

Olivia Dias

From: Rebekah Engle <rebekahengle@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 14, 2020 1:27 PM
To: CityRecorder; citycouncil; Olivia Dias
Subject: DevNW Case-11/23 Agenda

re: Case No. CPC-NPC-ZC-SPR-ADJ-DR20-03 for 905 & 925 Cottage St NE

Dear City of Salem Officials,

I am writing as a long term resident and board member of CANDO and as a concerned citizen of our city in general.

DevNW has made plans to create a wonderful affordable housing project in the old Evergreen Church building on the border of CANDO and Grant neighborhoods. Months ago representatives of the program reached out and came to our neighborhood meeting to share their plans. I had known of DevNW before, but was inspired by their compassionate, knowledgeable and professional presentation to look more into the programs they run. I am extremely impressed with the programs and feel like they have the potential to greatly impact housing and poverty issues in our city. Instead of putting roadblocks in their way, we should be supporting their work. If we claim to want to work on issues of homelessness and poverty in Salem, then we simply must support policies and programs that work towards that goal. DevNW is one of the programs we should be supporting.

I know that both Grant and CANDO neighborhoods feel a lot of the effects of homelessness. I live across from Arches and feel both compassion and frustration about things that happen with our unhoused neighbors. To oppose DevNW and this housing project is to shut off a viable source of help for the very issues that we are frustrated with. We need housing in Salem. We need all levels of housing, but particularly small, affordable housing. As a city, we need to support DevNW and this housing project to help with housing capacity particularly for our lower income residents.

The fact that there is any opposition to this development tells me that people are not thinking from a big picture perspective. In order to create a neighborhood that is pleasant for residential living, we must have city wide policies and plans that support all of our residents or eventually problems, such as homelessness, spill over into all of our neighborhoods. One thing we absolutely must have is housing that is plentiful enough that market prices are not driven up astronomically. Another thing we must have is a range of styles and types of housing to fit different needs. This DevNW project fits both of those needs while also maintaining a beautiful historical building that adds to the character of the neighborhood.

This project is a win for everyone in my book. If people are worried about small affordable apartments as housing they need to really look around the surrounding areas and notice that these types of small housing complexes almost always add character and vitality to a neighborhood rather than bringing problems. I live in such a building myself and love it's historic character, charm, and the wonderful neighbors who live here with me.

The attitude of wanting homelessness to go away, but not being willing to invest in changes that are proven to help, needs to be done away with. If we are going to work together to solve these problems we all need to be willing to adjust to a few changes. Living with the status quo of residential suburban type neighborhoods with little variety is part of what has gotten us into this problem. We are going to need some changes to our thinking to solve our current issues and I believe this project with DevNW is a great place to start that process.

Please do the right thing and support this project and any necessary changes of zoning, etc.

Sincerely and with great hope for the future of Salem,

Rebekah Engle
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