Independent discuss issues

Incumbent Alfred Vellucci, seeking his 16th term, supports rent control in its current form. He also supports linkage.

Vellucci acknowledged MIT's previous housing efforts, including construction of 750 units of housing for the elderly. But "in 1986 it was clear MIT's operation on the Simples issue was doomed," Vellucci said. He proposed a 10-year use of "emergency, temporary housing," on the property, for which MIT would receive a tax break.

"People who have kept their rents low are penalized" by limits on property tax increases, said Daniel J. Clinton, another incumbent candidate. Rents that were originally low remain low, while other rents which entered the system at a higher level are now over $1000 per month, he charged. Clinton opposed the linkage proposal which came before the council last year.

Incumbent Thomas Daney supports a comprehensive, city-wide rezoning process. He said that Cambridge's plan for redevelopment should be cohesive, not piecemeal. He also voted against last year's linkage proposal.

Alfred LaRosa was installed in the council after Leonard Russell's death in June. His appointment was based on a recount of the 1983 ballots.

LaRosa supports linkage. His platform states, "rent control can fulfill its goal... only if it operates efficiently and fairly for everyone.

Sheila Russell favors linkage in general, but does not support last year's proposal. Russell is running on a platform of balancing the development of Cambridge and the needs of its residential areas through the creative use of existing zoning laws, according to the Cambridge Chronicle. She also hopes to get more federal funding for housing programs.

Unaffiliated challengers

Among the remaining candidates are two strong attackers and two strong defenders of rent control, as well as moderates.

Lewis Armitage is opposed to linkage. But he favors downzoning of residential areas, such as Kendall Square, which have already been impacted by development. "Talk of providing large amounts of new affordable housing is erroneous," he said. Cambridge has "a limited spatial situation."

Frank Budryk charges that "rent control is pretty much out of control." The current system subverts the whole idea, he said. He proposed a "means test" to determine qualification for rent control, and suggested a head tax on universities for all students living off campus as an incentive for the schools to build new student housing, freeing housing units.

Elio Centrella told the Chronicle that rent control should not exist. "It's giving housing to those who can afford it," he said.

He supports a free market for housing. But he favors development of the city "so that those who need housing can get it," he said. He opposes linkage and in favor of downtown development in some areas. "Our homes are already being kicked out by the universities."

Vincent Dionne successfully sought the endorsement of the CCA, according to the Cambridge Chronicle. He backs linkage and municipal bonds for housing development.

Dionne also supports neighborhood development plans that are created by local residents, and is concerned about a lack of open space in the city. He has some doubts about rent control, preferring to encourage homeownership.

Commercial development of land is not the proper role for a university, Dionne said. He predicted serious tax consequences for MIT and Harvard if they continue "creeping" through Cambridge. "I'd like to see a more positive approach" to housing problems, he said.

Michael Turk said he has a "much stronger emphasis on limiting commercial development" than does the CCA. Turk, a spokesman for the Cambridge Rent Control Coalition, said rent control provides "indispensable protection for low and moderate income people in Cambridge." He feels that rent control should be strengthened, a low-interest fund for the rehabilitation of affordable housing should be established, and the rent control board should be elected to make it more accessible to the people.

He endorses a strong linkage program and the adoption of the Simplex Steering Committee plan, which includes substantial amounts of low-income housing, for the development of MIT's Simplex property.

Candidates George Spartichino refused to answer questions about his campaign, according to the Chronicle.

William Walsh has waged an aggressive campaign on a platform of cutting back rent control and removing restrictions on condominiums. Rent control discourages construction and maintenance and shifts the property tax burden to housing that is not rent controlled, he charged in his debate with Daniel Sullivan.

Walsh would institute a means test for occupancy of rent-controlled apartments and would decontrol units when the current tenants vacate them, he said in the debate. Additional tax revenue generated by the higher rents would go for rent stamps to help the poor find housing on the open market, he continued. Sullivan's supporters questioned the constitutionality of the means test.

He does not approve of linkage and other restrictions on business development. "We've got to give positive incentives, not negative incentives," he said in the debate.