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The Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Councilors,

I come before the City Councilors representing my own and the interests of at least 6 other residents that have chatted with me at Harvard Towers, 295 Harvard Street.

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I am 65 years old, single, still working professional, and a 40 year resident of Cambridge, and have been a renter for all these years. My rental history is brief. I have lived at two locations on Harvard Street for 39 years and 13 of those years at 295 Harvard Street, Harvard Towers, where on May 4<sup>th</sup>, tenants received certified letters that our leases will not be renewed as of August 31, no reason given.

The following statement is important for me to share. I have chosen to be a renter due to personal life circumstances and financial challenges and have always considered my apartment as "my home", not "just the place I rent". I am a responsible tenant, pay rent on time, protect and take care of landlord property, and often absorb minor repair expenses for the sake of expedition. I know that there are many, many, many tenants in Cambridge who, from time to time, are made to feel like second class citizens because we don't own our homes and there is an underlying belief that tenants somehow are not "mature" citizens in general, and are not respectful of rental property and property owner rights. That is not the case with me. My apartment is my home. ~~This is not the case with a substantial number of renters that I~~

~~know~~

I acknowledge that renters have quite limited rights and we often are made to feel like second class citizens for not pursuing home ownership in a financially challenging New England <sup>market,</sup> although indirectly through our rental payments we contribute to tax requirements of our landlords. We are voters. Some of us have children in schools. I note that the climate for tenants changed since the exit of rent control. I only moved in the past due to condo conversion.

My point this evening is to share the experience of receiving a notice that your home will cease to be available to you in 4 months and to seek some humane considerations in this room tonight. Some tenants have expressed that their first reaction was a mental health one, i.e. hyper-stress, anxiety, fear, anger, frustration. Our lives have been rudely interrupted and we've had to change or cancel summer plans, including travel, due to this unexpected situation. Most significantly is the unplanned/unexpected personal expense of this. We have to find a place, anticipate and pay broker's fee, deposits, first/last month rent, moving companies, and yet we are obligated to pay the balance of our current lease. The financial situation that this has created for tenants is substantial, to the tune of approximately up to \$10,000 to successfully complete a move.

In my case, this money comes from retirement savings. The timing of this situation is totally wrong for me. I had retirement plans for the next year and will turn 66 in November. These plans are now on hold due to the financial hardship associated with this unplanned move at this unique time in my life of being retirement ready. I am the sole financial support for my 86 year

old mother in KY. I had to cancel my already paid air fare trip to her birthday celebration for July 31 due to this situation. I had to cancel paid airfare for my retirement exploration plans to KY for the second week of July, due to the costs of this situation and the personal time I will need to take off from work to orchestrate this move. Indeed, this is not an inconvenience, it is a decided hardship that has serious financial implications. I stand to lose over \$1000 in paid air fare because of this unplanned situation. This is my story and there are tenants with their own unique stories.

I acknowledge that the property owners are pursuing their business ownership goals; but it seems to me there needs to be some humanity in the pursuit of these goals. It seems to me that any tenant in good standing that has been at 295 Harvard for a minimum of 10 years should receive some special considerations and especially so if they are senior citizens. We have been pressured to move and given deadlines based on the lease. We have been offered no support from the property owners. I asked them if they had other properties to rent and a representative said yes. I told him I was interested, the rental price was right, and he said he would call back, and as of this presentation, no contact from BluRidge Mgt.

At the very least, we should not have to pay the final month's rent. At the very least, we should be guaranteed our deposits will be returned promptly in full. At the very least, they should keep the property livable during this period of tenant exits, i.e. the elevator floors are grossly dirty, there is a crane parked at the building already doing work. Rumors have it that they won't even let us trash old furniture before we move, when there is quite adequate staging space to accommodate tenants needs to discard some property.

I close with the fact that I speak because I have been provoked, not because I enjoy exposing this situation. As a mature adult, I expect responsible and reasonable adult communication and negotiation. At this time, I have no evidence that this is possible and "we" are seeking the City of Cambridge's support, if nothing else, document that this has happened.

Thank you.

Jerome Saunders