Archived: Monday, October 5, 2020 2:15:28 PM
From: Jessica Simulcik Smith
Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 11:38:54 AM
To: Heidi Costello; Pollie McCloskey
Cc: Allison Taylor
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] 24/7 Shelter in Shoreline
Response requested: No
Sensitivity: Normal

Can you please forward to Council? Thank you!

From: Corinne McKisson <cmckisson@compasshousingalliance.org>
Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 11:34 AM
To: Clk <Clk@shorelinewa.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 24/7 Shelter in Shoreline

Hello,

Please forward this to all members of the Shoreline City Council in advance of tonight's meeting.

_____

Dear Council Members,

I am writing you again to reassert my support for the proposed 24/7 shelter at the former Oaks Nursing Home site at 16537 Aurora Ave N in Shoreline.

I have heard and read the many questions and concerns from neighbors and the City's response. I believe the City has done its due diligence in addressing these concerns and been exceptionally patient with the many biased perceptions communicated about the target population. It is time to move forward with the informed and educated move to engage the proposed partners and launch this much-needed service. I personally cannot think of a better location in North King County than the one being considered. Shoreline has a tragic need for homeless services and it only grows daily.

My family and neighbors support and encourage the establishment of the 24/7 shelter. I grew up in Shoreline, graduating Shorewood Class of '80. I bought a home in Meridian Park in 1995, ¾ of a mile from the proposed shelter location. I am a single working mother, and have sent my daughters through the Shoreline School system, one graduated last Spring, one still attending nearby at Shorewood HS. They ride the E line, play sports at nearby sports fields, all bringing them in regular contact with the folks living homeless that this shelter could serve. For over 30 years I have worked with low income and disabled community members through leadership positions at programs such as Northwest Center and Seattle Housing Authority. Since its opening in 2017 I have worked at Compass Housing Alliance's Ronald Commons as the Program Manager.

In my homelife and job I daily come in contact with our homeless neighbors who struggle to find a safe and consistent place to rest and keep their most precious belongings. I partner with City personnel and programs, and a vast and diverse array of community partners such as THS, ICHS, Shoreline Schools Equity Team, local faith partners, and businesses along the Aurora corridor. The agency I work for is a local leader in providing 24/7 shelter services, and I am on the board of NUHSA.

The opening of this shelter will serve people who are already our neighbors. It will reduce the inhumane existence on the streets and in bushes and parks of those who have nowhere else to go. The shelter will offer warmth, safety, respect and understanding, and a path forward that in their current circumstances most cannot see possible. Many of the people I serve at Ronald Commons were homeless before moving here, alone, or with children. Some have not proven themselves ready to take the measures needed to embrace stability and next steps. Most have, but it is far from one size fits all. I have watched and humbly participated in the progress of many men and women here who arrived with unspeakable life trauma and no personal safety net to lift them up. Some of these folks have lost children to the system, are in recovery for addiction, and are new to the mainstream expectations of being a good neighbor and handling personal responsibilities independently. Some engage with our staff and offered services willingly, some resent us or fear trusting in someone and struggle, sometimes to calamitous results. We are here to pick up the pieces and try again together. The self-loathing, self-destructive behaviors, inability to trust others and to open up and be vulnerable are all typical of people who have found themselves without a home. They have convinced themselves they don't deserve it and that they have to work the system to survive it. Changing those patterns takes time. People here are reuniting with their families, making friends, breaking away from harmful patterns, completing their GED, attending college, getting jobs, getting the consistent attentive medical care needed to heal.

Many people living homeless are not prepared to go directly to permanent living such as Ronald Commons provides and need a place to help bridge that gap and build some basic skills. The proposed program offers such a destination. Successes such as those Compass has had with our 24/7 programs are possible and meaningful on the path towards stability. Having this shelter in our community likely will not remove the presence of homelessness among us. We will probably continue to see discarded needles and petty crimes. However, without the shelter these concerning issues will only continue to rise. Simply because there will not be 100% success, we cannot refuse to try to lift up one person at a time. Please consider the potential residents of the proposed shelter as individuals, not "the homeless" but Randy, Karin, Dale and others as individuals with life stories interrupted, who deserve as much as you and I the

chance to be shown their value.

Please push forward on this shelter and give it your full and unwavering support.

Thank you,

Corinne McKisson | she/her/hers
Program Manager at Ronald Commons | **Compass Housing Alliance**
17920 Linden Ave N, Shoreline, WA 98133
D: 206-474-1455 | M: 206-482-1362 | F: 206-474-1451
cmckisson@compasshousingalliance.org
www.compasshousingalliance.org | **Sign up for our eNewsletter**

When I use my strength in the service of my vision it makes no difference whether or not I am afraid. ~Audre Lorde