



CITY OF SALEM

555 Liberty St SE
Salem, OR 97301

Written Testimony #2

Urban Renewal Agency

Monday, November 9, 2020

6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

The Urban Renewal Agency Meeting will begin immediately following the City Council Meeting.

3.3a. [20-395](#) Lease for real property with Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency for property located at 2640 Portland Road NE.

Ward(s): 5

Board Member(s): Ausec

Neighborhood(s): Northgate

Result Area(s): Good Governance; Safe Community; Welcoming and Livable Community.

Recommendation: Authorize the Executive Director to execute the attached lease with Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency for real property located at 2640 Portland Road NE.

Attachments: [Proposed Lease](#)
[Public Comments received by 2:00 p.m. 11-9-20.pdf](#)
[Additional Public Comments received by 5:00 p.m. 11-9-20.pdf](#)

Add - Written Testimony.

Amy Johnson

From: Bradley Allen <bradley.allen@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, November 9, 2020 4:38 PM
To: citycouncil
Cc: Gretchen Bennett; SALEM Manager; lindsay.dent@mwvcaa.org; Matthew Ausec; Seth Lenaerts; Melanie Fletcher
Subject: 2640 Portland Rd NE
Attachments: Letter.pdf

Council Members,

See attached letter.

Should you be interested in contacting me, please reply to this email or call me at 503-508-3142.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Bradley

November 9, 2020

Salem City Council
555 Liberty St SE, Room 220
Salem, OR 97301

Council members,

I am writing you today regarding the warming shelter which is to be activated at 2640 Portland Rd NE.

I was surprised to hear about this shelter – not from the City, but a member of my HOA. What I found more surprising is this shelter will be across the street from my house. I received a clip from a neighborhood app with a Zoom meeting ID. I attended the call on November 5, 2020, which was hosted by the City of Salem and the ARCHES Project staff.

This call raised concerns: it started with the low barrier to entry (no criminal background checks, though the ARCHES rep mentioned 30% of people staying at these camps have criminal backgrounds and 4% are sex offenders, for which no notice will be given) and progressed with the “preference” for vulnerable populations – only to turn around and state that anyone can stay there; then there will be no monitoring of people who leave the property; no protection from theft and litter and; no additional liability coverage. In fact, the question regarding insurance was completely sidestepped by ARCHES. I am also concerned that there was not much forethought about this location, as there are no other services or accommodations for people who are unable to reup their stay.

We were informed that anyone staying at this location must apply and, when accepted, will be able stay 29 days, at which point they can reapply for another 29 day stay, but must leave for 24 hours until accepted. One participant on the call mentioned residents often leave during the day. My interpretation is that they are left to frequent our neighborhood during this waiting period and will do so the duration of their stay. Given that there are no background checks or monitoring, this is not something I am comfortable with.

Then there was a presentation in which COVID was addressed. The representative mentioned the project will provide overnight accommodations for up to 25 elderly, some of whom will be chronically ill. This during a time when homeowners are allowed no more than 10 people on their property.

I want to focus on the intent to house elderly and ill people. We know that [older adults](#) and people with [comorbidities](#) (such as chronic illness) are the most likely to die if they contract this virus. We know that [COVID-19 can sometimes be spread by airborne transmission](#). This building, sizable as it is, does not appear to me to be able to safely house 25 people and the staff required to care for them, even if it is temporary. I have contacted Marion County Health Authority and expressed this concern as well.

ARCHES did assure us that they will have a COVID questionnaire and will be taking temperatures, which is great, but this disease has an [incubation period](#) of up to 14 days, in which asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic infections can occur. This fact invalidates the questionnaire and temperature checks. These people need individual rooms, not cubicles or whatever they have planned.

We were then told the people staying on site will have access to face masks. This virus can spread even when mask masks are worn (see the AIP study [on respiratory droplets and face masks](#)). The CDC makes no distinction about face masks, only that you [quarantine after 15 minutes of close contact](#) with anyone who is or was COVID positive. Again, by my estimation, if you have the targeted demographic described by the ARCHES folks in this facility, you are tempting fate. Not to mention this is in a residential area near a senior center (Center 50+).

Another concern is the plan to accommodate 20 tents and 20 vehicles. The representative for ARCHES implied this is to be an indoor shelter only, then walked that back after being pressed, acknowledging the vehicles and tents. This was some low-level misrepresentation, which I do not appreciate.

The ARCHES Project downtown had a warming shelter last year. By the time they were [cleared out by the Salem Police](#), the area was trashed. It doesn't take much to see what a congregation of these tents and vehicles does to an area – just go to Wallace Marine Park and see the riverfront, then go to the skate park and see the ARCHES building and the old Rite Aid / TJ Maxx building or take a trip up to Parkway and Hyacinth and if that doesn't do it, feel free to walk the underpass at Market St and I-5. To think this will be across the street from my home is unnerving, to say the least.

I am not saying this to be mean. I have lots of sympathy for these folks and believe this to be an urgent issue; one that deserves some real thought and a better solution. I am coming at this from my experience dealing with the homeless on my property and in my travels through town.

My experience with the homeless consist of picking up bags of trash left in our planters, along with spent food containers that I have personally observed them discard. I walk the property with a trash bag and have had the privilege of throwing away bags of used toilet paper, rotten food items and other random debris. On garbage day, we have people sifting through garbage cans and recycle bins. I have made attempts to confront these people, which is usually met with verbal hostility.

Last year we had one person in particular – a Darrell Landingham (Marion County inmate 38071) – who was overnighing in the Center 50+ parking lot. He was selling and consuming drugs out of his vehicle, which attracted several homeless to the area. The Center forced him to move, at which point he tried overnighing on our property, then on the street level. There was one day I witnessed him knocking on my neighbor's door and looking through the windows. I

asked him to leave the property and was met with a verbal assault and physical threats. He was not the only one, but he is one who's mugshot I found.

I also happen work near Parkway and Cherry Avenue. The homeless built a camp in an ODOT easement behind our business, which was around for years. This was right behind the DHS building on Cherry Avenue. The camp has since been removed, but before it was, our business suffered break ins and theft. I am reviewing our loss history for this period and the total insured loss was \$ 25,718. This includes theft of tools from vehicles and damage to our property. This was not isolated to our business. I recommend calling other businesses in the area, such as Brundage Bone Concrete, Susan Court Apartments and Salem Exhaust and Automotive and ask them for their experiences.

Given the evidence and anecdotes provided, I posed this question to the meeting attendees: does anyone on this call live near one of these shelters? One woman did and her stories were heartbreaking: she dealt with issues ranging from drug deals to prostitution, to theft and infighting among the homeless. The City Manager, ARCHES folks and the other callers had nothing. They do not live around these camps and they certainly did not seem to care about moving one into my neighborhood.

However, when the homeless moved to the Capital in [protest of the camping ban](#), you were quick to have them [removed](#). Evidently what is good to the governing isn't good for the governed. I made mention in the call that our community and this shelter are just spots on a map to an indifferent bureaucracy, and I stand by that. In your rush to occupy this building, you overlooked the people who will live with the fallout of your decisions.

Adding insult to injury, as I write this letter, I am looking at my Marion County Property Tax Statement. By November 16, I will write a check for \$ 2,633.23 to Marion County, part of which funds the City of Salem. And here you operate without consideration for me or my neighborhood by quietly acting to install this facility.

In closing, I ask that you reconsider this decision in favor of something better; a place that is more spacious, offers individual rooms with wider access to accommodations like restrooms, showers, transportation; somewhere other than a mixed residential neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bradley Allen