



January 28, 2021

Asheville City Council
70 Court Plaza
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of Pisgah Legal Services, I write to urge maximum support by the City of Asheville for the proposal for deeply affordable housing on Asheland Avenue planned by the Haywood Street Community Development Corporation. In full disclosure, I serve on the board of directors of this nonprofit, and I was the housing attorney at Pisgah Legal Services from 1983 to 1993.

Thousands of households in Asheville and Buncombe County pay considerably more for rent than the federal government considers affordable. Many of them are the most vulnerable economically and cannot find affordable units to lease. At Pisgah Legal Services we talk to some of these families every day about their basic needs and the information they share drives us to advocate for the development of more affordable housing so that they can make ends meet.

We have all learned that no one model of affordable housing can fully meet the community's needs. We are impressed with the model proposed by the Haywood Street Development Corporation as it leverages multiple funding sources without relying on Low Income Housing Tax Credits while providing housing to those at the lowest income levels. There are not enough federal LIHT Credits to meet the demand, as you know.

We believe this project will be very successful as it proposes to deliver on-site services to residents provided by multiple community partners. The location makes accessing off-site services and the transit system easy for residents, including those that may be persons living with disabilities. This model has already proven to be successful in other cities, and we look forward to seeing it in Asheville.

Thank you for your concern for developing more affordable housing options to increase upward economic mobility in Asheville. This project would be a significant step in that direction, and it deserves substantial financial support from the City, including funds from the Housing Bond and/or Housing Trust Fund.

Sincerely,

James A. Barrett, Executive Director

Standing for Justice and Dignity since 1978.

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