

From: [Peter Duvall](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Alternative Living/Hospital Potentials
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2020 5:47:15 PM

Good Evening All.

Thank you all for the work you do for our city. Please pass along my thanks to Mayor Larson as well. Although I don't always agree with every decision, you balance many items that many don't see.

As we get closer to the possibility of a true pandemic within our own community, I'm curious (and hopeful) that there are plans in place. It concerns me that I haven't been able to find these resources online. Looking forward, my greatest concern lies in the hidden community within our city. As homeless shelters look for alternative areas we must be ahead of the curve.

As the DECC and Central High School will be/have been vacant, I believe you all have the opportunity to be proactive instead of reactive.

If Covid-19 attacks our friends in the shadows, that do not have access to sterile environments, we will all be at fault. Please address this issue with the resources available.

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Peter Duvall

From: [jamie harvie](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Bag it Duluth and Fee Enforcement
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 12:38:11 PM

Councilors,

Clearly, the national pandemic has thrown the plans of many businesses and individuals into disarray. While a variety of businesses have already voluntarily implemented a bag fee those that decided to wait until the April 1st implementation are now in a challenging spot logistically. To that end, Bag it Duluth is very supportive of the proposed July 1st bag fee enforcement delay. We want the shift to happen as seamlessly as possible for business and customers. We are opposed to the amendment to the resolution which has a proposed extension to January 1st, 2021.

Of course, we do not have a crystal ball and come July 1st this country may still be in a major crisis. But, we also can't ignore the growing climate crisis compounded by plastics production. Let's give our community some breathing room and worst case scenario council can revisit the issue July 1. In closing, let us remember that regardless of the implementation date customers will still have the option to use paper bags and that those on WIC and SNAP are exempted.

I am hoping that all of you and your families are safe and healthy. Thank you for your service especially in this time of crisis.

Sincerely,

Jamie Harvie

Bag it Duluth

From: [Angus Vaughan](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Council Agenda, Item 38 (resolution 20-0288R)
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2020 3:33:36 PM

Dear City Councilors,

I am writing to comment in opposition to resolution 20-0288R, authorizing an agreement with SMDC Health System for the design and construction of a parking ramp and skywalk in the Regional Exchange District. Demolishing functional housing to replace it with a parking ramp is not in the best interests of Duluth and is antithetical to multiple stated city priorities, including increasing affordable housing, reducing the city's greenhouse gas emissions, and making decisions about transportation infrastructure primarily in the context of improving city and neighborhood vitality and not on automobile traffic.

I appreciate the city's efforts to obtain a donation from SMDC to cover the remaining outstanding funding for One Roof Community Housing's Brewery Creek Apartments project. However, although that is an important project and should be prioritized, it is a development that was already planned and mostly funded, and would likely happen without this funding from SMDC. Therefore, it is disingenuous to argue that this agreement will replace the housing that will be lost in the construction of the parking ramp. At a time when our city is facing a severe housing shortage, demolishing 19 units of functional, affordable housing is irresponsible.

Not only does this proposal eliminate affordable housing, it does so to build infrastructure that increases our city's dependence on automobiles, and will likely not solve the identified parking shortage in the medical district and downtown. Has the city considered or studied the induced demand this ramp will create for parking? By making it easier to park nearby, this project will entice patients and staff who currently take the bus or active modes of transportation to drive instead. This pattern is observed persistently when automobile infrastructure is expanded. The demand increases to fill the supply. Furthermore, by increasing parking capacity, this proposal will increase traffic and cause increased greenhouse gas and other air pollutant emissions at the very time we need to cut them dramatically. It is unconscionable to spend a large sum of public money to expand automobile infrastructure, when we should be focusing our public investment to do exactly the opposite.

Councilors, I hope you vote against this resolution. At the very least, a different location should be selected for this ramp. There are numerous lots nearby that are vacant or used as surface parking lots. Furthermore, I urge you to consider whether a new parking ramp should be built at all. I understand the \$36 million of state money is earmarked specifically for building a parking ramp, and that turning down this money would be a difficult decision. Nevertheless, I believe we should think hard as a community about whether we should be spending public money to dramatically increase the automobile capacity of our city when instead we should be reducing greenhouse gas emissions and prioritizing safer, healthier, more equitable forms of transportation. I have no doubt it is in the best interests of Essentia to build this ramp. I urge you to think hard about whether it is really in the interest of the

broader community you represent.

Sincerely,

Angus Vaughan

1424 E. 10th St.

Duluth, MN 55805

From: [Maria Antonescu](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: council agenda
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 7:16:34 PM

I stand with Community advocates with Housing Justice Duluth urge you to oppose the increase in vacation rentals, which would eventually remove up to 115 units of much-needed housing in Duluth.

When my family and I moved to Duluth we had a very hard time finding affordable rentals. We eventually found a one bedroom we could afford - for my husband, our small child and myself. We had no extra money for savings. It was quite a time of struggle.

More affordable housing needs to be available in Duluth. Duluth is not known for good paying jobs, which makes affording steep rent very tough. Now, in the midst of a pandemic many people are out of work with no savings and trying to figure out how to afford their rent.

Approving an increase in vacation rentals takes more housing out of the picture in Duluth when we are already short of housing.

Community advocates with Housing Justice Duluth have a great idea of allowing people to rent out their own place of residence when on vacation - this would not take housing away from other people.

Thank you for your time,
Maria Antonescu

From: [Libby Weberg](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Council Agenda
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 1:03:25 PM

Dear City Councilors,

Please vote no on the proposal to allow St. James Catholic Church to expand their parking lot at the expense of 6 housing units adjacent to the church.

The removal of relatively affordable housing units for parking is inconsistent with progressive urban planning guidelines, including Imagine Duluth 2035, which recommends preserving existing housing and moving towards a denser development pattern.

As long as there are handicap spaces and a workable drop-off area to the church, walking a few blocks is not a hardship, and honestly is likely safer than negotiating across a larger parking lot.

Thank you for your consideration,

Libby Bent
2423 E 2nd St., Duluth

From: [J.R. Rogers](#)
To: [Council](#)
Cc: [Emily Larson](#)
Subject: Editorial
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 12:31:09 PM

Councilors,

I have to strongly agree with this editorial. ESPECIALLY, the last paragraph.

If passing on germs with dirty reusable bags is a concern during the pandemic, isn't the passing on of germs from these bags something we should be concerned about ALL the time?
<https://www.duluthnewtribune.com/opinion/editorials/5009692-Our-View-Council-can-bag-the-bag-fee>

Thank you,

Stay safe and healthy!

Also, thanks for your service.

Jim Rogers.

Sent from my iPhone

From: bclqt@aol.com
To: [Council](#)
Date: Saturday, March 21, 2020 6:55:47 PM

At a time like this, your all talking about some bag fees ?? Why don't you go & pickup the 2 or 3 bags you supposedly see in the trees once a year or so....

My God, where are your priorities, you can't even sign/mark the roads for emergency routes for the city snow-plowers, and we "have snow" each winter since the beginning of time....

Good-God, the hope&change crowd.....

Time for another layer of duplicate programs.....

As ever,
The long ago broke taxpayer-provider,
Jack Anderson

From: [Jess Koski](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Message to Renee Van Nett
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 8:32:29 PM

Boozhoo!

I wish I had emailed you when this first came up, but tonight's bag amendment prompts me to express my disagreement with your stand on the plastic bag fee.

In short, I disagree with your argument that, as an Indigenous woman who works with and represents people of color, and low-income constituents, that the bag fee is somehow a burden. You've heard all the arguments already during the debate, so I won't rehash them.

But, as a person who grew up on the Central Hillside, dirt poor, and as an enrolled member of the Grand Portage Band, I can assure you that a nickel surcharge isn't going to break anyone... and if it does prove to be a financial burden, it will motivate people to simply bring an old bag--plastic or otherwise to the store (after this pandemic now I guess.)

I hope that in the future you will *first* make decisions based on our children and the seven generations... not temporary inconveniences.

And, I am not attacking you... just disagreeing.

Stay well, Renee... and thanks for your time and service to the community.

(Did you know Elaine Fleming at Leech Lake? One of my favorite humans! :)

-Jess Koski

From: [Wind Ridge Schoolhouse](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Outdoor child care model and assistance for providers/teachers
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 2:35:41 PM

Dear City Councilor,

Child care providers have been asked to remain open to support the needs of Minnesota's essential and emergency workers during the COVID-19 crisis. Unlike the K-12 system where funding continues to flow for operations even while closed, child care providers are experiencing an abrupt drop in operating revenue as families understandably withdraw due to COVID-19 health or financial reasons. Family Child Care is being deeply affected as our profit margins are slim, and most of our families are private pay. The child care system is in imminent danger of collapse. This means that health care providers, police, fire and grocery store employees cannot show up to support their communities.

Creative solutions for how to address the child care crisis for essential workers and mitigate risks of spreading the virus among children and all workers caring for children are needed for both the short and long-term. My child care program has a model of care that is primarily outside. We are still learning about how this virus spreads, but it seems like it is less likely to transmit outside than inside. If this crisis escalates and essential workers have a hard time finding care for their children perhaps we might look for alternative care models.

We have a talented, connected, and passionate group of professional nature teachers in MN that I am optimistic would step up to help the children of essential workers have a safer play experience while their families care for others. I have some ideas about how this could look as the weather warms. Please be in touch if this type of support is ever a helpful path as we make our way forward in this uncertain future.

We're all in this together. Take care,
Laura Whittaker, M.S. Ed.

1302 W 5th St
Duluth, MN 55806

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"Go slow. Pet a chicken."
- wisdom from a Schoolhouse nature preschooler

[Wind Ridge Schoolhouse](#) | Brave & kind, hardy & free

From: [Art Johnston](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Plastic bag agenda item should be tabled forever
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 12:05:40 PM

It is hard to believe that the Duluth City Council is still talking about plastic bags. This item should be table indefinitely.

With all the the important things going on in the world, for the Duluth City Council to even talk about plastic bags is completely crazy and an indication that your (the Council's) priority are irrational. This is particularly important in that plastic bags are the safest and cleanest way to stop transmitting viruses.

Please start acting responsible and do something that would benefit the City.

Art Johnston

37 N. 93rd Av. W.

Duluth, MN

From: [Daral Lange](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Plastic Bag Fee
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020 9:51:42 PM

Dear Duluth City Council,

I see you are debating whether or not to delay implementation of the proposed \$.05 fee on plastic shopping bags. I believe the delay should be made. An even bolder move would be to not only delay the plastic bag fee, but to also ban the use of reusable shopping bags until this pandemic is over. The reason for this is because reusable bags could very well be carrying dangerous bacteria and virus. Ask people who shop with reusable bags how often they launder and disinfect their reusable bags. I've asked several since this issue first came up and what I found is that very few people actually clean their reusable bags. Those bags should be washed every time they are used. At a time when people can't even use a refillable coffee cup at a store, it is strange that people can plop their reusable bag on the check out counter in a grocery store without proving somehow that the reusable bag is sanitary. I didn't give it much thought until recently. Now I see people do that and I can only think one thing. IT. IS. GROSS.

Sincerely,

Daral Lange
Duluth

From: [Sheila M. Ballavance](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Plastic Bag Issue Tabled
Date: Friday, March 20, 2020 11:15:54 AM

I was glad to see the plastic bag issue tabled and I would like to have you completely rethink that whole issue. If there was ever a time that we don't want people bringing possibly infected items into our stores, this is it. When we hear that the Coronavirus can live on objects for hours or days ----what about that bag/bags that people bring into the store??

Have you ever looked into the car that you park next to in the grocery store parking lot or the drug store parking lot or the mall lot? Often times these cars are strewn with debris---some of which are these reusable bags that people bring into the stores. Do we really want dirty bags in the same grocery cart we use in the store, or on the same counter of the drug store or convenience store where we are putting our products in a clean plastic bag. Those reusable bags are very likely on the floor of their car, maybe on the seat where the dog laid, or stepped on by their children when they got into their car—I bet if some were tested for fecal matter, it would be found. All very probably things when leaving your reusable bags in your car so they are there when one goes to the store.

I don't know about you, but even if this was not the fear of the Coronavirus on those bags, just the germs and dirt that they are probably collecting on them from daily/weekly use and careless care should be enough to know this probably is an idea that should be scrapped.

Please----move off of this issue. Plastic or new paper bags are clean and if we all use them, we know that no germs and dirt have been brought into that store and rubbed on the counter we are all using. And now that so many people are out of work---every nickel counts. Move on to important problems likes street and infrastructure problems and crime.

Thank You!
Sheila Ballavance

From: [David Ross](#)
To: [Council](#)
Cc: [Emily Larson](#)
Subject: Request to Delay New Charge for Plastic Bags
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020 1:26:40 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Duluth City Councilors,

The Duluth Area Chamber's leadership applauds Councilor Sipress' proposed resolution to delay the mandated charge for plastic bags, from April 1 to July 1.

The majority of Duluth's businesses are struggling mightily as they navigate the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. Our Chamber members, who are in the grocery industry, are working exceptionally hard to provide our community members with the essentials they need for sustenance during these challenging times.

You are in a position to support and affirm the heroic work being accomplished by the workers who deliver the groceries to our local stores, stock the shelves, process our purchases, while keeping the stores clean and safe. These honorable women and men are feeding our community.

Please know the Chamber stands in solidarity with you as you strive to lessen the challenge being faced by our brothers and sisters in the grocery industry. Please vote to delay the mandated charge for plastic bags.

Yours in supporting the more efficient nourishment of our community,

David

David Ross

President & CEO

Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce

218.740.3751

duluthchamber.com

[Visit my blog by clicking here.](#)



[Join our email list by clicking here.](#)

From: [Mark A. Baker](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: St. James Church
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2020 10:33:57 PM

Council members:

I wish to indicate my opposition to the application of St. James Church to vacate alley in order to create additional parking spaces. This whole project, to create more parking without any analysis of why it is necessary, while at the same time removing 5 affordable housing units, should fail.

I urge you to vote NO on this proposal.

Mark A. Baker
231 East Arrowhead Road
Duluth, MN

From: [City of Duluth MN](#)
To: [Chelsea Helmer](#)
Subject: The Form "Contact - City Council" was submitted
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2020 8:29:47 PM



Umbraco Forms

Form Results

First Name

Abigail

Last Name

Dillon

Email

abigail.c.dillon@gmail.com

Phone**Message**

Hello City Council, Thank you for your leadership in this time, of uncertainty with the coronavirus, COVID-19. I would like to bring up the matter of rent to you. As you are aware, social distancing and self isolation is critical to preventing the spread of COVID-19. This makes shelter and a place to call home essential. However, we are seeing an unprecedented spike in unemployment across the country, even threatening to exceed that which we saw in the Depression era. I request that you mandate a rent freeze and eviction ban across Duluth so that those whose employment/income has been impacted by COVID-19 can maintain

the essential social distancing required to slow the spread of the virus and lessen the strain on our medical system/professionals. Many companies - such as MN Power and Charter - are taking this downturn of employment into consideration, and our state leaders have worked with the education department to ensure essential needs (food for students, pay for workers, childcare for those whose services we rely upon) are met within our state. Housing is one of those essential needs. To be clear, I am one who is able to continue paying rent as my work has been able to be moved remotely. But I know that many of my neighbors, and many of those across the city do not. Regards, Abigail Dillon

Recaptcha

Need more help? Contact: Webupdate

Chelsea Helmer

From: Ashley G <ashleygrimmc@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2020 6:20 PM
To: Council
Subject: Council Agenda Public Comment

Thank you all for your service. Here are my public comments for agenda item regarding vacation rental increase:

Thank you for your public service in this time of uncertainty. I am writing to urge city council to table and ultimately oppose the increase in vacation rentals, which would eventually remove up to 115 units of much-needed housing stock in Duluth. It is a well-documented fact that we need housing at all levels, and especially at affordable levels. We have repeatedly given millions in tax breaks to increase high-end housing stock, and have not made a significant dent in the amount of affordable units desperately needed in our city. To be clear, this would remove housing at each of these levels. From what could be one-bedroom apartments in West Duluth to homes that would be affordable to first-time home-owners to units that doctors and executives could afford. Instead potential homeowners and renters are leaving Duluth. I've talked to many of them. Community advocates with Housing Justice Duluth urge you to table this proposal. We urge you to work with the Planning Department and Planning Commission to allow people to rent out their own homes for weeks or months when they are gone (which does not take housing stock off the market) and still hold firm on preventing people from renting out second or third homes to vacationers and taking it off the market for families who want to live in Duluth.

It has been brought to my attention that units may also be lost for an expansion of parking space for a local church, and I ask city council to help find possible alternatives that would serve community members.

It has been said that this will only affect a very small percentage of our housing stock. That this does not solve the fact that we need thousands of units for low-income renters. I don't contest either of these. But I hold firm in a simple truth. We have a critical lack of housing. And while this isn't enough to fill it, when you're in a hole the first thing you do is stop digging. We are simply asking to stop digging. It's not thousands, but let's start with helping up to 115 families.

Sincerely,

Ashley Grimm
4020 Grand Ave.
Duluth, MN 55807
218-485-1074