

Marshall Apartments Permanent Supportive Housing

Urban Renewal Agency November 22, 2010

Mr. Chairman, commissioners, my name is John Goldstone and I am an east side property owner, in fact my property is within 300 feet of the Marshall Apartments. When I purchased my property, the Marshall apartments were there, as well as all of the existing NON-improvements on East 12th street.

When I first started actually getting involved on the East side, it was the year 2000, and the ARA was in full swing. I had a house on East 13th street that backed up to what was going to be a 60 foot project. In my neighborhood, we were generally newcomers or gentrifiers. We understood that 12th street was once a thriving part of downtown and the heart of minority culture in Austin. I had no illusions that 12th street would again be busy and would have development. My neighbors and I worked for 10 years on the Urban Renewal Plan and on the NCCD to turn East 12th Street into a mixed use- pedestrian friendly area. In fact, I was one of the prime architects of those documents, I did a lot of the drafting and reviewing. We supported heights and we even proposed granting additional height variances if the developers would put affordable units in some of the additional height that they received.

I have to ask, why would the first development following the rejection and termination of the ARA be a project that will destroy East 12th street and that will be the destruction of our 10 years of mixed use planning. *Why would you support a project*

I went to the Kealing neighborhood meeting this past Saturday and heard all kinds of ~~crap~~ from the applicant, how this will be better for the residents there, and we heard and read sob stories of homeless. Well, most of what they said and submitted was contradicted by several people in the audience, including displacement of people on the Section 8 waiting list (they said there would be no displacement) and whether they would collect a developer fee up front (they will). So we know we are dealing with an applicant that will lie by omission and say, really nicely, "oh sorry, what we meant was..."

~~None of the residents of Marshall were new~~
I know that when I speak like this and oppose a project such as this I will be accused of being a nimby (not in my back yard). Well, I love my neighbors in the Marshall Apartments, I love the section 8 program and feel that it is a necessary backstop against the inconsistencies of the so-called free market. I have not talked to one person who is opposed to the PSH who is also opposed to the section 8 existing housing, so applicant, stop saying that racist lie.

To do something positive rather than negative, a few days ago, I started a drive for volunteers to upgrade the Marshall apartments, both labor and materials and I have several people willing to help out and have already found 40 countertops, and a plumber, as well as plenty of painters from the neighborhoods and from 12th street owners. We want these residents to have a nice place to live and use the Marshall Apartments as a stepping stone to a better life. I ask you, members of this agency to write a letter to the

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Statesman editor and correct their misconceptions, as well as enlighten them and the council to our voluntary effort to make the life of these residents better, without a governmental solution, but with a community solution. As the statesman said, Permanent Supportive Housing is not an appropriate use near 12th and chicon, OH RIGHT, they said it was not an appropriate use near the Domain, but it is apparently an appropriate use for the East side. Do not allow the downtown Austin alliance to push their problem over here, please please help us.

Thank you