

September 24, 2009

Temple of Aaron Social Justice Committee  
616 Mississippi River Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55116

To the members of the Social Justice Committee:

I wanted to extend my sincerest appreciation to each of you for all you did in helping our PPL West 7<sup>th</sup> development proposal obtain the zoning variances needed to move forward. Your efforts have helped pave the way for the 44-unit apartment we propose, which, as you know, had encountered stiff resistance from a relatively small but very vocal group of opponents.

The development we propose will provide larger housing units, conducive to family living, at affordable rent levels. Although there is a lot of multifamily development in the West 7<sup>th</sup> area, this particular type of housing is in short supply. The development will also provide housing for 10 formerly homeless families with supportive services that will help them connect with the community. The Temple of Aaron Social Justice Committee's efforts, including attendance and testimony at public hearings and letters to city council and staff, were a very significant factor in moving our proposal forward, and PPL recognizes that and appreciates your efforts.

The resistance our proposal encountered was, I believe, all too often due to misconceptions about what "Affordable housing" really is. But, through your letters and testimony you reminded the neighborhood council, the zoning committee and the city council that our West 7<sup>th</sup> plan is consistent city goals and objectives, including the city's comprehensive plan and the Shepard-Daven small area plan. You reminded them it is consistent with the state's housing plans, including Met Council affordable housing targets and the state's plan to end long-term homelessness. You let them know that affordable housing is not necessarily run-down or substandard, and a haven for crime and misbehavior. Rather, that well-built, well-planned and well-managed affordable housing revitalizes communities by bringing investment to the area and providing a stabilizing force for those who live there. You let them know that you believe PPL has a track record to prove that the development will be well-built, well-planned and well-managed, which we particularly appreciate.

It is not easy to stand up and support a proposal like ours when it may not necessarily directly benefit you as an individual, but you did it anyway, and it made a huge difference. I thought it was particularly telling that Councilmember Pat Harris mentioned at the city council meeting on September 16, when detailing his support for the proposal, that the support of the faith community, and specifically Temple of Aaron, was a factor in his support. I would particularly like to thank Howard Goldman and Vic Rosenthal for their personal testimony to the council and direct conversations with Councilmember Harris, which clearly resonated with him.

When groups such as the Temple of Aaron Social Justice Committee take a stand on an important issue such as affordable housing, it makes a big difference. Know that PPL appreciates all you've done.

Sincerely,

Matt Soucek  
Senior Project Manager  
Project for Pride in Living (PPL)