

## Alyssa Bryant

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**From:** Jeff Cox  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2016 1:18 PM  
**To:** Alyssa Bryant  
**Subject:** FW: Arguments Against the Garfield Square Apartment Plan  
**Attachments:** ATT00002.htm; Arguments Against the Garfield Square Apartment Plan.docx

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**From:** Andy Goldfine [mailto:agoldfine@aerostich.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2016 12:50 PM  
**To:** Jeff Cox  
**Cc:** Gunnar Johnson; Council  
**Subject:** Re: Arguments Against the Garfield Square Apartment Plan

### NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Arguments Against the Garfield Square Apartment Plan (2 pages, read-time five minutes)

I am writing you today because I am against the Garfield Square Apartment Plan. There are several reasons. First, I am the owner and founder of a manufacturing business located one block and a half west of the planned location. We have been at that address for thirty two years, and before then I also worked for fifteen years at another business which was located nearby on Garfield Avenue. So I'm familiar with this neighborhood.

By coincidence, I've also lived directly across the street from a Center City Housing owned/managed section 8 property for more than forty years, and by direct observation am familiar with the externalities of this building. The low-income tenants there are my neighbors.

As a result I have strong concerns about this plan and also about the assumptions and philosophies which underlie all of these kinds of projects. They all have measurable and negative effects on both the low-income tenants and the immediate surrounding neighbors and neighborhoods.

The only proven-successful way to house low-income persons is to provide living spaces for small numbers of individuals within a mix of housing locations distributed among areas of middle and moderate income housing. That seems counter-intuitive, but nothing else works. (Separately, yes, it does make sense to put sick people close together in hospitals to provide more effective and efficient care, but only a few low-income people in need of housing are sick. And yes, the same gathering-together efficiencies helps communities provide better care for the elderly, but again, not all low-income persons are elderly.)

From an overall societal perspective, and as an analogy, the best schools and best families both provide students and family members a diverse mix of people sharing a space. Students develop better if they are able to experience being with a mix of ages, races, creeds, and abilities. Something similar happens within families that have children of mixed ages and genders. Low income persons always do better when they are able to live in neighborhoods which provide a mix of peoples and incomes. This is because people in all situations and circumstances learn by direct observation, which only happens when there is proximity. Putting a large number of people of the same race, creed, income or ability all together in one space or enclave does not provide opportunities to learn. It provides the opposite. It diminishes, degrades, marginalizes and Balkanizes. It makes communities, schools and even families weaker.

Specifically to this project, when large numbers of low income people are grouped together in any kind of subsidized building there are always problems, and the larger the number of people involved, the larger the problems. Here, fifty units is a very large number, not just for Duluth, but anywhere. A notorious example of this kind of incorrect development was the failed Cabrini-Green buildings in Chicago (now demolished). There

are hundreds of very similar examples of this exact kind of urban-planning failure in many other cities across the country. These projects never work, no matter how well-intentioned the underlying plans or the operational management.

Separately from low income housing -- yet related -- the very best way to solve low income housing needs is when communities provide job opportunities for low income persons. We currently employ about 65 persons at our facility in Lincoln Park, and some were low income before they started working with us. Now they can afford market-priced housing, and I'm proud to know and work with them.

When I look at Center City Housing and similarly structured entities around the country, I see well-meaning enterprises successfully receiving public funding to develop their housing projects, and then more public funding in the form of Section 8 rental payments for their tenants. These kinds of organizations perform a needed service, but they are getting public money at both ends...to create the living spaces and then to support their tenants. They all prefer large projects like this for a variety of reasons which are internal to such organizations, but which are not in any way the public interest.

Separately, if public money is available to help low-income persons, it would be much better spent if more would be used to help low income persons find and keep jobs. At my business we've never received anything comparable to the kind of public funding Center City Housing has received. I wish more public funding and support were available to those enterprises wanting to hire and train people for vocations. We have multiple current job openings, customer back-orders, and provide a safe and comfortable workplace...but suffer a lack of able applicants. Many other private area employers are also in this situation.

Forgive me, but the kind of public-private 'housing partnership' that Center City Housing has created seems quite a lot like the "military-industrial-congressional complex" stuff which president Eisenhower warned everyone about sixty years ago. That is a separate topic but the similarities (and resulting problems) seem striking.

Lincoln Park is just now emerging as an economically stronger and more desirable neighborhood after two generations of decline, while just across town where I reside the high frequency of emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) at the Center City Housing business across the street from my residence is real. Many of the tenants who need this type of housing assistance here are fine and deserving people, but some are not. These types of housing projects do not work. Center City Housing seems in many ways as much on the public dole as their tenants, except unlike the tenants, they are neither poor, nor in need.

Thus I do not support the Garfield Square proposal. It is conceptually a bad plan for those in need of low-income housing, and is also in a bad location which would be bad for the Lincoln Park neighborhood,...and from a 10,000 foot overview this project will also bad for our greater community. This proposal is only good for the Center City Housing corporation, and they should not receive any public assistance for any projects configured and located like the Garfield Square Apartments.

Sincerely,  
Andy Goldfine

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