



Betty Jo Mahan <bettyjo.mahan@knoxmpc.org>

[MPC Comment] HRM Jail or Hospital?

1 message

connie hughes <conniehughes4521@gmail.com>

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Mayor Rogero, Mayor Burchett, MPC, County Commission, City Council;

I understand the need for such a facility as is being proposed in our city by Helen Ross McNabb at 3343 Dewine Street near Ball Camp Road, but I am somewhat concerned by the site selected and the unanswered questions regarding the use and management of this facility and simply the business decisions that seem not to have been considered. I am not in favor of the proposed site at 3343 DeWine Street/Ball Camp Road location.

The site in question is in a residential area. There are numerous homes, with children that will be affected. Many of these homes are owned by working parents whose children are home alone after school and in the evenings. A decision to put this facility on Dewine is not in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations. The placement of this facility will undoubtedly draw substantial additional traffic through this residential area.

In addition to the above, residential homes are located less than 100 ft from this proposed site. This will affect the value of the property around it. I challenge anyone on the County Commission, City Council, MPC, or Mayors, to get a professional opinion from several realtors and appraisers to verify this. Activity of bringing clients to and taking them away from the facility will indeed injure the value of the adjacent and surrounding properties by the increase noise and lights.

In regards to the business of simply caring for this needed population, I believe many things need to be considered that have not, such as, how many times will a particular client be able to use this facility? 1 time? 2? A dozen? What about the client who has no one to pick them up after discharge? If the time to actually detox an individual is approximately a week, then, why is the County even considering a 72 hr facility? To really help these people, it appears that a 72 hr detox is not addressing the long term problem, and that it is a bandaid to put off the real issue. If helping these folks is the heart of the issue, then lets think long term and address the actual needs.

If this problem is not properly addressed, it will be a burden on future administrations and taxpayers. Even if moving forward is a forgone conclusion and the public meetings is a dog and pony show for the community, then has the County received a detailed, specific project proposal that identifies the specific business plan? Questions asked by the community has been addressed with contradictory and changing answers.

Given the lack of business forethought, I would hate to see Knox County jumping toward a seemingly good short term solution to jail overcrowding by moving forward on this without the legalities being well thought out

and addressed. Is this a detox facility? A hospital? A jail annex? Have these folks been booked as inmates by the jail, or are they just being housed to dry out until, hopefully a family member will take responsibility for them. And if no friend or family member is available, then they are taxied to the downtown jail and released? What steps are being done and who is paying for Case workers to follow up with these folks? And what happens when a mentally ill client misses an appointment with a Case worker that has been assigned to them by HRM? So many unanswered questions. Is subsidizing HRM going to be an ongoing line item in the Knox County budget from now on? Is State dollars always going to be available to help with this expense?

What is the short and long term budget of this facility? Will HRM be asking for assistance down the road from the County? And what is the specific dollar amount that this facility will save the Sheriffs department? How is this being tracked? Have we, as a County, considered that other organizations could provide this service at a lower cost? Such as KARM, or an outside business. Have we as a County researched what works and doesn't work in other parts of the country? There are so many cities and counties around the country that have done this right and wrong. Have we identified them and learned anything? It appears that we are jumping on a quick fix to this solution as State funding is available.

What about expansion? What is in the contract the prevents or allows this? Has this even been addressed? And at this Dewine St location, is this a possibility? Would another site be a more frugal, long term solution? Lets not bandaid this problem for the sake of saying that this community is helping the less fortunate. If we indeed, want to really help and care for these folks and rehab them appropriately, then lets spend alittle more time in learning how to do this correctly. This proposed 3 day detox center is creating problem not solving one.

Is locating facilities such as this all in one area, good for them and for any community? Other cities in this nation has tried this approach. Congesting one area with multiple facilities such as the one proposed here has proven to be detrimental. Shouldn't every part of the City and County share in this responsibility?

As mentioned at the outset, this is a definite need. Let Knox County address it wisely and with compassion for all.

Sincerely,
Connie Hughes
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This message was directed to commission@knoxmpc.org