

393 Broadway,
Cambridge, Mass. 02139
Telephone: 547-4156
May 26, 1981

Members of the Cambridge City Council
City Council of Cambridge
City Hall,
795 Mass. Ave.,
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Members of the City Council:

This letter is to inform you that I am outraged that Councillor Leonard Russell is trying to propose amnesty for those condominium owners who illegally moved into their present condominiums after August 13, 1980. There was a clear-cut majority vote in accord with Robert's Rules of Order and proper parliamentary procedure - preceded by general debate as to the order itself being adopted originally. On March 26, 1981 and two weeks later when the Massachusetts State Supreme Court of the Judiciary stated that this order was legal in all its aspects we suddenly had a great awakening by developers and condominium owners as to the very peril that they had placed themselves in by not getting removal permits from the Rent Control Board first - until that time they had treated the Ordinance as one great big joke. I had the absolute dissatisfaction of witnessing a clique of what I can only charitably describe as hooligans disguised as developers and condominium owners try to literally shout down Councillor David Sullivan in the performance of his duty as Chairperson of the Rent Control Budget hearing; they so packed the hearing room at City Hall and were so led almost to a rampage by Attorney William H. Walsh that they resembled to my mind at least nothing but a bunch of vultures ready to devour carrion; those tenants and others of the other side were not allowed much courtesy and were given short shrift by the cacophonious evocations of this clique. Thank God that Councillor David Sullivan kept his cool and tried to explain the laws; ordinances and resolutions in detail: despite the vehement and almost insane baying of the mob. You were elected by residents of Cambridge to make the laws for this City - not the developers; the condominium owners and the large property owners and banks and, not by the tenants and small home owners either. You are supposed to dispense equal justice with malice towards none; yet had the State Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts ruled otherwise you would have seen an general exodus of longterm residents from this city similar to the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt as described in the Old Testament. In the past 30 years we have had a population decrease of some 25,000 citizens (from 120,000 in 1950 to 95,000 in 1980); the poorest class have been subsidized with public housing; the lower middle-class has been forced - even under Rent Control - to pay increasingly higher and higher rents especially during the past 5 years of \$50-\$75 and more per month for rent each and every year based on the theory that the person; bank; mortgage company; finance company, etc which owns their apartments are entitled to have "A Fair Net Operating Income"; resultantly thousands of people have left this city who could have contributed to it; longterm residents have been harrassed and intimidated; threatened and served notices to quit their apartments without any legal justification while legally paying their rents. We have had developers and condominium owners taking over the city with the blessings, incidentally, of the academic community which claims that its holdings in this city (some 74% of the city property) are for eleemosynary purposes. (Harvard University's rates of some \$10,000 per year are more than many longterm residential families in this city earn). We have had an erosion of the city workforce which is mainly lower middle-class, viz: policemen; firemen; custodians, teachers, city workers, et als due to the threat of Proposition 2½ which does not even come into effect until July 1, 1981. Our City Manager gave up the ghost either for personal reasons or because he could no longer take the heat. The Cambridge Chronicle from time to time publishes who the property tax delinquents are: not suprisingly most of them appear year after year after year and they don't even get a slap on the wrist; if tenants withheld the hard earned cash which they pay in rent each month to some of these same delinquents you would have a vast outcry resultantly.

II:

I have been a resident of mid-Cambridge for almost 50 years either living on Maple Avenue; Highland Avenue or Broadway during that time; I have lived in my present apartment for some 20 years; I am both a product of the Cambridge Public School system's grammar and high school system and have in the past taught in that system as a special arts teachers; I am the past Senior Vice-Commander of Cambridge Chapter No. 16, Disabled American Veterans of which I am a Life Member; my roots are in Cambridge; I could have taken my G.I. Eligibility Certificate and bought outside of Cambridge many years ago but chose to stay and help those of my own neighbors and friends who live in this community and whose roots are here as well. I am presently in my 60 th year and if this Council decides to rescind the Ordinance both I and most of the lower middle-class in Cambridge will have to move as we can no longer afford to pay the exorbitant rents which we have been getting for the past half-dozen years - and, we regularly get increases in rent whether the tax rate goes up or down. Harvard University's idea of the population of Cambridge could best be summed up by the Inaugural Address of President Abbott Lawrence Lowell in 1910, he stated: "... Harvard is Cambridge - the rest is nothing but a greasy slum ...". This same attitude of snobbish indifference and outright hostility still prevails to-day. Add to this the emergence of a new class of parasite - the speculative developer and the condominium owner whose invests strictly for profit and who come from other near and remote areas of both this country and around the world and you no longer have a city: you have a megapolis of sterile luxury high rises which have no community life and whose very owners as long as they get their abatements; equity; liquidity of cash; return of taxes from city, state and federal governments don't give one damn about the City of Cambridge and its problems. In Viet-Nam we had the infamous quote of the Marine lieutenant , who when asked why he had ordered a city destroyed when its inhabitants had not resisted his troops, flatly state: "... We destroyed it in order to save it ! ...". Are we to have such Draconian measures instituted for Cambridge by rescinding this Ordinance which the City Council adopted in toto previously ? Many years ago I - and several million other men - received a telegram issued by the President of the United States in a time of clear and present danger that stated that : " ... A committee composed of your friends and neighbors has selected you for induction into the Armed Forces of the United States ...". We went because our country was in danger and served in many instances for the duration plus six months and counted ourselves lucky to be living in a democracy that nurtured us. To-day we become expendable because some body or bank; finance company; mortgage company; speculative developer; foreign oil interest, et als has decided that they will develop (sic) the market as they see fit and to hell with the consequences as regard~~s~~ the citizenry itself. Let me tell you as a qualified historian (a profession which I no longer practice beacuse of its debased philosophy) that when you suppress and depress and debase the lower middle-class you end up with either a full-blown revolution or a civil war; you, if you rescind the Ordinance will be sure to lose what makes a city viable - its inhabitants of all classes and all occupations who by joint effort make the city work. Eject them and you will eventually have a desert similar to Babylon and Nineveh; keep the Ordinance and we can by joint effort try to make order out of chaos: because people and not money make a city come alive forever.

GS:s

Faithfully yours,



George Saver.

N.B.- Because I leave home at 6.45 A.M. and return at 6 P.M. daily Monday through Friday you may call me at my place of work for verification of this letter; which is:
The Day Treatment Centre-Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic, 125 Lincoln Street, Boston, Mass. 02111. Telephones are: 223-6262; 223-6263; 223-6264 and 223-4391 between 7.30 A.M. and 3.40 P.M. You may reach me at my home telephone number which is: 547-4156 any evening after 6 P.M. - George Saver.

Comm. from George Saver, 393 Broadway, in
opposition to the amnesty amendment to
Ord. # 945.

In City Council,

June 1, 1981

Placed on file

6-8-81