From:	Robin Abeshaus
To:	Ellen Buchanan
Cc:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site; Mayor Staff
Subject:	MRA Funding and Affordable Housing
Date:	Tuesday, April 26, 2022 1:13:51 PM

Dear Ms. Buchanan and MRA Commissioners,

I read the article in this morning's Missoulian about Edgell Builders being granted permission to demolish 322 Levasseur Street ahead of their application for MRA/TIF funding.

I am writing to urge you to not let this permission become a reason to grant TIF funding to this project in the future. As I wrote on your recent survey asking for input on MRA's funding priorities, I believe that it is crucial that we figure out how to provide affordable housing for our community. Ironically, the fact that people were 'squatting' in the building to be demolished serves as proof of the desperate the housing situation in Missoula. My comments on the survey read as follows:

If we want to continue to have a community in the City of Missoula, we need housing that young people and families can afford to purchase, and we need rental properties that are affordable for those who are new to Missoula or want to stay and continue working in the community after college. It is not a secret that currently both housing prices and rents are out of reach of many Missoulians. There are not a lot of options, given our state laws, that Missoula can employ to help return Missoula housing to a level of affordability for a wide range of its citizens. One tool that we do have is TIF financing. I believe that any housing project using TIF funds should have a requirement to provide some sort of long term, if not permanent, affordable housing as part of the project. Additionally, I believe that until our current housing crisis subsides, the best use of TIF funds is to help create housing for all.

With the state legislature prohibiting the use of other tools to address affordable housing, TIF funding is one of the only tools at our disposal. I ask you to use this tool to help address the city's affordable housing crisis.

Thank you.

Robin Abeshaus

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