



675 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139 p 617 864 3020 / TDD 800 545 1833 x112 • f 617 868 5372 • w www.CAMBRIDGE-HOUSING.ORG

October 21, 2009

Robert W. Healy
City Manager
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Manager Healy,

This letter is in response to Council Order Numbers 2 and 16, regarding the removal of diseased trees at 150 Erie Street and the Cambridge Housing Authority's (CHA) plans for replacing them.

The trees removed from Lyndon B. Johnson Apartments (LBJ) were infected with a fungus called, *anthracnose*, and were in decline. They were significantly weakened after a recent pruning to remove them from the street's power lines, and even with a treatment for anthracnose disease, their long term prognosis for survival, according to CHA's contracted arborist, was not good.

CHA's landscape architect has recommended that two large deciduous trees (most likely Honeylocusts) be planted on either side of the entry canopy and one large Kousa Dogwood be planted in front of the windowless concrete northern section of the property.

Further, CHA intends to include significant landscaping improvements in its \$21.8 million project to modernize and "green" LBJ. Thanks to a \$10 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant, CHA plans to begin work at the development in May 2010. Additional plantings and the possible addition of seating in front of the building are being integrated into the planning process. We are confident that the end result will enhance the appearance of the building's entrance as well as the entire neighborhood.

With respect to the public notice and "street tree removal hearing" requirements referenced in Council Order 16, CHA respectfully reminds the Council that public shade tree laws apply to the removal of shade trees within a *public way*. The trees in question were behind a wrought iron fence on the grounds of LBJ and not within a public way.

Please feel free to contact me or my staff if you have any additional questions about this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory P. Russ'.

Gregory P. Russ
Executive Director
Cambridge Housing Authority