

RESOLUTION NO. 41

Calling on the Health and Human Services Committee To Hold Hearings Regarding Biddle House

WHEREAS, in 2012, the City of St. Louis Department of Human Services adopted MOVING FORWARD, as its policies, plans and strategies for Ending & Preventing Chronic Homelessness; citing this plan as a best practice model for ending homelessness; and

WHEREAS, in April of 2016, the City of St. Louis Department of Human Services issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for homeless services to be located at Biddle House, at 1211-19 Tucker Boulevard in the Near Northside in the 5th Ward, which features plans for a large emergency homeless shelter at Biddle House; and

WHEREAS, City residents who live in the immediate proximity of Biddle House, in April, 2016 wrote a letter to the members of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen requesting that this Board investigate whether the Biddle House plan was consistent with the best practice strategies outlined in MOVING FORWARD, which emphasizes that emergency shelters are not the solution to chronic homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the Near Northside area has a median household income of only 52% of the median income in the City, and an unemployment rate of 22%; and

WHEREAS, these residents live in an area that has struggled for decades without an effective development strategy, and as a result, the area has many quality of life challenges, including poor health outcomes, and high rates of crime that negatively impacts their health, safety, and well-being; and

WHEREAS, this neighborhood is already home to more than ten homeless shelters and prison release halfway-houses in the immediate vicinity that already expose neighborhood residents to a high risk population that threatens their safety on a daily basis, which is reflected in 2014 Uniform Crime Reporting Data from the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department that shows this neighborhood has more than twice the violent crime than the City of St. Louis average; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Biddle House plan merely transfers the region's homeless problems from the Downtown area to this area on the Near Northside without effectively solving the problems, and in fact does not follow the best practices model already adopted by the City of St. Louis for dealing with homelessness; and

WHEREAS, these residents of the City of St. Louis raised many important questions about the proposed facility at Biddle House, as well as questions concerning a pattern of decision-making by the City of St. Louis that they feel will have a profound effect on their present and future quality of life; and

WHEREAS, these residents stated that there has been inadequate public input and inadequate public participation in this process and in the overall execution the City's homelessness plans, and that there are no hearings nor votes scheduled at the Board of Aldermen concerning this important issue; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Health and Human Services Committee conduct hearings on the issues concerning Biddle House and the issues raised by these residents, and should report back to the Board with a recommendation on whether the Board of Aldermen should support the Biddle House plan and whether there should be further investigation of the issues raised by these residents.

Introduced on the 3rd day of June, 2016, by:

The Honorable Tammika Hubbard, Alderwoman 5th Ward

Adopted this, the _____ day of _____, 2016, as attested by:

Timothy O'Connell
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis E. Reed
President, Board of Aldermen