

From: Carlos Ovalle [<mailto:csovalle@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 5:39 PM

To: Mayor <Mayor@longbeach.gov>; Auditor <Auditor@longbeach.gov>; Council District 1 <District1@longbeach.gov>; Council District 2 <District2@longbeach.gov>; Council District 3 <District3@longbeach.gov>; Council District 4 <District4@longbeach.gov>; Council District 5 <District5@longbeach.gov>; Council District 6 <District6@longbeach.gov>; Council District 7 <District7@longbeach.gov>; Council District 8 <District8@longbeach.gov>; Council District 9 <District9@longbeach.gov>; Monique DeLaGarza <Monique.DeLaGarza@longbeach.gov>

Subject: Agenda item 23 19-0092 Homeless Shelter Feb 5, 2019

To:

Long Beach City Council Members, the Mayor, City Auditor, City Clerk

Feb 5, 2019

RE: Agenda item 23 19-0092 Homeless Shelter Feb 5, 2019

Please include the following comment with agenda item 23 19-0092 for City Council Meeting Feb 5, 2019 on the topic of the proposed homeless shelter.

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I applaud the city's efforts to provide a much needed year-round shelter for our homeless residents.

I am writing this from the point of view of direct experience, as someone who in my youth lived for many years in a cold warehouse for lack of affordable place to live, and as a professional who has devoted a majority of my career in architecture to the creation of affordable housing including the creation of homeless shelters, and who has advocated for housing as a right and not a privilege.

First I'd like to comment on the city's lack of outreach effort. The issue of homelessness is a citywide issue. Why were there no hearings or community meetings held in all the districts? Instead we hear that Councilman Richardson spoke with a few community groups in the area of the proposed shelter, and frankly that worries me because from the councilman's own statements it sure looks like he sold a bill of goods that is simply not true.

Councilman Richardson apparently sold the shelter location to the immediate community stating that this "property will immediately provide space needed for a year-round shelter". He explained that there are \$3 million to rehabilitate the buildings to get this shelter running. That is an impossible feat to accomplish. The existing buildings are unsafe to inhabit and do not provide for even the most basic necessities. They are structurally unsound, they lack adequate heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems. They have no restrooms, shower and locker facilities, or nursing station. They have no kennels, pet washing station, or a visiting vet clinic. They do not have offices, storage, break rooms, or other facilities for staff. They have no kitchens, classrooms, meeting rooms, or counseling rooms for social services. The buildings lack compliance with basic fire-life safety codes in terms of the number and size of exits, fire sprinklers, lighting, etc. for a building that provides the stated services.

The main building was built in 1952. In the meantime the codes have changed at least twenty times. It is nearly impossible and financially irresponsible to attempt to upgrade such a building unless it has redeeming historical or

strategic value. It does not. A complete facility would cost in excess of \$100,000 per bed, more for a state of the arm facility, not \$24,000 as the councilman claims.

The first thing that caught my attention is the cost of the land. It just doesn't make sense. Councilman Richardson told me that there are two things driving up the price, one being the price of industrial buildings are desirable due to the proximity of the port and the other that the potential for use of the warehouses as a marijuana greenhouse. Certainly the port would appear to make sense because there is always a need for warehouses. The only problem of course is that what appears to be a warehouse is not. It was designed and built to be a store that one could easily access on foot and come out loaded with bags of produce. What does this mean? An essential component of a warehouse is the ability to load and unload potentially very heavy stuff and the need to move trucks in and out. Well, the light industrial use doesn't allow heavy truck traffic as would be allowed in a Medium Industrial use or General Industrial use. Furthermore there are no loading docks in this place, and I guarantee the floor isn't constructed to support the kinds of storage racks such as one finds in a Home Depot.

The Marijuana growing doesn't make sense either because it requires infrastructure that is non-existent. It would require substantial upgrades in structure, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and two critical components, irrigation and electricity.

Another item of concern is the area of the parcel, which to me sounds as possibly a means of justifying the cost of the land. Published material from the councilman talks about a 3 acre parcel, but from the County Assessors Map, the area is 2.28 acres, far below what the Councilman claims.

All the above point to a potential deficiency in the comparables portion of the appraisal. I would like to ask the city council to release at least this portion of the appraisal and make it available to the public, because from where I stand, the property is highly overpriced.

This parcel is located far from where the areas where I've seen the homeless concentrate, which is downtown and along the beaches. It seems to me that areas that are closer to these locations would have been a wiser choice. From experience in providing housing for the homeless I can tell you that it'll be a hard sell to convince the homeless population to go to this location with their belongings. In fact it'll be a nearly impossible task without transportation for the homeless, their pets, and their belongings. This will add significantly to the cost of operation.

To have homeless people concentrated in one location makes sense only if the location is close to where they congregate. However the greater the number, the more opportunities there are for them to slide into activities that are detrimental to them and society. Why is it that this location was chosen to house homeless in one concentrated area instead of being distributed along areas where they currently congregate?

Respectfully,

Carlos Ovalle, Executive Director
People of Long Beach

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**Carlos Ovalle, Architect, LEED AP
C25390**