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CAMBRIDGE MA 02139
25 June 1992, AM
54 Fayette St
Cambridge MA. 02139

To: Camb Chronicle, & the Camb. City Council

subject-- Rip Off-or-Collusion?

The state law is clear that all non-profit educational institutions are exempt from the local property taxes. Every year Harvard makes a big thing out of the presentation of a check to the city which is supposed to take its place. I'm sure Governor Weld is very happy to subsidize his old alma mater but most of Cambridge's less well off and citizens who are not associated with the school are not so inclined.

The basis for the Harvard payment to the city is very unclear. Harvard graciously pays Cambridge a sum of money supposedly to cover the police, fire and other benefits provided to it. The question is: Are our city hall yokels giving away the farm, not watching the store, or colluding with the largest property owner and employer in Cambridge at the average citizen's expense?

Questions are raised about all those once free market, highly gentrified apartments across the street from the Law school on Everett St that are now mostly "associated" with Harvard. [note: the one the mayor lives in, probably the only one left, is also underassessed and under rent control] Similar questions are prompted with respect the recently acquired motel on Mass Ave. which has now become a part of the Law school. The underassessed rent control but plush house on Ware St. only one block from or essentially on the prestigious campus that was to be rented to the Prince of Denmark is also subject to inquiry.

Cambridge should be protected from Harvard's insidious incursion on its tax base and legally and fairly compensated for any service it provides the university. Association with Harvard and or Rent control should not be used as a mechanism to minimize Harvard University's liability to the city.

In the absence of responsible politicians [national, state, and local], an unsatisfactory judicial environment [reference the 8 to 1 Supreme Court decision in favor of California's Prop 13 and date of acquisition based property tax inequity justified on the basis of a "plausible policy reason"], and a less than vigorous investigatory fourth estate there is only one solution to this problem. The Harvard/Cambridge deal and rent control

shenanigans must be exposed to the light of day. An analysis which explains the basis for the deals must be mandated and made a part of the public record and published by the media.

With all the famous and incipient gadfly authors in the area it is unbelievable that a best selling exposing and documentary history of the relationship of Cambridge's town and gown interrelated to "rent control" and "gentrification" has not been written.

It should be clear that a housing subsidy for the well off student body of the most highly endowed university in the country should not be part of any deal but rather the inverse may be in order. The Harvard student gentry are certainly not entitled to a rent control property tax subsidy either in associated or rent control housing.

Distraught, but hopeful, free market,
inequitably property taxed,
long suffering citizen, and
long time Cambridge family resident,

Arnold Schutzberg 868 8190

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arnold Schutzberg", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Consent Comm. # 32

Comm. from Arnold Schutzberg, 54
Fayette St., relative to non-profit
educational institutions are exempt
from the local property taxes.

S-613

In City Council,

Aug. 3, 1992

Placed on file