



**HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA**

222 EAST SECOND STREET
P.O. BOX 16900 • DULUTH, MINNESOTA 55816-0900
PHONE 218/529-6300 • FAX 218/529-6344 • TTY 218/529-6321



June 1, 2016

Duluth City Council
411 W. 1st St.
Duluth, MN 55802

Dear Honorable City Council Members:

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of the Garfield Square supportive housing development. The creation of Garfield Square is an integral part of the long term plan to redevelop the Esmond Building in Lincoln Park. In addition, Garfield Square is able to meet some of the most important housing needs of our fine city by providing not only housing, but also supportive services to those citizens with some of the highest barriers to housing. Most of the current residents of the Esmond will have the first shot at the opportunity to live in brand new housing which is far superior to their current environment. In addition, the Esmond building will then be redeveloped with community input as a combination of both commercial and residential space. As Lincoln Park continues to evolve as a craft district and a Duluth destination, redeveloping the Esmond is crucial to that neighborhood's growth and success.

As much as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority has a vested interest in seeing this project move forward, providing affordable housing also has a tremendous impact on the overall health of a community. For individuals and families who can now afford their housing payments, it not only improves self-esteem, but it also reduces stress by freeing up resources needed for healthy food and health care. Having high quality affordable housing reduces exposure to environmental health risks, reduces exposure to infectious disease, improves mental health and chronic disease management, and allows survivors of domestic violence a chance to escape abusive relationships.

As we look to the future of our community, it is important to remember that providing housing to our citizens with the highest barriers is the only way to continue the fight against homelessness. These citizens deserve a safe and sanitary place to live that they are able to afford; and, in this case, one that provides the services to help them be successful. We are fortunate in Duluth to have a local developer, Center City Housing Corporation, who is willing to provide housing for our hardest to house citizens. I hope you will vote to support their latest effort - Garfield Square.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill Knutson-Kaske".

Jill A. Knutson-Kaske, MPH
Executive Director