From: Robin Abeshaus
To: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject: Public Comment - Kiwanis Park Easement
Date: Sunday, July 17, 2022 11:16:37 PM

I have the privilege to be a homeowner in Missoula. I use the word 'privilege' with intention. My partner and I were privileged and fortunate to move to Missoula at a time when there was available and affordable housing stock. Had we not purchased our home then, we would not be able to afford one now. Were we to consider moving to Missoula now, rather than when we did over 25 years ago, we would have to make the difficult decision to settle elsewhere. We would not have been able to afford a rental, even if we could have found one, on our university and teacher starting salaries.

I do not pretend to know all of the factors that have affected affordable housing in Missoula. I do know that whatever the factors, we are in a full blown housing crisis, and I am writing to ask that as City Council members you use your privilege to do what you can to safeguard Missoula citizens who are close to losing their homes. Today I ask that you consider an option other than 'yes' or 'no' on the easement being requested by MC Real Estate Development LLC. I ask that you consider a postponed decision to give the current renters time to figure out whose couch they will land on, or what city they will move to in order to find housing. If they are lucky, maybe they will be able to find a place that will allow them to stay in Missoula, but as we all know, this will take time, time which a postponement might provide.

If the city does decide to grant an easement, how might the developer invest in Missoula's needs? Will there be affordable units in the building? Might there be a set of HOA agreements prohibiting units in the building from being purchased and used as AirBnB's? The city has been in the midst of an AirBnBstudy for some time; I am concerned that while this study is going on, more and more housing units are becoming investment opportunities for their owners rather than available housing for Missoulians.

Missoula's housing policy acknowledges the need for affordable housing. In what ways are we moving toward that goal?

Sincerely,

Robin Abeshaus

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