



COUNCILMEMBER CHRISTOPHER WARD

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: February 19, 2020

TO: Mayor Kevin Faulconer

FROM: Councilmember Chris Ward

SUBJECT: Old Mission Hills Library – Permanent Supportive Housing Proposal

I submit this memorandum in response to your unexpected announcement last Thursday to move forward on specific development of the Old Mission Hills Library, which came without any updates to my office or our Mission Hills constituents.

While there is a significant need for supportive housing throughout the City of San Diego, it was just earlier this month that you and I made a commitment together at the City's Leadership Council to conduct a comprehensive analysis of all publicly owned sites in order to create a single, coordinated regional public land strategy. We have created a framework with the potential of working together to make real progress on our housing crisis by actually analyzing our real estate portfolio. Unfortunately, the piecemeal approach of your recent announcement will, in practice, set timing back for both supportive housing opportunities citywide and beneficial development for this shuttered site. I cannot support this proposal not only because it isn't in line with Leadership Council direction, but also because you have failed to incorporate any constructive feedback for this site.

Starting in May 2018, my office began a process to engage with the community on the future of the Mission Hills Library site in order to support a project that would be both the highest and best use of City-owned land and contribute to the Mission Hills community in a meaningful way. This process has included engaging with residents through several well-attended community meetings and many letters with specific feedback from interested groups. Incorporating much of that feedback, my January 2019 memo to your office requested that the site be utilized for mixed-use market rate housing, affordable housing and commercial opportunities.

On October 26, 2018, the City Council unanimously supported a resolution to identify sites for the construction of at least 140 units of permanent supportive housing (PSH) in each Council District. Additionally, per your request on November 14, 2018, multiple council offices, intending to meet their stated commitments, responded with proposed PSH locations in their communities – many of which are not reflected in the RFP you released last week. At

that time, I had submitted multiple parcels in my district that could have accommodated much larger projects to bring more affordable housing to our region.

Since the adoption of the resolution, District Three communities have entitled or permitted more than 400 units of PSH. Proposals for PSH should be aligned with Council-led principles calling for a data-driven approach to effectively utilize city-owned land in an equitable fashion.

Without any Council or community input on May 7, 2019, your office unilaterally identified eight properties for PSH. The proposed Old Mission Hills Library was included to result in a maximum development of 28 units of PSH. In my conversations with affordable housing developers and experts in homelessness I have been informed that a feasible project size would require capacity of more than 50 units. This raises several questions I have on your decision in this matter:

- Who recommended to your staff that a 28-unit project was feasible for Permanent Supportive Housing?
- What analysis did your office complete on the council proposed sites and why was that not communicated to the City Council?
- What happened to the three sites included in your May 7th, 2019 press release that are absent in the February 13th, 2020 RFP?

I request that your office respond to the community on the removal of 3043 Fairmount Avenue in District Nine, NEC Friars Road & Colusa Street in District Two, and Site 892 in District Two from this Request for Proposal. If these three sites have now been identified to be sold, why were these properties chosen over the remaining five?

Further, basic communication on this issue remains a problem. You have failed to send any representative to attend community meetings in Mission Hills or respond to residents' concerns regarding your proposal. You have failed to respond with any updates on your proposal or considerations to requests. My office has consistently asked for updates regarding this project over the past year and was repeatedly told that we would know in advance of any future action. This absence of communication with the community and my office regarding your proposal displays a basic lack of respect for real partnerships.

Since your press release on May 7, 2019 my office has received helpful feedback from the Mission Hills community regarding project elements that would make future plans for the site synergistic with the surrounding business district, as well as meet the needs of the firefighters next door. In my June 18, 2019 memo to your office, I asked that community requests surrounding this property be included in any future Request for Proposal, including that the designated population of the site be limited to seniors, for which we have a large need in our community. There is nothing to suggest that either this community feedback or my requests have been incorporated into future plans in any way.

In order to successfully address our ongoing housing and homelessness crisis, it is critical that members of the public have faith in the decision-making process that will impact their communities. Furthermore, your office and the City Council have committed to a regional, collaborative action plan which cannot move forward effectively when members of the Leadership Council and Implementation Team act unilaterally to contradict plan priorities. While utilizing existing City assets to address the need for permanent supportive housing in each of our communities must remain a priority, if done correctly, this is a mixed-use site

with broader potential for additional community benefits that does not preclude affordable housing components.

CC:

Aimee Faucett, Chief of Staff, Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer

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