

Fairview Community Council Resolution CS-2010-01

A Resolution opposing establishment of a multi-unit complex for chronic inebriates in the northern section of Fairview and recommending an alternative location for implementing the Housing First Initiative

Whereas, the Municipal Charter states “The Assembly by ordinance shall provide for establishment of community councils to afford citizens an opportunity for maximum community involvement and self-determination.” and,

Whereas, Community Councils have an official role to provide counsel and recommendations to the Mayor and Assembly on relevant neighborhood issues, and

Whereas, the Anchorage Bowl 2020 Comprehensive Plan provides a long range vision for the community wherein the goal of “Housing: A balanced, diverse supply of affordable, quality housing located in safe and livable neighborhoods with amenities and infrastructure that reflects Anchorage’s varied social, cultural, and physical environment.” and

Whereas, the Department of Neighborhood’s 2010 Action Plan, page 12, states “the inner city neighborhood of Fairview Community Council is experiencing disinvestment, a concentration of low-income households, and blighted conditions.” and

Whereas, according to Anchorage Neighborhood Indicators Sourcebook, the number of Fairview residents in Group Quarters versus Households is 9.8%, more than three times the Anchorage average of 2.7%, indicating that the Fairview Community Council shoulders more than its fair share of public and affordable housing units, and

Whereas, there is an identified population of 200-250 individuals who constitute the hard-core chronic public inebriate in Anchorage, and

Whereas, chronic public inebriates have impacted Fairview business and residential interests significantly over the years to the point that the Council organized and co-sponsored a series of community workshops that resulted in production of a written report and recommendations informally titled the Fairview Initiative, and

Whereas, the Community Transfer Station (Sleep-off Center) for individuals detained for public drunkenness is located in the City Jail located at the corner of 3rd Avenue and Post Road and just below 5th Avenue, and

Whereas, the Community Service Patrol collects inebriated individuals from Downtown and Midtown while the Anchorage Police Department collects public inebriates from all over the city, and bring them to the Sleep-off Center where they regain a sense of sobriety, and are then released into the community of Fairview, and

Whereas, the Mental Health Trust Authority and other public organizations are preparing to provide funding to the organization of RurAL CAP for purposes of implementing the concept of Housing First in Anchorage modeled after a relatively successful experiment titled 1811 Eastlake in Seattle located in a prosperous neighborhood, and

Whereas, the 1811 Eastlake or Downtown Emergency Service Center facility provides supportive housing for 75 formerly homeless men and women living with chronic alcohol addiction, 24-hour, seven days a week supportive services including: State licensed mental health and chemical dependency

treatment, on-site health care services, daily meals and weekly outings to food banks, case management and payee services, medication monitoring, weekly community building activities, and

Whereas, the proposed location in Anchorage for implementing the Housing First concept is the 55 unit Red Roof Inn located on Karluk Street between 5th and 6th Avenues and approximately two blocks from the City Jail and the Sleep-off Center, and

Whereas, Housing First is also known as a “wet house” whereby chronic inebriates are allowed to have visitors and drink to excess within the confines of the building, and

Whereas, the approximately 48 chronic inebriates to be housed in the facility will know and associate with the remainder of the 200-250 known chronic inebriates who will be frequently released from the Sleep off center, and

Whereas, RurAL CAP managers have informed the Fairview Community Council they do not intend to provide any support services except for on-site food preparation and general building security, and

Whereas, chronic inebriates and their visitors will purchase their liquor at the nearest retail outlets, two of which are located along Gambell Street at 12th and 13th Avenues, and

Whereas, according to a 2005 report, 5th and 6th Avenues along with Gambell and Ingra Streets rank within the top five most dangerous road corridors for pedestrians within the City, and the Municipality Pedestrian Plan recommends significant infrastructure improvements along this section of Karluk to address the unsafe pedestrian conditions, and

Whereas, the Municipality and State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities are engaged in an effort to develop an eight-lane, high-speed, controlled-access Highway to Highway connection between the Glenn and New Seward Highways for purposes of resolving current and anticipated traffic congestion problems along 5th and 6th Avenues and the Gambell/Ingra Couplet, and

Whereas, the preliminary alignment for this connection as identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Municipal Bicycle Plan comes from north of Third Avenue to Post Road and angling in a southwesterly direction to the general alignment of Hyder Street, and

Whereas, this preliminary alignment will also have major off ramp connections to both the Downtown along Third Avenue and to the Port of Anchorage angling northwest, and

Whereas, this major infrastructure project will very likely result in significant changes to existing land uses including social support facilities located along Third Avenue, and

Whereas, proponents of the Housing First or “Wet House” assert it is more economical to locate such a facility near existing support services such as the Brother Francis Shelter and Bean’s Cafe, and

Whereas, these social service support facilities are would possibly be relocated by the proposed Highway to Highway connection, and

Whereas, it would be an inefficient allocation of resources to purchase and renovate a facility that will very likely be isolated from other social support services in the future and located just a couple blocks from the City Sleep off Center in an area of town that struggles to maintain a prosperous economic base, and

Whereas, the lack of supportive services at the proposed Housing First facility due to budget constraints means that the success achieved by 1811 Eastlake would be very difficult to replicate at the Red Roof Inn location, and

Whereas, implementing an abbreviated version of the 1811 Eastlake experiment could very likely result in increased calls for emergency services at this location, and

Whereas, the short term economic savings associated with facility acquisition and rehabilitation should not override what is in the long term best interests of the clients, the neighborhood and the community.

Whereas, the proponents of the Housing First concept would be well served to look at alternative locations for such a facility in conjunction with future establishment of a support campus for homeless chronic inebriates,

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Fairview Community Council formally opposes the use of public funds from Municipal, State, Federal governments or funding from organizations that are supported by any level of government to acquire and renovate the Red Roof Inn for purposes of establishing a limited application of the Housing First concept in Anchorage, and

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Fairview Community Council herewith opposes well-intentioned but poorly designed approaches that perpetuate a negative image of the Fairview community as a de facto social services ghetto, and

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Fairview Community Council requests their elected representatives and public officials oppose this use of public funds and to support a more comprehensive approach that recognizes the recommendations of other official Municipal planning documents, the need for funding adequate supportive services and the recommendations of the Fairview Community Council Chronic Public Inebriate report.

Passed this 11th day of February, 2010 by a vote of 21 Yeas and 2 Nays.



Sharon Chamard, President