

City Council Agenda 5/24/12 Items 12 and 13

Mayor and Council Members

My name is Stuart Harry Hersh, and like most in Austin, I rent.

Unlike others who may recommend postponement of the Green and Seaholm items or adding more 80% Median Family Income (MFI) rental housing for more years of affordability, I am asking you to adopt the master agreement and infrastructure agreements on your 5/24/12 agenda and eliminate the 80% MFI language. If you retain the 80% MFI language or modify to require more 80% MFI housing, you will guarantee that Green and Seaholm will be forever known as "The Mistakes On The Lake".

Stakeholders in the Downtown Planning process identified the needs to create housing for the poorest among us, including Permanent Supportive Housing. So we should remember this and the words of Dr. Seuss who once wrote, "If I ran the zoo, I'd make a few changes, that's just what I do".

Based on the most recent housing market study and the adopted Downtown Plan, the appropriate housing affordability goals for Green and Seaholm should be 5% of the housing at 30% MFI for 40 years, including Permanent Supportive Housing if possible, for this is the greatest housing gap based on the 2009 Housing Market Study.

Encourage the developers of these two sites to apply for federal and/or local resources you will consider as part of the Action Plan, City Budget and Bond Election ballot later this summer to achieve at least this level of housing affordability at Green and Seaholm.

Finally, I ask you to remember that the keynote speaker at this year's SXSW here in The Live Music Capital of The World was Bruce Springsteen, who once wrote lyrics for those of us born elsewhere that we needed "to get while were young". But this year he wrote a song called "We Take Care of Our Own". Let that begin today in Austin.

In that spirit, I ask you to make the changes I am suggesting at Green and Seaholm to avoid the mistakes on the lake and to send a message to all that Austin will take care of its own, including the poorest among us, in neighborhoods across the City.

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