



**Rent Stabilization Board**

June 19, 2007

City Manager and  
Members of the City Council  
City of Berkeley  
2180 Milvia Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704

Dear City Manager and Councilmembers,

At its regular meeting on June 18, 2007 the Rent Stabilization Board voted unanimously to direct me to convey the following comments to the City Council.

The Board wishes to express its concern and regret over the resignation of Dr. Stephen Barton as city Housing Director. Additionally we want to recognize the many contributions that Dr. Barton made to our community in his 18 years of service as a city employee. Dr. Barton was a tireless advocate for affordable housing and through his leadership the city was able to subsidize the construction of hundreds of units of affordable housing, expand protections for tenants, increase home-ownership opportunities, and provide housing and services to the homeless and mentally ill populations. He believed in the right of all people, regardless of their background to have a roof over their heads and used his knowledge and creativity to help protect the right for all people to live in our community. Dr. Barton is someone of immense integrity and dedication and recent comments made in the newspapers and by our City Attorney do not accurately reflect his work as Housing Director or his long career.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the City Attorney issued a letter to Council and the press blaming a number of city employees, including Dr. Barton for management problems with the Housing Authority and Housing Department. Because Dr. Barton strongly disputes the allegations raised in the City Attorney's June 6<sup>th</sup> letter and fears if unchallenged, his professional reputation will be irreparably harmed, we ask that the City Manager and City Council immediately initiate an independent and thorough investigation into the accuracy of the allegations made in the City Attorney's June 6<sup>th</sup> memorandum. We also ask that this investigation address as well the appropriateness of the City Attorney making these allegations in a public forum. None of the individuals named have had a chance to respond, and the validity of the allegations are in serious question. Because every city employee has professional and personal issues likely to compromise their impartiality, we ask that the inquiry be conducted by someone independent of the city. This investigation should be independent of other investigations into the Housing Authority and should be completed before the Council's summer recess at the end of July. Delaying this investigation until after summer will make it impossible for Dr. Barton's reputation to be restored should the allegations contained in the June 6<sup>th</sup> memorandum ultimately be shown to be false.

I thank you for your consideration and please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jesse Arreguin  
Chairperson, Rent Stabilization Board