

Creedon, Paul

From: Arthur Strang [arthurstrang@msn.com]
Sent: Saturday, January 03, 2015 2:57 PM
To: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Fwd: A variety of homelessness issues on the Council's Monday night agenda

Begin forwarded message:

From: Arthur Strang <arthurstrang@msn.com>
Date: January 2, 2015 at 12:45:41 PM EST
To: "Kelley, Craig" <ckelley@cambridgema.gov>, Cambridge City Council
 <Council@CambridgeMA.GOV>, "marcmcgovern@gmail.com" <marcmcgovern@gmail.com>
Cc: Jan Devereux <jan.devereux@gmail.com>, "andreawilder@comcast.net"
 <andreawilder@comcast.net>
Subject: **Re: A variety of homelessness issues on the Council's Monday night agenda**

Dear Craig,

Thanks for your always informative emails.

Eminent Domain: the decrepit build near City Hall.

What is the opinion on eminent domain of The City Solicitor? I would like to see the opinion.

I am not in favor of so dramatic a taking of houses as to evict the people living in them. However, cities have gone that far. Some cities then sold rights to build on the land to private developers of office buildings. I think Cambridge can take a building for moderate income housing.

Homeless:

SF and NYC, and other cities, even Boston, have a "street to home" program for the homeless. It should probably be a Boston Metropolitan program, or at least a program in all the towns served by MBTA bus or subway. One program would be supported by all municipalities, cooperating with money or housing sites or both.

Though there will still be homeless, those identified as likely out in the winter (and willing) are given housing and the services necessary to sustain them at home. Studies show that housing and services cost less than: police, emergency rooms, paramedics, jail, and all the other costs of street homeless. I would be interested in seeing studies that contradict.

A program example: <http://www.cucs.org/services/street-outreach>

Arthur

On Jan 2, 2015, at 11:49 AM, "Kelley, Craig" <ckelley@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

FYI, folks:

Monday's Council agenda includes a number of items regarding homelessness, poverty, affordable housing and hoarding (which is not quite in the same category, but my understanding is that the Housing Authority, like other landlords and property owners) does have to deal with issues of hoarding from time to time).

I've pasted links to most of the items below in case you want any more information. I've also pasted the Manager's letter about not being able to acquire the former Tokyo Restaurant site on Fresh Pond Parkway for affordable housing as an illustration of the challenges the City faces in trying to get new property in a very competitive market. The two Committee reports on poverty and housing are worth reading, especially (I think) the first one which discusses the Housing Authorities \$200,000,000 renovation program and its restructuring of ownership for many of its properties. I won't claim to understand the ins and outs of tax credit financing and holding companies, but there is a lot more to running a Housing Authority than meets the eye. This is big, complicated stuff and the ongoing construction projects and renovations will impact a lot of people. The second committee report, and its attachments, illustrate the challenges we face in working with our homeless population. Finally, there is a Council Order about taking Vail Court (a dilapidated property near City Hall on Bishop Allen Drive) by eminent domain for use as affordable housing. While the building is an eyesore, it appears not to be a public safety hazard and I'm not sure how we could effectively take it by eminent domain for anything, though it's worth thinking about.

Feel free to come speak about this issue Monday night if you wish, remembering it's at the School Committee room at CRLS. You can sign up by phone between 9 and 3 on Monday at 617-349-4280 or in person at CRLS between 5 and 6. Public comment sign up stops at 6, though the comment period itself may last longer. You may also email the entire Council at Council@Cambridgema.gov.

Thanks a lot and have a great 2015!

Craig

All emails to and from this email address are subject to the Public Records Law and may be made available to members of the public. Anything you do not want subject to that law should be sent to me at Craig@CraigKelley.org.

To unsubscribe, click [here](#).

Transmitting communication from Richard C. Rossi, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of a donation from the Cambridge Trust Company to the Multi-Service Center's Carey Program in the amount of \$1,500 to the Grant Fund Human Services Other Ordinary Maintenance account to be used by the Carey Transitional Program for Homeless Men to provide a meal for program participants at the monthly House Meetings.

2. Transmitting communication from Richard C. Rossi, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of a grant from the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MassHousing) in the amount of \$3,000 to the Grant Fund Human Services Other Ordinary Maintenance account which will be used to provide services in relation to hoarding related activities which include training service providers, funding assistance for clean-ups, and establishing and supporting hoarding related peer led support groups.

- 3. Transmitting communication from Richard C. Rossi, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of funds from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services' (EEOHS) salary reserve in the amount of \$5,553 to the Grant Fund Human Services Other Ordinary Maintenance account which will be subcontracted to the Cambridge YWCA to pay one time salary increases to staff at the homeless family shelter.

City Manager Letter

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January 5, 2015

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To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Number 14-110, regarding a report on the status of the housing development on the site of the Toyko Restaurant, Assistant City Manager for Community Development Brian Murphy reports the following:

In response to the above-referenced Council Order we can report the site of the former Tokyo Restaurant on Fresh Pond Parkway at 307 Fresh Pond Parkway was recently sold. The property was sold last month to the owner of the abutting property at 317-327 Fresh Pond Parkway.

Inquiries as to the availability of this property have been made on multiple occasions over the years as it appeared the property would be a suitable site to create new affordable housing. Unfortunately there was no response by the former owner to inquiries made by affordable housing developers in the past.

Earlier this year, there was a proposal advanced for a market-rate residential development and when it appeared that proposal had stalled, City staff contacted the owners to inquire as to the availability of the site. Unfortunately, the property was already under contract with the eventual buyer.

We have informed the new owner of the City's interest in the site and will continue to monitor its redevelopment and be prepared to act if there is interest in pursuing development of affordable housing there.

Very truly yours,

Richard C. Rossi
City Manager

RCR/mec

Policy Order Resolution

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O-3
IN CITY COUNCIL

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January 5, 2015

<image003.png>

VICE MAYOR BENZAN

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WHEREAS: There has been an increasing number of complaints regarding the graffiti and general state of neglect of the blighted property on Bishop Allen Drive known as Vail Court; and

WHEREAS: On May 19, 2014, Councillor Simmons filed Policy Order #5 requesting the City Manager to consult with the appropriate City personnel to determine the feasibility of taking the Vail Court lot by eminent domain and to report back to the City Council; and

WHEREAS: Our City is in dire need of a substantial amount of affordable housing units to meet increasing demand; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back on Policy Order #5 of May 19, 2014 regarding the feasibility of taking the Vail Court lot by eminent domain for the "public good."

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A communication was received from Paula M. Crane, Deputy City Clerk, transmitting a report from Councillor E. Denise Simmons, Chair of the Housing Committee, for a public hearing to receive an update from the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) on programs, projects and policy changes CHA is implementing or planning to implement in the coming year.

- 2. A communication was received from Paula M. Crane, Deputy City Clerk, transmitting a report from Councillor Marc C. McGovern, Chair of the Human Services and Veterans Committee, for a public hearing to discuss poverty and issues related to the experience of organizations working with those living in poverty.