambridge Family Services spoke next describing the dilemma her agency faces in trying to provide assistance to the homeless. They have found that because the homeless require intervention on a concrete level in terms of housing, their other needs and problems often go unattended. Also, they encounter people who have opted for the nomadic life, forming what she termed a "subculture" of the homeless. "These people," she remarked, "do not want nor welcome additional intervention."

The Cambridge Organization of Portuguese Americans (COPA) reported that for their clients, housing itself is the major issue. Victor DoCouto, the Director of COPA, remarked that this problem is compounded by the reluctance on the part of many members of the Portuguese community to accept public housing. They perceive public housing as places where their children would be exposed to behavior they find extremely objectionable and, therefore, do not want anything to do with it. Consequently, many are being forced to double up. It is because of this situation that Mr. DoCouto feels it is important to make a distinction between the homeless and the houseless.

The last agency to be heard from was the Committee of Elders. Ed Cyr, its Director, echoed sentiments expressed earlier by Ginny Winters. "The problem," he stated, "is that no one follows an individual case all the way through the system. Consequently, people are bounced from one place to another." He described the current situation of the homeless as a "Catch 22", adding that much of the fault lies with us. "We [social service providers] have set up all these 'Catch 22s' and the homeless are made to suffer as a result."

Having heard the various presentations, Ms. Kaufman remarked that there is always a local flavor to the problem, necessitating a local solution. She noted that unlike other cities, Cambridge does not have a huge problem with the deinstitutionalized or as Mrs. Dukakis stated, "other communities had a more dramatic presentation of the deinstitutionalized." Alan Seigel of Cambridge City Hospital attributed this to the fact that our agencies work closely together in this community to address this problem, but remarked that it still needed our continuing attention.

The hearing was brought to a close by Ms. Herold. She remarked that unlike many of the other hearings being held state-wide in which discussion centered around what programs to initiate, ours concerned what direction to take with programs already established. She cautioned the group not to interpret this to mean that our need is not great. "Today's presentations clearly demonstrated that our need is great, if not greater than others," she remarked. Ms. Herold then suggested three ways by which those present could continue ongoing participation in this effort.

- 1) Participation in CCS' effort to establish a Day Drop-in Center for the homeless. The date and time of the next scheduled meeting was repeated.
- 2) Collaboration with the Emergency Services Coordinator, soon to be hired by the Cambridge Dept. of Human Services, in the development of coordination and a resource sharing mechanism among emergency service providers.
- 3) Identification of discretionary monies available in each agency and formulation of a plan that would maximize use of these dollars towards the homeless effort.

Final remarks were made by Mayor Brune. He emphasized the need for continued action and participation by those in attendance, commenting that "we're on the right track."

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Address</u>
Mary Babic	David Sullivan's Office	City Hall, Camb.
Christine Harper-Baker	Community Action Agency of Somerville	265 Washington St., Som.
Edward J. Billo	Dept. of Elder Affairs	38 Chauncy St., Boston
Patricia Blackburn	Som. Council on Aging	1 Davis Sq., Som.
Melvin H. Chalfan	Camb. Dept. Health and Hospitals	1493 Cambridge St., Camb.
Kate Cloud	Som. Council for Children	1 Summer St., Som.
Thomas J. Cobbins	Som. Housing Authority	30 Memorial Rd., Som.
Rev. Richard J. Craig	Camb/Som. Catholic Charities	270 Washington St., Som.
Ed Cyr	Camb. Comm. of Elders	15 Pearl St., Camb.
Victor DoCouto	Camb..Org. of Portuguese Americans	1046 Cambridge St., Camb.
Kevin J. Donnelly	Camb. Public Library	45 Pearl St., Camb.
Mrs. Kitty Dukakis	The Governor's Office of Human Resources	The State House, Boston
Lulu Gorgievski	Local Officials Human Service Council	98 Cambridge St., Camb.
Michael Granzen	Harvard Divinity School	Francis Ave., Camb.
Richard Griffin	Camb. Council on Aging	51 Inman St., Camb.
Audrey Haas	Som/Camb. Elder Services	1 Davis Sq., Som.
Michael Haran	CASCAP, Inc.	186 Hampshire St., Camb.
Valerie Headley	Dept. of Human Services	51 Inman St., Camb.
Jill Herold	Dept. of Human Services	51 Inman St., Camb.
Isabella Hinds	Dept. of Human Services	51 Inman St., Camb.
Chris T. Holland	Wellmet Project	99 Bishop Allen Dr., Camb.
Howard Horton	City of Somerville	City Hall, Som.
Dorothea Johnston	Elderly Housing Assistance Prog.	15 Pearl St., Camb.
Nancy Kaufman	The Governor's Office of Human Resources	The State House, Boston

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Address</u>
Mardi Rose	C.L.O.E.	99 Bishop Allen Dr., Camb.
Alan Seigel	Camb. City Hospital	1493 Cambridge St., Camb.
Ruth Shea	Elderly Housing Assistance Prog.	15 Pearl St., Camb.
Phyllis Simpkins	C.C.S.	99 Bishop Allen Dr., Camb.
Lisa Sloane	E.C.H.O.	186 Hampshire St., Camb.
Mary Jane Treadwell	Som. Council on Aging	1 Davis Sq., Som.
Hilma Unterberger	Camb/Som. Mental Health and Retardation Center	12 Maple Ave., Camb.
Pam Varley	Camb. Chronicle	678 Mass. Ave., Camb.
Gary Weiland		58 Fayette St., Camb.
Catherine Weisbrod	Camb. Family and Children's Services	99 Bishop Allen Dr., Camb.
Christina Wolfe	Cambridgeport Problem Center	1 West St., Camb.
Dan Wuenschel	Camb. Housing Authority	270 Green St., Camb.

SHELTERS

1. Shelter, Inc.

Contact: Dave Whittey, 547-1885; Anne Carney (case worker), 547-3448

Clients: Anyone over 18 in an emergency situation and unable to afford private shelter, including families; families make up about half the house at any one time. About 1000 people served per year. Takes referrals only, (no drop-ins); may be from Welfare, Salvation Army, Cambridge Hospital, churches, or overflows from Boston shelters and Transition House. Screens out "medical or mental problems beyond us"; alcoholics okay if not intoxicated.

Services: Capacity, 20; has a policy of 3-night limit, but this is flexible. Most families stay about 30 days; some individuals are permitted to do the same, as long as they are seriously looking for long-term housing. Many street people come for a few nights and then bounce around to other shelters and back; are not permitted to stay at length (without interruption) if have chronically homeless life-style.

Open 6 p.m. to 8 a.m.; dinner, breakfast and shower provided. Case workers have daytime office hours and work to help develop long-term housing plan for all clients.

Is always full, but rarely has trouble meeting Cambridge requests; overflow usually occurs only if outside referrals are involved. Although currently averaging 20 turnaways a week. Since December, has been using large dorm area at the YWCA for temporary shelter for families in crisis - 1 family allowed at a time for up to 8 weeks. Is in search of a site in Cambridge for a shelter for individuals.

2. Transition House

Contact: Alice Bell, 354-2676

Clients: Battered women and children (male children up to 12 years only). The only requirement is that the women have no other safe place to go. The majority of women are from outside Cambridge; Cambridge women often call the house and do stay there at times, but for security reasons its location may not be desirable for them. No actual figures are available on the proportions of Cambridge/non-Cambridge women.

Services: Provides shelter for up to 9 women and 14 children for 4-6 weeks each. About 45 women and children sheltered each month; about 100 women referred each month to other shelters or emergency housing. A 24-hour crisis line offers these referrals, as well as referrals to other services such as legal, medical, counseling, welfare. The House also runs support groups for women at the House and other battered women.

Contribution by residents of the house: \$1.25 per person per day for food; \$1.50 per family per day for household expenses. Help with child care provided by House. Tries to help women find housing when they leave the shelter, but finds this an increasing problem.

3. Emergency Service Center

Contact: Terry Rowe, 661-0600

Clients: Alcoholics only; may be intoxicated. Drop-ins as well as referrals from Police Department and social service agencies.

Services: 50 places a night provided on a first-come first-served basis each night. No limit on number of consecutive nights. Services provided through CASPAR.

Turnaways range from 4 to 5 per week.

HALFWAY HOUSES

1. CASPAR

Contact: Carolyn Bedell, 498-1419

3 houses, 48 beds total men only; 1 house, 15 beds, women only. Around-the-clock services provided. There is no limit on stay; average is 3-6 months. Referrals through CASPAR. There is a waiting list.

2. CASCAP

Contact: Michael Haran, 492-5559

1 house in Cambridge and 1 in Somerville; 10 places in each; heavy supervision provided at nighttime, less during the day. In addition, 22 places provided through cooperative apartments in private buildings; some services provided. All clients referred directly from Metropolitan State Hospital or Cambridge Hospital. No limit on stay.

OTHER TEMPORARY LODGINGS

1. YWCA

Contact: Mildred Mackinnon, 491-6050

Rooms: 103 total, 3 guest rooms available for transients on a nightly paying basis of \$22-\$24. If guest for 7 full days can become a member for \$15 and rent is then reduced to \$65/week. 100 rooms for long-term residents, 1 month to two years. Rents are \$45, \$50 and \$57 depending on room - required to pay 2 weeks rent, a \$50 deposit, a \$15 registration fee and \$10 membership fee in advance. Schiff Center is utilizing space for 1 individual for up to 3 weeks. Clients are referred by the agency.

Clients: The YWCA's primary mandate is 18 and over women. Most clients are young, working women, women going through transitions such as divorce, a major move, or other changes in lifestyles, students or on S.S.I.

For transients, i.d. card is required; the person must also have some luggage, not be on a list of women who have caused problems at the Y in the past; and otherwise appear stable. Some agency referrals are accepted. Long-term applicants must go through a screening process.

Usually filled to capacity although last few weeks has been in the 80's. No records kept on numbers turned away.

2. YMCA

Contact: Farris Ajalat, 876-3860

Rooms: 139 rooms total; at least 15 kept open for transients, served on a first-come first-served basis, for a stay of one day to several weeks, \$15 per night and \$5 key deposit. Other rooms for long-term stay, 6 months or more, \$51-60 per week. Must have stayed 2-3 weeks consecutively to be considered. There is always a long waiting list for these rooms. Additionally leaves 4-5 rooms open for influx at night, and has stopped taking reservations in advance.

Clients: Most are from outside Cambridge. Registrant must have 2 i.d. cards, one photo but there is no other strict requirements. Sees a variety of people although, majority are business people, and, during the summer, students.

Is usually filled to capacity; however the last 4 months has had rooms vacant. Does refer overflow to shelters in Cambridge and Boston, to the YMCA in Boston and to Kirkland Inn.

REFERRAL AGENCIES

Department of Social Services

Contact: Carol White, Information and Referral, 661-9390

Clients: Refers about 5 welfare-eligible individuals and families a week for housing. These people have often been living with friends or relatives and can no longer stay; or are new arrivals in Cambridge. A smaller number are victims of evictions, or are "chronic lookers" with some mental health problems.

Services: Refers only to temporary shelters, usually Shelter, Inc., sometimes to Pine St. Inn, New Chardon House for Women in Boston, or Harbor Lights. Does not have any information available on more long-term housing; list of rooming houses and a list of Housing Authorities in other cities.

Salvation Army

Contact: Captain Davis, 547-3400

Clients: Refers about 5-10 people a week; approximately 80% of people have special alcoholism or mental health needs; 20% are burn-outs or evictions, or other. Sees about 1 family every 2 weeks. Very occasionally sees an abuse victim, or a family living in subsidized housing dissatisfied with conditions and seeking an alternative.

Services: Refers only to temporary shelter, usually Shelter, Inc. occasionally to Harbor Lights or other Boston shelters, or to Transition House. Also occasionally sends elderly to Elderly Housing Assistance. Makes no referrals for longer-term housing.

Provides family Day Care for families from Shelter, Inc., currently has 2 families.

Red Cross

Contact: Ron Verde, 354-7800

Clients: Provides emergency services for victims of fire; last year saw over 120 people total. So far this year it has been relatively light.

Services: Provides one night in a hotel; then usually refers family to Welfare, if eligible. Other families usually find friends or relatives to stay with. Occasionally puts someone up for two or three nights, or helps with rent or deposit on new apartment, if are low-income but not Welfare-eligible. No referrals for longer-term housing.

Cambridge Hospital, Dept. of Social Services

Contact: Liz Greene, 498-1269

Clients: The whole department, which includes social workers in the hospital, ambulatory centers, neighborhood centers and outpatient psych, averages 450 housing related problems per month, of which, 30 involve distinct housing problems. Most are chronic street people, although some are families with young children. Has not been seeing many elderly homeless.

Services: Usually refers people to Shelter, Inc., Pine St. Inn, Chardon St., Transition House, Rosies Place or Casa Myrna Vasquez.

Cambridge Hospital Alcoholism Outpatient Dept. (part of CASPAR)

Contact: Carolyn Bedell, 498-1419

Clients: Sees both alcoholics in need of emergency shelter (see Emergency Service Center) and about 8-10 recovering alcoholics every week, who could handle independent living, or something in-between a shelter and own apartment.

Services: Refers people to Emergency Service Center and tries to place in halfway houses, if appropriate. Refers others to Welfare and subsidized housing, but most referees cannot deal with the bureaucracy and waiting lists; more help along these lines is needed. Does not have capacity to do more housing placement itself; used to keep list of rooming houses, but these are gone. Encourages people to find friends to stay with through the dry drop-in center.

Mt. Auburn Hospital, Dept. of Social Services

Contact: Judy Olson, 492-3500

Clients: Sees elderly, deinstitutionalized, alcoholics, etc. from Accident Room: either street people or elderly living in inadequate housing or (occasionally) facing condominium conversion. Also sees elderly staying at the hospital who need long-term care situations such as nursing homes or congregate housing.

Services: For street people, refers to shelters in Boston or Cambridge. For elderly looking for long-term housing, tries to help through elderly service networks.

Concilio Hispano

Contact: Aiba Alicea, 661-9406

Clients: Sees about 5-6 people a week looking for housing. At present has 15-20 families waiting for apartments. Most are recent immigrants or new arrivals from out of town. Some evictions. 60-70% don't speak English, or very little.

Concilio Hispano - Continued

Services: Use to keep list of apartments and rooms but these have become too expensive. Does send people to CHA to fill out applications. Many people stay with friends or relatives; many ultimately move to Dorchester.

COPA

Contact: Valentina Pacheco, 492-5800

Clients: Receives about 7-8 inquiries a week regarding housing, most are recent immigrants. All are non-English speaking. Many are families in search of large apartments with low subsidized rents.

Services: Most people stay with friends or relatives, ultimately moving to Somerville, Boston or Chelsea. Use to keep listing of landlords in Cambridge Portuguese community, but these have become too expensive. Keeps list of available housing as vacancies become known to them - i.e. people call in.

CHAMA

Contact: Maria Yolette Vall, 492-6622

Clients: Average 10-15 housing problems a week, usually families, of which 1 to 3 are often emergencies. Most clients are refugees who have been staying with friends, and the situation has become too tense or crowded.

Services: Usually can find other families in the Haitian community willing to put people up; refers emergencies to Shelter Inc., Rosies Place, YWCA and YMCA; keeps list of real estate agencies.

Elderly Housing Assistance

Contact: Betty Morrison, 868-0800

Clients: During the months of October, November and December for example, saw 76 new clients and 232 repeat clients. Has seen a minimal number of homeless people this winter in comparison to other years possibly because the weather has been milder than usual. Clients are drop-ins from the street, referees from other agencies and from shelters. About 10-15 clients a month are chronic street people; the rest are facing family conflicts, possible eviction, or other problems causing them to need new long-term housing. About 1 or 2 people a week are deinstitutionalized, or exhibit strange behavior that will cause them to be rejected by most landlords. Clients are not necessarily elderly; many are in their late 50's making them ineligible for many types of elderly assistance. (Total number of clients has approximately doubled over the past 7 years). Referrals come from many sources: Shelter, Inc., DHSP, SCES, Dept. of Elder Affairs, Boston and Cambridge Hospitals, CHA and Somerville & Cambridge COA's.

Services: Refers street people or other emergencies to shelters. Puts those looking for long-term housing on as many waiting lists as possible; admission to public housing takes a year or more, but admission to MHFA housing in Cambridge or elsewhere may take only a few months or less. In the case of eviction proceedings, a judge will usually allow an elderly person to remain in current apartment until new placement is found. For those elderly who prefer or need a rooming house situation, these have become increasingly difficult to find at an affordable rate, but EHA does keep lists of these both inside and nearby Cambridge, and tries to keep in contact with landlords.

For deinstitutionalized people (many are probably not from Cambridge) is working out cross-referals with other agencies. Also occasionally finds a rooming house willing to take these people.

Other Indicators of Emergency Needs

The number of individuals turned away each night from local shelters varies. Shelter, Inc. reports that on the average it turns away approximately twenty people a week. For example, in one recent week, they were forced to turn away 23 individuals, including three families that accounted for nine of that total. Individuals who must be turned away may be referred on to the two new shelter facilities in Boston - those on Long Island and in the Shattuck Hospital. Families present a more difficult problem. The addition of the YWCA unit is an important one, but still does not fill the gap between the capacity of the agency to serve families and the current level of need.

The Emergency Service Center, located on Albany Street, which has a larger and more flexible capacity than does Shelter, still must turn away anywhere from 1 or 2 people a night up to as many as two dozen. All of these are single individuals. Transition House must refer about 100 families a month to other services. According to figures compiled recently by Somerville/Cambridge Elder Services for the Department of Elder Affairs, the Councils on Aging in the two cities, including the Elderly Housing Assistance Program in Cambridge, received a total of 45 requests from elderly people for emergency shelter in 1982.

The difficulty, of course, is that only those individuals who find their way into the system are counted. Those who for reasons of culture, knowledge of available systems, fear of that system, or the like who never find their way to an agency are never counted. Moreover, impressionistic evidence from hospital personnel, social service agencies who do not typically handle requests from those in need of emergency shelter, and even the police suggests the problem of homelessness is growing; we do not yet have a systematic method for insuring a complete, unduplicated count of those numbers.

It does appear that the population seen in largest numbers are "street people," not necessarily recently deinstitutionalized, but people who are basically independent but who often act in ways most people find bizarre or disoriented. Many of the people in this group are capable of living in and have been accepted by rooming houses in the past; but recent conversions and price increases of rooming houses in the city have pushed these people more and more into the emergency shelters. Since 1970, the number of lodging house beds in Cambridge has shrunk from 1800 to 900. Of the remaining 90 licensed lodging houses, moreover, only 6% currently meet code requirements.

In addition to this population, those who are in increasing need of emergency shelter are victims of eviction; of the failure of multi-generational living arrangements in often crowded and difficult conditions; fire; domestic violence; or of economic conditions or other situations which have brought them into the Cambridge/Somerville area with few resources to find income and housing. Included in this latter group in both cities, as

Current Local Initiatives

Cambridge Community Services. Some months ago CCS convened a group of agency and church representatives as well as other interested individuals to collaborate in planning for emergency services in Cambridge. Currently the group is focusing on the development of a day drop-in program for the homeless people. Captain Randy Davis of the Salvation Army has committed a space for two days a week (Mondays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.); the Department of Human Services has committed, on an interim basis, the coordinating and supervisory services of the Emergency Assistance Coordinator, and efforts are underway to establish both a hot meal program and a variety of other services (such as medical screening, information and referral, a message board, etc.). The next meeting of the group is scheduled for February 15th at 10 a.m. at Cambridge Community Services, 99 Bishop Richard Allen Drive. For further information call Phyllis Simpkins, 876-5214.

Department of Human Service Programs. The City Council has recently authorized funds to establish within the Department the position of Emergency Assistance Coordinator. This individual will assume three basic responsibilities: crisis counseling and referral for the growing number of individuals and families in emergency situations who approach the city government for help; provision of intermediate coordinator and/or supervisory services to launch immediate programs to respond to the current crisis (see CCS above); data gathering and information dissemination on a year round basis.

In addition, the Department through the Planning and Development division and in conjunction with administration of the Low Income Fuel Assistance program will continue to work with existing providers of emergency services to facilitate their program goals and to monitor the need for new initiatives in this area. For further information contact Isabella Hinds at 498-9076.

Harvard Square Churches Advisory Group. This group established a meal program one night a week in the early fall. Held at Christ Church on Thursday evenings, the program services about 60 individuals a night and relies on volunteers from the participating churches and students from the Harvard Divinity School. Other initiatives are in the works from this group. For further information contact Michael Grantzen at 825-7626.

Lodging House Task Force. Initiated by members of CLOE (Cambridge Living Options for Elders), this group is concerned with the preservation, and eventual expansion of lodging houses as a viable housing option for low-income elders and others who either prefer or need this type of housing. This group is currently focusing on two efforts: advocacy for legislation to support lodging houses filed through Representative Sandra Graham's office in close cooperation with ECHO (Elder Cooperative Housing Options) and support for the production of a hand book, by the DHSP for lodging house owners. For further information, contact Patty Derr, CLOE, 491-1603.

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Department of Human Service Programs. The City Council has recently authorized funds to establish within the Department the position of Emergency Assistance Coordinator. This individual will assume three basic responsibilities: crisis counseling and referral for the growing number of individuals and families in emergency situations who approach the city government for help; provision of intermediate coordinator and/or supervisory services to launch immediate programs to respond to the current crisis (see CCS above); data gathering and information dissemination on a year round basis.

In addition, the Department through the Planning and Development division and in conjunction with administration of the Low Income Fuel Assistance program will continue to work with existing providers of emergency services to facilitate their program goals and to monitor the need for new initiatives in this area. For further information contact Isabella Hinds at 498-9076.

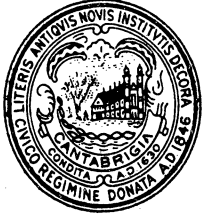
Harvard Square Churches Advisory Group. This group established a meal program one night a week in the early fall. Held at Christ Church on Thursday evenings, the program services about 60 individuals a night and relies on volunteers from the participating churches and students from the Harvard Divinity School. Other initiatives are in the works from this group. For further information contact Michael Grantzen at 825-7626.

Lodging House Task Force. Initiated by members of CLOE (Cambridge Living Options for Elders), this group is concerned with the preservation, and eventual expansion of lodging houses as a viable housing option for low-income elders and others who either prefer or need this type of housing. This group is currently focusing on two efforts: advocacy for legislation to support lodging houses filed through Representative Sandra Graham's office in close cooperation with ECHO (Elder Cooperative Housing Options) and support for the production of a hand book, by the DHSP for lodging house owners. For further information, contact Patty Derr, CLOE, 491-1603.

Current Local Initiatives

In addition, there is a Cambridge-based group interested in establishing a food pantry and/or distribution center. Identifying itself the Ad Hoc Food Coalition, the group includes members of the Council for Children and representatives of CEOC and Food For Free Committee (until recently Food not Bombs). For further information call Hap Tierney at 623-5096 or Steve Geary at 868-2900.

Finally, the Central State-Wide education and advocacy group concerned with problem of homelessness is the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, 34½ Beacon Street, Boston, Mass, 02108, 523-6400.



7.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 498-3011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

April 4, 1983

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In reference to Awaiting Report Item No. 14, City Council Order of December 20, 1982, I transmit herewith communication from Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, relative to the task force to assist people.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/b

Agenda Item Number Seven ^{S-181}

Re: response to Awaiting Report Item No. 14 relative to a task force to assist people by providing food, shelter & medical assistance during winter months.

In City Council,

April 4, 1983

4/4/83

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