From:	Ellen Buchanan
To:	Robin Abeshaus
Cc:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site; Mayor Staff; Dept. MRA; Karl Englund (karljenglund@aol.com); Melanie Brock; Nancy Moe; Ruth Reineking (rreineking@gmail.com); Tasha Prinzing Jones
Subject:	RE: MRA Funding and Affordable Housing
Date:	Wednesday, April 27, 2022 9:15:46 AM

Thank you for your email and voice message. I am sorry that you were having difficulty finding contact information for the MRA If you go to our web page, www.ci.missoula.mt.us/MRA, there is a "contact us" link which is a little hard to find (it took me a bit of searching to find it). I will ask staff to find a way to make it more obvious.

With respect to the Edgell project on Levasseur Street, the action that the MRA Board took last Thursday in no way guarantees or obligates TIF funding for this proposed project. It merely allows them to move forward with removal of a structure that has become dangerous and a nuisance for the neighborhood without precluding reimbursement for that work should his project move forward and receive approval for TIF funding.

Missoula's very real shortage of housing at all levels is a constant challenge that the City Council, the Mayor's Office, MRA and other City departments are working on diligently. This is especially critical for our lower income residents and our service workers. The more we drill into this, the more evident it becomes that there are no simple remedies and some that seem like no-brainers come with unintended consequences. We will continue to work collaboratively to find solutions that will have a lasting impact on our housing needs.

Thank you for taking the survey on Engage Missoula. We value your input and use it to shape new programs and modify existing ones.
Best,
Ellen

Ellen Buchanan, Director
Missoula Redevelopment Agency
140 West Pine Street
Missoula, MT 59802
406 552-6156
buchanane@ci.missoula.mt.us

From: Robin Abeshaus <robinabeshaus@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 1:14 PM
To: Ellen Buchanan <buchanane@ci.missoula.mt.us>
Cc: Grp. City Council and City Web Site <Council@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Mayor Staff <StaffM@ci.missoula.mt.us>
Subject: MRA Funding and Affordable Housing

Dear Ms. Buchanan and MRA Commissioners,

I read the article in this morning's Missoulian about Edgell Builders being granted permission to demolish 322 Levasseur Street ahead of their application for MRA/TIF funding.

I am writing to urge you to not let this permission become a reason to grant TIF funding to this project in the future. As I wrote on your recent survey asking for input on MRA's funding priorities, I believe that it is crucial that we figure out how to provide affordable housing for our community. Ironically, the fact that people were 'squatting' in the building to be demolished serves as proof of the desperate the housing situation in Missoula. My comments on the survey read as follows:

If we want to continue to have a community in the City of Missoula, we need housing that young people and families can afford to purchase, and we need rental properties that are affordable for those who are new to Missoula or want to stay and continue working in the community after college. It is not a secret that currently both housing prices and rents are out of reach of many Missoulians. There are not a lot of options, given our state laws, that Missoula can employ to help return Missoula housing to a level of affordability for a wide range of its citizens. One tool that we do have is TIF financing. I believe that any housing project using TIF funds should have a requirement to provide some sort of long term, if not permanent, affordable housing as part of the project. Additionally, I believe that until our current housing crisis subsides, the best use of TIF funds is to help create housing for all.

With the state legislature prohibiting the use of other tools to address affordable housing, TIF funding is one of the only tools at our disposal. I ask you to use this tool to help address the city's affordable housing crisis.

Thank you.

Robin Abeshaus

3331 Hollis St.
Missoula, 59801