

TRANSCRIPT
Neighborhood Meeting
The Launchpad Project
9/26/22

SK = Shawna Kemppainen Executive Director of The Place
WB = Wayne Bland Housing Stability Chair of The Place
SC = Sam Clark Executive Director of the Pikes Peak Real Estate Foundation (Property Owner)
JF = Jen Filonowich retiring Executive Director of the Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School
BG = Becky Gundrum Board President and COO of The Place

SK: Likely you walked in here to this meeting with questions, so we have little notecards and pencils that if you'd like to jot things down. We're going to collect those through the evening to make sure that, you know, if you're like me, I think of something and then forget. So, if you jot it down then you'll have it.

WB: We also have cookies from Mary's Mountain Mama's. It's a new cookie shop downtown. Pat Rigdon is former Colorado Springs Police Department. He and his wife opened that this summer. Pat was on the board of The Place. So, we thought we'd support him. He has supported us through the years. Water and a few soft drinks are there, so make yourselves comfortable. I have paper because I'm old and I forget my place and I don't want to just go on and on. My name is Wayne Bland and

Neighbor: You need a loudspeaker!

WB: There's chairs up here. They're chairs here.

Neighbor: I'm good right here.

WB: Ok

SK: We'll project as best we can!

WB: So, my name is Wayne Bland and I'm going to make a few introductions and a few thank yous. First of all, I want to thank Jen Filonowich. Jen here is the executive director for the Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School which is here and I know a lot of you pass by here almost every day. Jen invited us to have a meeting here to let you all know what's going on. This is not a required meeting by the city. Actually Alex asked some questions of Shawna and we said "Well, there are probably other neighbors that want to know what's going on." And, since we're going to be your neighbors we wanted to let you know what's going on and see if you have any questions. So, what we'd like to do is go through. Yes, sir?

Neighbor: Can I ask why it's not a required meeting from the city?

WB: Because we're ahead of the required meetings. When Alex asked us a question, she said other neighbors may want to know. So we decided to put this meeting together independently so you'd have information ahead of time.

Neighbor: But I guess what I'm asking is, why wasn't this notified to everybody in the beginning before it was ever put together? Because, you know if you do something with a piece of property, unless you're government, you have to get okay from the city all right? So, what I'm asking is why wasn't it posted? And, why was it that we didn't know about this until just a month and a half ago?

WB: So, we're not in that portion of the process yet.

Neighbor: Then why are they drilling and setting property lines and stuff?

Neighbor: So you're already going right?

WB: So, please. I beg, let us go through this and we'll explain that as we go along. And then if you have questions at the end you can write them down, that's why we provided pen and paper so that you could do that. We called this meeting voluntarily so please know that. It wasn't required by the city. We did this so that you guys as neighbors would understand what's going on with the property.

Neighbor: Okay, well I got one more question before I stay here. Is this meeting in any way, shape or form us saying that we don't want the property built and can that be retracted?

WB: No sir.

Neighbor: Then, why?

WB: It's informational.

Neighbor: Let's let him talk and then we can ask questions.

Neighbor: I've got a question for you. What is the building actually about?

WB: Okay.

Neighbor: Let's get there. Let's get there first.

WB: Really quickly we'll go through it so please bear with me. I don't want to get off schedule and it's not really about schedule because we'll stay here as long as Jen will let us stay here but I'd rather go through and cover all the facts before we get into other issues that raise other questions. So please let us do the presentation and respect that we came to you voluntarily so that you would know what was going on.

Neighbor: So, no matter what comes out of this meeting, it's not like you can go back and be like, "Nope. We're going to move it somewhere else"?

WB: I don't understand the question.

Neighbor: You're going to go forward with this anyway right?

Neighbor: You're going to go forward with this regardless of what this meeting happens or not.

Neighbor: No, the Planning Commission is the one who decides right?

SK: Yes, we still are going through the city process. There will be another official city meeting.

WB: A required city meeting.

Neighbor: I guess the start of it was supposed to be in August, or I mean September or October that's what we've read in the newspaper.

WB: No, sir. We're not gonna really dig over here so to speak. We're not going to turn dirt probably until

SK: Spring. Late spring.

Neighbor: Well, you have to get approval from the Planning Commission.

WB: Yeah, we'll go through all the city's approvals and you guys will get notices. I mean, we'll do the proper thing. What we were trying to do is get ahead of it and give you good information so that you understood what was going on before we had the city meeting. So, thank you. So, I appreciate your comments. I do want to introduce a few people. Shawna Kemppainen is here. Shawna is executive director of The Place. The Place is homeless youth services here in Colorado Springs and Shawna has been the executive director for about eight years. She'll speak in just a moment. She and I will do the tag team. The developer was supposed to be here but the developer representative came down with covid yesterday, so Shawna and I are going to try to tag team and answer questions for her. And then Becky Gundrum. Becky's here. She's the COO of The Place. Mimi Brown is here. She's on the board for The Place. Peggy Byrd is our youth housing services coordinator. And my lovely wife and volunteer at The Place, Pam for 16 years. And then Sam is here. Sam Clark. Sam is going to speak in just a moment. So what I'd like to do is have us go through this and Sam can talk about the need for housing. We'll talk about both the project and also the programs for it so that you all have as much information as we can give you ahead of time.

SK: Let's let Jen say a word if she wants to.

WB: Yeah.

(pause)

WB: Jump in there, Sam.

SC: Ok, cool. Hi. Welcome everyone. Thank you for taking the time. I know it takes a lot out of one's day to come and talk about housing sort of in the middle of a weekday afternoon so appreciate you guys being here. My name is Sam Clark. I work with the Pikes Peak Real Estate Foundation. We're part of the Pikes Peak Community Foundation. So, we're a non-profit entity and one of the things that we're really passionate about is getting more affordable housing in this community. The reason that matters a lot to us is, if we want a really strong economy, if you want a resilient city, you have to have affordable housing. The reason that's important is, all of us go to a barber. All of us shop at the King Soopers just down the road. If you have a kid that's in school, their teachers are all folks that don't get paid enough to pay the median rents or buy a median home in Colorado Springs. This is something we probably have all observed or have all experienced over the last couple of years. Housing has gotten really expensive in this community. Housing is already incredibly expensive in a city like Denver and so our job as the Real Estate Foundation is to help this community figure out, "How do we get more projects established that are going to make it affordable for the folks that really run this city to allow them to live successful, economically resilient lives in this community?" You do that by having affordable housing. So, one of the reasons that we have been behind the work Shawna and Wayne and Becky have been doing is they put together a really phenomenal affordable housing project. It's a really complicated project, sort of unique for this community in that it is using something called a low income housing tax credit. And what that means is the State is offering tax credits to a developer. And Marsha, you and I were just talking about you know, you're somebody that sort of lives in the center politically. This is a Reagan Era program that was saying "Hey how do we provide market incentives so that developers have incentives to build housing that's not going to go to the most expensive rent possible." So it created this low-income housing tax credit program. Colorado Springs

historically has not had a lot of these projects. We haven't been very good at winning these awards. So, the Real Estate Foundation was really excited and started working with The Place and realized that we had the opportunity to get a lot of State funding to help make housing in this community more affordable. And, we were so enthusiastic about this we purchased the land where the project is going to be. And then we've also, through our mother ship, the Community Foundation, provided some of the grant dollars that go to making this project sort of roll out, making sure that we have enough money to cover the costs and make sure that this program is really well operated through its first five years of existence. So, that is the reason that we really care about this project. We're probably about 10,000 units of affordable housing short in this community. That means that if you are starting your career, if you're somebody that's working in public service, you likely are not able to find a home that you can live in affordably and that means you're less likely to pay for your health care needs and means you're less likely to go to the movie theater and help new businesses survive in this city. So, we're really passionate about this. We're really grateful that we have a chance to meet you guys and talk a little bit about what this means to our community by having it here. But, long story short, this is a really unique project for this community it's incredibly well designed and it's a reason why the Community Foundation, The Real Estate Foundation have been so behind this project. We're really enthusiastic about what it means for the Westside. Shawna, we'll have you come in and talked a little bit about who's going to be living in a project like this and a little bit about why is The Place important. How maybe people have interacted with The Place in the past and kind of "What's the vision for the project? And then maybe we can talk a little bit about the design details that type of thing, but I think the important thing first is, you know, who is this? And, you know, who are our neighbors going to be when this project is done?

Neighbor: Before you start, I have a question.

SK: Yeah?

Neighbor: So the Real Estate Foundation, what did you say was the real estate?

SC: The Pikes Peak Real Estate Foundation.

Neighbor: So they're not worried about property values going down? Because of this? Because this is not a housing unit. This is a homeless shelter, let's just be clear.

SC: Actually, I might change your mind about that. So one thing is, this is a 17 million dollar project. There's really good research around the fact that when you have new projects like this, it actually has a positive effect on the neighborhood residential area. I can give you some data that just came out on this recently but long story short, like these are expensive projects. And they're new projects so they're things that really help neighborhoods.

Neighbor: So let's put it in the Broadmoor!

Neighbor: Yeah!

Neighbor: Let me ask you a question. Where do you live?

SC: I live on 29th and Pikes Peak.

Neighbor: How long have you lived there?

SC: Four years.

Neighbor: Four years. Let me tell you, I've lived in this neighborhood, within 300 yards of here, my whole life. 58 years. And all the homeless, what are we doing about the homeless down here? Nothing.

Neighbor: It's gotten worse.

Neighbor: Not a thing. And is this going to make it any better? Is this going to make where we are here any better? This project?

SC: So if I can actually kind of kick this to Shawna because I think you're bringing up some good questions.

SK: So, the answer is we're not doing nothing anymore right? And we're not building a shelter.

Neighbor: Okay so we're gonna have trash cans for the homeless, right?

SK: So let me let me share a little bit with you. I share your concern. In our community, across the city,

Neighbor: Where do you live?

SK: I sold my house on Pikes Peak and 8th Street a few years ago and I live by Cheyenne Canyon.

Neighbor: Okay. Cheyenne Canyon. So, this isn't going to do anything to your property value?

Neighbor: Nope.

Neighbor: Whether you put a 17 million dollar building there or not, it's not going to do anything to your property value.

SK: We'll be glad to share the information in the research about what happens to property values.

Neighbor: I own the biggest piece of property around here that's undeveloped. What is that going to do to that piece of property?

SK: We're going to let Sam send that data out to everybody.

Neighbor: Yes, please do. Because, I do real estate and I don't. That's not the case.

SK: Yeah, so I wanna acknowledge that this is, I mean you came in with like "What the hell are you going to do over there?" I get it. I totally get it. So, we want to share what's happening and yes we're just at the start of the process with the city. There'll be more meetings but this is just a brand new drawing of what's called The Launchpad. It's 50 units of. It's 50 apartments. It's a big apartment home community. It's not a shelter and it's designed for young people 15 to 24 years old. So, let me tell you a little bit about who The Place is. So, this is really beautiful. The developer is amazing. We can talk about that. But what really matters is what's going on inside. Because you want to know what's going to be happening on your street, on your corner right? Like who are these people moving to your neighborhood?

Neighbor: Yep.

SK: So we are working with young people who are primarily (might be some a little older) but 18 to 24 years old.

Neighbor: But do not have to be.

Neighbor: No, they have to be.

SK: No, some people can be older. We can't, it would be housing discrimination to say "You're 25 you can't live here". But in the other projects like this around the country it's typically the late 20s and then they move on and we have a process for that. So, we have a really simple goal at The Place. If any young person falls into homelessness in our community, we want them to be able to get off the street in 24 hours. So we have all sorts of programs that work with that. A drop-in center. We do have a shelter downtown. We've been doing housing like this in other buildings all across the community called scattered site housing. We have about 150 youth who live out in apartments right now that our staff works with. The second thing is, I'll just ask you to think about is, raise your hand if at the age of 20 you had all your stuff together and it was all good?

Neighbor: I had a job.

SK: That's excellent. I moved back into my parents' house twice by the time I was 22.

Neighbor: I moved out when I was 15 and never wanted to go back.

SK: That's awesome. But, some of us have parents and support systems where we can do that and not everybody does. And, the young people we're working with have had a lot of trauma in their background, usually abuse situations and they are going to end up down at that 7-Eleven and 40 and 50 years old doing drugs and other things.

Neighbor: They already do that!

SK: One of the aims of this is to have a good support system and option for them to get off the street, live in a decent place and work with our staff. So I'll tell you a little bit about what we're going to be doing inside the building. And Becky is our timekeeper tonight because I'll talk all night she's going to stop me. Inside this, this great building, we're going to have support services that are wide ranging. Everything from what's called "case management": listening to youth, linking them with resources. We're gonna have health services that come in including mental health services. We're going to be doing food and mood groups. We're going to be doing support groups. We're going to be bringing all the things. Youth all need different things. There are no two alike. So, youth need different things and we're going to bring those into the common centers that we have there. So youth will live in their own apartment and also be able to come down to meetings. Let's say we have an AA meeting that's happening once a week or we're doing a food cooking class. We also have, you know, a laundry area. We're going to put in a gaming room for them. These are young people so we're going to do things that they will want to do. Those support services are there every day 24/7. We will have security and/or support staff there all the time, including a front entry that that's monitored and you have to be let into, so you have to be accessed into there. So, it won't be just "anybody come and hang out and do whatever you want to" inside this building or outside the building. We'll talk a little bit about Cohen Esrey Development Group. Lisa, who has covid who's not here, they've done apartment home communities in multiple states. They have literally 1000+ units. And they property manage them so they know how to do this. I am not a property manager. We work with young people. I know that stuff. We don't know how to manage a property. That's going to be their job. So, who are these young people? There is a process that would take me two hours to explain but essentially, I can't just say "Hey Jim, I think it'd be great if you lived here. Do you want to live here?" There's a process in the

community for youth and for adults who are experiencing homelessness. Every week people who work with them come together and are talking about you know "Where is Jim? Where is Juan? Where is Cindy? How are they doing? Is it time for them to, you know, can they get into a unit?" Because we have far more people in homelessness than we do housing in the community. So in that weekly meeting, there's a conversation about who's the most vulnerable right now, what's going on for them? The young people who are in the most vulnerable situations, who have already been in chronic homelessness, at the age of 18 or 20, they've already lived more than a year in homelessness. They have various levels of disabilities. So it won't just be any young person who moves in there. So we can't decide. You can't decide. It's a community process.

Neighbor: Okay I have a question. What's the turnover going to be? Is it going to be where they have to sign a lease? Is this going to be Section 8 housing? How are they going to pay for this?

SK: Sure let me, yeah, I'm glad to answer that question. So um the average turnover for us what we see in scattered site housing is maybe two years to five years is about how long you stay. But they can, the idea is that this doesn't have a time limit. Because for some of the young people we're working with, especially with disabilities, 24 months isn't enough time to have them learn skills, get resourced. So this almost entire project is paid for by the state of Colorado. It's not Section 8 housing. It's paid for through the tax credit, through the low-income housing tax credit. And there's what's called supportive, it's supportive housing leases. Supportive housing dollars. All of the youth have to sign a lease. They're background checked and they have a one year lease that's renewable.

Neighbor: So it's teaching them how to pay rent and how to be responsible.

KS: Exactly.

Neighbor: And then how is this as far as being part of the community? How is it going to be part of the community?

SK: I think that's something we're going to learn actually by working with all of you. We've already been talking to Jen. She's been talking about, you know, it's really hard to find employees. Every business that Wayne went and talked to said we need some employees over at the King Soopers and the Arc and other spots. Jen also talked about like "Hey maybe we could do an art project to get there, like on the wall that's facing us." So, we'll start with those things but we'll have a lot of volunteer opportunities there as well. So we're going to be running groups that doesn't have to be always by a professional. Of course, it has to be a background checked person etc but if you know something really cool if you want to do like "Hey I want to take the kids hiking once a month." We would love that. So, we really want to be good neighbors and to be involved with you to create this here.

Neighbor: Will you have an active outreach for volunteers in the community too?

SK: We will have something very specific for this project. So, it will be about two years from now when people are moving in (give or take) so construction starts next spring. About two years from now is when youth would be moving in. So, we'll get toward that volunteer project. We have volunteers in our other programs already.

Neighbor: How was the site picked? Like, what was the criteria?

SC: I can talk to that. So when we, The Real Estate Foundation is looking at "Where can we create housing where people are going to be the most successful?" So, the reason we're big believers in Shawna is she's got a really great track record of taking kids that were not otherwise going to be successful and

helping them be like really productive members of our community. Things that are most important, and the things that are really important if you want to get these tax credits that, you know, to your point, what pay to help these folks sort of be successful in these spaces. What we look for are: are there jobs nearby? So the Arc, Ace Hardware, the King Soopers, they're all looking for low-income employees that, you know, probably can't afford housing on minimum wage anyway so that's a real big bonus. Number two is it's really close to transportation. So you've got the bus line on Uintah that helps people get to jobs and get across the city that type of thing. That's a real big bonus for people that are otherwise unable to afford the other amenities in life. It's also near the trail system so you're not far from the Midland Trail. There's parks nearby. Proximity to the Westside Community Center is also a big part of this that allows people to enjoy an outdoor space gardening, community programming. I think to your question, like all right so some kids lived here for a year they got their feet underneath them. How do they go learn from their community? How do they go be involved? This is a site that has a lot of those amenities that make this a project where we think people are going to be really successful.

Neighbor: Okay one more question then. How are you going to police it? Because, I guarantee ya that the kids that come in there that are new. I have raised three kids. I have raised six grandkids. I know what teenagers are like and not necessarily are they going to be cooperative or actually doing what you guys want them to do.

Neighbor: And another thing is how are they going to interact with all the other homeless people?

SK: Let me say a little bit about both those things. My son was in homelessness for about 18 months after he got out of high school. Captain of the wrestling team blah blah blah, and the wrong set of drugs and the wrong set of friends, it doesn't take long for a kid to end up on the street. Sometimes of their own volition. Sometimes because adults aren't taking care of them. So, again we'll have staff there all the time. We're going to have security service/security guard 24/7. And the truth is, there are some of these youth who aren't going to do anything we say. They're gonna like stay in their apartment, we're gonna knock on their door and be like "Hey, there's a group tonight. Hey, there's this and they're going to tell us to "F-Off". That is the truth and that's okay because they have freedom and are allowed to do that as long as they're not harming themselves or someone else. Like, they can stay in their apartment and live and what we know is that's very specific to the work that we do at The Place. We have the professionals who work with young people so we love teenagers. I tell people all the time "Send the adults away. Bring us the teenagers." Because, we just know that it's like you stand alongside them and say "What's up for you right now?" and if they don't want to talk and flip you off, cool. "Let's talk tomorrow." And, if they want to, you know it's every time we have that conversation it might take three months or a year and then that young person will say "Hey what's that group going on?" We see it every day. 85% of the youth that we have in housing stay stably housed and move forward. If they do exit housing, they're moving on to a safe stable place. Sometimes back with family. Sometimes market rate apartments.

Neighbor: How do you get a turnover rate of two to five years that you previously mentioned though? If you don't have some type of curriculum or education or retraining program that has to be in place they have to agree to, how does that make this any different than just an expensive homeless shelter? With 30% of homeless having mental illness and 50% having addiction problems, your site survey suggested that it might be best and well-suited next to children one to six years old?! I'd be really happy to meet that individual and see how they thought that would be okay for the future of this generation that's literally growing up right here.

WB: Can we go get Jen? Jen invited us to be here. She supports it.

SK: If Jen is here, the executive director of the school, she is a huge supporter.

Neighbor: We understand that. It doesn't mean the parents are onboard.

Neighbor: Yes. I mean maybe the director does but has anybody asked the parents how they feel about that?

Neighbor: Yea, what do all the parents think?

SK: This is part of this process so I don't know if there are parents here tonight at the school but we're glad to have more meetings with anybody on that. So, I want to say something to your point. You're exactly right. There are programs that require, like "You step up. You do this, this and this or you're gone." That is why there's homelessness. Because the people we're working with...

Neighbor: Don't want to be helped.

Neighbor: Some don't want to be helped.

SK: ...have so many things that are happening for them that it is sometimes hard for them to put on their shirt much less think about getting their GED. When we work with them calmly, patiently, individually, really frequently, more than half the time in fact, in this kind of housing, youth will get their high school diploma or get their GED. It often takes a long time and it takes a great deal of patience. Peggy does have gray hair. She dyes it. I'm just gonna tell you. It takes a great deal of patience and sometimes it gets tough. Just like with anybody in any house or any apartment, sometimes it gets tough for sure. And there's a lease and there are rules by the property manager. So, they can't just do anything they want to.

Neighbor: So, you did mention background checks. Does that also include being close to a school for the site placement? Also the sex registry / sex offenders?

SK: Yep. Sex offenders will be part of the background check.

Neighbor: Not allowed?

SK: Yep.

Neighbor: What about the other 45 units that are going up the hill? It's gonna create more traffic up here. What do you guys know about that?

SK: We just literally heard about that a month ago. We didn't know about that.

Neighbor: What about, can they come and go all day and all night whenever they want to? And what about all the parking? How the heck are you going to handle the parking?

SK: Good questions. Parking. Traffic. All those things.

Neighbor: It's crazy the way it is right now!

Neighbor: What about how much more security, we're gonna have to deal with 50 more of them in the neighborhood. Living! People breaking in constantly to houses up here.

Neighbor: Pooping on our sidewalks.

Neighbor: You used to be able to leave your stuff unlocked. You can't anymore.

SK: Well, again this is in part meant to solve some of that. But, let me speak specific. So, these are brand new because we just got all the soil samples and the engineering and etc etc. And, we had an original design that can't work on the property. Probably no shock to any of you because you live on the west side. So, we will have a 31-car parking lot. About 2 out of 10 of the youth in this apartment will actually drive or have a car. We hope some of them will work toward it. We'll actually pay for their driving classes. So, we hope that they do. But, we don't have to have like 60 parking spaces. But we'll have enough. 31. Enough for staff. Enough for you. So they won't be parked along the road. And sorry, she just asked a specific question. Yes. Coming in and out. Yes. So, this isn't a shelter. It isn't a program where you're locked in so if you want to go somewhere at two in the morning you can go somewhere. And we monitor who's coming and going so you can't bring a bunch of people in with you. And we have so many services going on that we're helping the youth who are having some of the difficulties. Let's say mental health issues. You know we have youth, we have therapists now that are working with young people, so we'll have all of that. So it's not any kind of lockdown.

WB: Can we let Jen speak real quickly to this gentleman's question about what we're doing next to four-year-olds?

JF: I'll come up and speak. I haven't met many of you. My name is Jen Filonowich. I'm the executive director of Ruth Washburn. We've been on this site, well we've been in existence for 61 years, on this site since 1971. I've been with the organization for 12 years now and I can tell you we are so happy and I'll tell you why. The property next to us has been nothing but a problem for this school. We've had to evacuate the school multiple times due to fires being set. We've had to remove large dead deer off the side because they would come up and die right by the fence. Not good lovely things for children. We've actually been shot at from that property um passed over there from that property and so for our perspective the amount of challenges with the property have just been really extreme for our school. It's constantly on our security and safety plans. How to deal with that. The unknowns are really hard for us. I'll get to you in just a second. But for us as an organization, having children here, we are really excited to have a place for families who, or individuals, young people who do not have a place to be who need some support as they're growing up. We have a young man who's been homeless over here on the Westside for quite awhile and he's a former student of ours. That's really hard. And he just needs support and services to be able to make those next steps and so organizationally we really are thrilled to have a cornerstone organization really looking at some of the hard things that are happening over here anyway. You had a question sir?

Neighbor: Yeah, so I understand it's a very complicated problem that we have and somebody said we're trying to fix the problem okay so my question is how are you going to put out a fire by adding gasoline to it? One. Two, why doesn't this school just expand and start educating individuals instead of bringing other youth here? Which are going to be homeless. I don't know if you guys know this but the homeless goes over here to the Soopers. They wash in the toilet and then they go sit at the Starbucks that some of you probably eat at! It's not something that's good, okay?!

JF: We look at as a positive from an education place. I don't know if you're familiar with the fact that many of the caregiving industries and jobs in the world, many of those individuals start out on the margin. And so for education purposes, we're excited to work with The Place and to ...

Neighbor: How are you going to work with The Place?

Neighbor: What's that relationship look like?

Neighbor: Yeah.

JF: Right now? What does it look like? What I envision, I'll tell you what my best case scenario is, is that we're able to take our staff, who are State level trainers, and train individuals in parenting skills for their future lives as parents, in teaching skills so that they may be able to be an assistant teacher in a classroom. We are excited about that. There is a huge lack of that for our young folks in general. I've worked with youth for a really long time and marginalized youth in other programs. And while that's not what Ruth Washburn is by any stretch, it's really a passion and we can really see working with them as just supporting what's happening over there. But from our perspective, it's all about future outcomes for future children that they may have or children they would work with.

Neighbor: I'll ask you I guess, for any of you. I'm curious. If there is so much freedom, (as you would want there to be obviously, they're legal adult citizens right?) how are you going, and many of them struggle with addiction. I did some counseling in the women's prison in Tennessee when I was an undergrad in Nashville. It's a hard cycle to break, drug addiction. So, they're next to a young elementary school. Needles, you know.

JF: We have that already.

Neighbor: How are you going to stop that?

JF: I mean truly we have it already in such an extreme way, but I don't think people understand. I mean we do the cleanup at our dumpster every single day. So, that's not unusual for us. It's something we're already having to deal with, so something to support these folks as they're doing this to me is nothing but positives. We have current families here who are suffering through addiction and really working their way out of that so that's not again an unusual thing for us.

Neighbor: Ok.

Neighbor: It sounds like this is a very secure facility. There is gonna be cameras outside.

SK: Yes.

Neighbor: They're gonna have to check in and check out, right? At the desk, at the front desk and so they're accountable?

SK/JF: Yeah.

Neighbor: And there's cameras everywhere?

JF: Yea, and it's the same here. We have cameras all over our property inside out. You know, inside the property, outside the property, you know, on our side as well.

Neighbor: I have one more question. I'm sorry. What if somebody in the facility commits a crime? Is there anything that ejects them from living there? Or is it just, it seems like it would be normal conditions like you live under, you wouldn't necessarily get ejected from your apartment?

SK: I mean we wouldn't know that unless the police were around or something and if somebody committed a crime and they were released on bail and they might live there. But certain crimes, a certain type of record would not be allowed there. And, I just want to say with the substance use disorder issue. Um, that is a disease that definitely overlaps with people and homelessness. The youth we know, if they had a little bit of some substance stuff going on, once they're living on the streets. We know young people who do meth all night long so that they don't fall asleep and get raped. This is their reality. Once they are inside a safe place, it's an adjustment to be sure. It's its own adjustment. "Whoa. Now I'm by myself. What's going on?" However, the circumstances, everything that they're going through can be better addressed once they're safely housed. And, we absolutely will have things that we'll work through with them. Just like living in any apartment.

WB: Yeah, let me point out we've got an apartment building over here. And those people have freedom to come and go.

Neighbor: Yeah. Of course.

WB: And they're 18 to whatever. And, this is really a much more controlled environment. I don't want to say control in that, you know, we're handcuffing them or making them stay in their room. But, they have much more opportunity to succeed right there than they do right there.

Neighbor: Can you speak to the relationship with the property manager? Because The Place is not going to own this?

SK: Correct.

Neighbor: So, what's to say four years from now it turns into luxury apartments?

SK: Good question. So, it can't. Because it's funded by the State of Colorado, it has to stay exactly what this is going to be for at least 15 years. Our intention is that The Place buys it in 15 years. I mean that's fully what we're going to be working toward. And, we want to say just a couple more things from the development, since she's not here. Sam had a couple things about development. And then we'll make sure we have time for questions.

BG: Does anyone have any questions they want to pass up and then we can, or...

SK: Did anybody jot a card down?

BG: ...do you just want to keep doing open format?

Neighbor: Sam, you had said 50 units?

SC: Yeah.

Neighbor: So, is there anything written in there that, so occupancies have square footage. What is permitted by State regulations, right? Does this mean that, what's the square footage of each unit going to be?

SK: I want to say it's 420. Is it 400? 420? 425?

BG: 425. It might be.

SK: So a very small one bedroom.

Neighbor: All right, so efficiency size. What does that allow for occupancy per unit per State regulation? Originally, there were 3 or 4 comments that said "50 individuals here roughly 18 to 24 or 25 years old". But in reality, by that square footage number, you in fact can double and triple up individuals.

WB: We can't.

SK: We can't.

SC: Yeah. And a big part of that is, and this is actually kind of combining the two questions. So, the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority is the one who administers these credits. They are incredibly complex. They are heavily monitored. Essentially around, they'll be checking the rents to make sure that you're not overcharging and making these unaffordable. They're checking the eligibility of the tenants. They kind of spot-check and make sure that you don't have people leased up that don't qualify for those leases. And they'll also be checking in and making sure that you don't have 4 to a bedroom. That type of thing. So there's a pretty robust, and maybe it's actually a criticism the program, is it's so robust. The due diligence that happens after those credits are issued, that one, makes it really hard to manage the program and that's why we're glad we have Shawna because it's a big leap for them to take on something like this. But, it also means that the State's pretty involved in making sure that you're fulfilling your commitment. "If we're going to give you a bunch of money to build this type of housing" you better be pretty sure they're checking up to make sure that you're administering it the way the program's designed.

SK: And the same thing with the way the building looks. The exterior. The landscaping. Because they've got to be on it.

Neighbor: And that's why we are here, too. It's our taxpayer money. Who's paying for it? It's not just the State of Colorado. It's actually our tax paying money.

Neighbor: There you go! I heard that!

Neighbor: I'm just saying. It's a community thing. It's from us. Not just the State of Colorado. So, we should have a bigger voice in this. That's why we're here.

Neighbor: Something scaled to this magnitude will in fact raise property values around this area?

SC: Raise or erase?

Neighbor: Raise. If it does not raise, it will certainly lower property values.

Neighbor: It will lower it.

SC: So, again it's a 17 million dollar project replacing a vacant lot. I've got a good study that came out in April around. These things raise property values. It's a pretty marginal effect. But the fact that it's a positive effect tells you it's not lowering property values.

Neighbor: Who did that study?

Neighbor: Is that somewhere in writing?

SC: The Urban Institute. They released it in April. Basically looking at...

Neighbor: Urban Institute? I've never heard of the Urban Institute.

SC: ... "What is the impact of low income housing projects, so these are low income housing tax credits. What's the impact of those property projects on the neighboring property values?"

Neighbor: Who funded the study?

SC: It would have been the Urban Institute.

Neighbor: I came in a little late so if you have already said this please don't repeat. But, I'm just wondering how you select the young people that are going to come in. And, how long is the expectation that each young person will be here?

SK: Excellent questions. So, let me answer the last one first. This is non time-limited supportive housing. This is one of the biggest issues is that sometimes there's a two-year program. But, most of the young people with disabilities who've been living on the street, a two-year program is simply not long enough. Sometimes they're even moving out of our supportive housing into maybe a group home where they're going to stay the rest of their lives. So, it's non-time limited. Our experience and the data from other organizations doing this, there's two other of these sorts of housing in the state of Colorado. Typically young people are there 2½ - 5 years, you know, because just frankly, they're going to get real tired of us bugging them. They're going to be like 25 years old and like tired of us telling them that there's a group going on. So, they'll stay an unlimited amount of time. We can't say "You're 26. You gotta move." That would be illegal. I didn't mention the name of it before but there's a process called "coordinated entry to housing" which is part of our homeless solutions and our continuum of housing services. So, every week people, not like me, people who know things about youth and other people in homelessness. They sit around a table literally and say "Where's Jen? Where's Sam? What's happening for them? Hey a housing unit opened. We have lease dollars for them. We can move them in." That still takes usually two months to find a landlord, you know, just because there's such a shortage of housing. So, we don't get to decide who it should be. It's pretty much given to us.

Neighbor: So are these kids coming from other programs or?

SK: Sometimes they'll be youth we know. We have a street outreach team who is out Monday through Friday directly with youth living in parks and cars along the alleyways. Sometimes it will be those youth, who we've worked with a long time and they'll finally say, "Okay. Let me try." And, they're so vulnerable that they can get into the housing. It might be youth who've even stayed in our shelter. That happens sometimes. Or, they could be from other programs that we don't even know or haven't met. But, they will all be from this community.

Neighbor: So it is Westsiders. Specifically.

SK: West Siders?

Neighbor: Correct. We are on the west side of I-25.

SK: No. A zip code is not the, because coordinated entry is county-wide, if you want, it's El Paso County. So, we can't discriminate by a zip code or where they're from.

Neighbor: Applicants from El Paso County. Right?

SK: Yep. Yeah. So, right now today we see about 350 youth every month are living in homelessness just in El Paso County. Almost half of them are unsheltered. There's a lot.

Neighbor: I'm hoping that someone's going to be doing a study saying that this type of facility, with the supports that you're going to be offering, is going to show that there's a drop in that rate.

SK: Yes. There will be. In fact, the architect on this project, they're called Shopworks. They just are working with the University of Denver on a study, an evaluation of the project that went up in Grand Junction about a year and a half ago. So, what's cool is they're kind of doing all the dirty grunt work up front and then they're saying "Ooooooh. We did this cause we thought it would work. Don't do that." So, we're talking to them saying "Oh we thought this kind of space would work but we found that actually youth were too close together and they got in fights. So we know not to design the space that way". So, we're learning all along and I'm sure this will be something that is studied.

SC: Can I ask? So, we've gotten a lot of really good questions. I genuinely appreciate it. There are hard questions to ask too. We provided some cards for people to write down, you know not everybody likes to sort of stand up and ask. So, is there anybody that had something written on a card that they could pass to Peggy and we can kind of go through those questions that way as well? Just to give everybody a chance to talk? Do we have any cards?

Neighbor: She said everything got answered.

SC: Ok. It sounds like everything got answered.

Neighbor: I have a question.

SC: I just kinda want to be mindful of people's time and so maybe we can do a couple...

Neighbor: Over here.

SC: ...questions and then what we'll do is we have some flyers here with contact information. People are going to go home. You're going to think about it. You're going to remember a question you wanted to ask. We have contact information for folks here. We're also going through the city review process so there'll be like a "formal" meeting that's facilitated by the city that's maybe along the line of what we were talking about earlier. Again this was just a, we wanted to be transparent and good neighbors and talk to people. So, that's what this meeting is. But, just kind of wanted us to sort of have a way to kind of end this and make sure everybody got a chance to talk and know who to talk to before we go.

Neighbor: That flyer that you have. Is it going to have contact information for moving forward? For when everything starts and we're seeing stuff happen, we can call and say "Did you know?" That kind of stuff?

SK: My contact's on there. Wayne is, Wayne is our volunteer Chief. So, he will be here. I will be here.

WB: The developer...

Neighbor: Ok. That's perfect. That's fine.

WB: ...The two people with the development company and their contact info is on there too.

Neighbor: So, the second part, somebody had asked earlier and I asked Jen before she left. The parents at Ruth Washburn are onboard as well.

Neighbor: All of them?

Neighbor: Well, I don't know.

Neighbor: They pretty much all said yes? That's kind of hard to believe.

JF: So, we kinda like voted to every single person. So, we are a private organization and so one of those things is that tuition dollars talk. And so these have been conversations we've been having with our parents. When our parents have had questions, we've been able to direct them in the right way. But as a holistic 12-person board and 140 families that we serve here, it's been overwhelmingly positive.

Neighbor: So, the families right? Not the board members, right?

Neighbor: Is the school getting anything?

JF: No. We're not asking for

Neighbor: Your not getting anything out of it?

JF: Nope.

Neighbor: So, families right? Not the board members?

JF: The families. Absolutely. Yes. Absolutely.

Neighbor: And how many of them live in this neighborhood?

Neighbor: That's a good question.

JF: You know we probably have about 50% of our families are Westsiders.

Neighbor: How many are here today? Are any of the parents here today?

Neighbor: Probably not.

Neighbor: I'm a "pick-up parent", so.

JF: Yea, about 50% of our families are Westsiders.

SK: And we're glad to do, Wayne and I, you'll have our contact info. If you want us to go to your church, your book club, go with you to coffee, we're glad to get more in-depth and hear more. Because, we've had the chance to hear a lot of questions and we are really interested in continuing hearing from you.

Neighbor: Yeah, one last question. What are the consequences for your tenants who go out in the neighborhood and misbehave? Number two, who is the person responsible for seeing that

they behave and respect their neighbors? Which one of you specifically? And what is your phone number?

SK: Well, I'm going to point to Peggy. That will be Peggy. Not literally. I mean, Peggy runs our housing program with all the youth and all the case managers. And myself. I mean, if there is something that is happening. You know, again I'm not Pollyanna. I'm not here to like BS you. We run a shelter. Do on occasion, do youth go to a neighbor and pull their fence down? Yep. And that neighbor comes to us and says "Hey, what happened here?" We'll talk to that youth. We'll help recompense. I mean, it's not going to be perfect.

Neighbor: Do you fix the landowner's fence? Do you kick the kid who harassed and bothered the landowner out? So that that problem is solved?

SK: I mean it's hard to answer that now. We have fixed fences before. We've paid things before that got damaged. So, a requirement of the State of Colorado, this is called supportive housing, it's called firm support housing. A requirement is that we cannot make a youth leave for something that they did just because we didn't like it. I mean if they commit certain sorts of crimes, they're going to have consequences for that of course.

Neighbor: What sort of consequences?

BG: Well if anybody commits a crime, it's the same consequence. I mean they're residents. If they get caught and are arrested

Neighbor: I think most of us are aware the police rarely respond to this neighborhood.

WB: I think you'll see an increase in supervision.

Neighbor: I don't think so. I doubt it highly.

Neighbor: There's about a quarter million people that six to eight sheriffs police every day. That's sheriffs outside of the Colorado Springs city limits. That will not happen, sir. Absolutely not happen. I got a question. Who's profiting from this?

WB: The youth.

Neighbor: No, that's BS.

WB: The youth.

Neighbor: No. No, no, no. Who is profiting money from this? Who is actually getting it? What corporation is getting it?

SC: I can try and work you through the deal if you like. One, these are incredibly complicated so I'll do my best but really, honestly. So, we own the land. We're selling it to what's called a "tax credit partnership" at cost. So, I'm not making any money. I'm actually losing a little bit of money on this but it's not much.

SK: Meaning the Community Foundation.

SC: The Community Foundation. Excuse me. Yes, the Pikes Peak Real Estate Foundation.

Neighbor: So how much is the land?

SC: We bought it for \$735,000.

Neighbor: Sorry, how recently?

SC: Within the last two months. It was owned by a deceased estate.

Neighbor: Estate. So it was taken by a tax lien from the city?

SC: No, it was owned by a trust, like a deceased trust. So, the family lives in Illinois and we purchased it from them. So, I'll try and work through the deal and get to other questions. We sell that to the "tax credit partnership". That's the entity that's formed that is essentially created when these tax credits come from the State. What happens then is those tax credits are used by banks or companies that have large amounts of taxes today. They use those credits and then make an equity investment into this project. It's incredibly complicated. That "tax credit partnership" then works with Shawna and the developer to essentially build the project. And over a 10-year period, the State gives money every year to pay for the construction costs of this project. If you're lost, it's because it's a very complicated Byzantine program. The rents are incredibly affordable. So, what's the?

SK: It would be in the \$900 range, I wanna say. I haven't seen the most recent.

SC: It then gets subsidized.

Neighbor: Oh, wow.

Neighbor: These kids don't have any money though.

SK: But it's subsidized by the State.

SC: It's subsidized by the State.

SK: No, you're exactly right. What kid has that kind of money?

Neighbor: It sounds like Section 8 housing.

Neighbor: It sounds like Section 8.

SC: It's not.

Neighbor: You said "the project" earlier and that's exactly what this is, the projects! That's what you're proposing. The projects.

SC: I kind of think of it as a development project.

Neighbor: So what you're saying is that corporate people up at the higher echelon are getting profit from this. That's what you're saying.

Neighbor: It started off as a tax write-off.

Neighbor: Yeah, but eventually your corporate cosponsors and blah blah blah, they'll end up getting the profits off of this and the community here will suffer from it.

SC: Perhaps I've done a bad job of explaining this because the bulk of it is coming from State credits.

Neighbor: That's us.

Neighbor: But that's us!

SC: That is. It's dollars allocated

Neighbor: Sir, I didn't say the bulk of it is coming from the State or not. I said somebody is profiting from it, sir. Okay? That means the corporate sponsors. You just said it. The banks. They're profiting from it. And then the community here!?! Not one of you live here, do you? Not one of you.

Neighbor: He does.

Neighbor: Here on this side?

SC: 29th and Pikes Peak.

WB: I used to live on Mesa.

Neighbor: Ok, great. That's awesome. Super awesome. Wonderful. Have you gone to this Soopers? Have you seen the homeless? Have you seen the homelessness? Have you seen this over here? Like, you're gonna add fuel to the fire, sir! You're gonna add fuel to the fire!

Neighbor: That's what we're afraid of.

BG: My daughter lives on 17th.

Neighbor: Cool. I moved out of here because of the homelessness.

Neighbor: Yes.

Neighbor: Yes. That's why I moved.

Neighbor: I moved up to Monument because of the homelessness. I don't even live here anymore because of that. I would have. Because I have great neighbors. But, I don't live here anymore because of the homelessness. You're going to push everybody out of here. All the good people, you're gonna push them all out of here.

Neighbor: What I'm afraid of is that your youth that you are trying to save, trying to rehabilitate. They're going to get involved with the homeless people that are here. There has to be something, and I know this is not you guys responsibility, but if you're bringing in these youths, something's gotta chase them out of here.

Neighbor: This is the crux of it. This is it. As soon as the Downtown Association got the City Council to make panhandling illegal downtown, suddenly this place is overwhelmed.

Neighbor: Yes.

Neighbor: And those of us that have cameras in our homes and are up early, this neighborhood just lights up. It's busier at night. If you don't have it bolted down, in the morning it's gone. So this is just adding to what has already been pushed on this neighborhood. I'm not telling you what you're doing isn't going in the right direction, but this is how the whole neighborhood feels.

Neighbor: You guys need to address it from you as well as we, we need it addressed for us.

SK: We absolutely agree. We will think of it. I mean, like, we can't control what youth do all the time, but it is absolutely our responsibility to work with youth in how they are interacting and building skills of who, you know

Neighbor: Sorry, but for a community program though, part of you working with the local community should in fact have been, you should have had a meeting like this months ago.

Neighbor: Before you even got started!

Neighbor: This shouldn't be an opportunity for people to voice their grievances with what is about to be done. It should be to voice their opinion for or against what is to come. Based on that, that would determine whether or not this is a good site location.

Neighbor: Not just because you bought a piece of property.

Neighbor: Because it's not going up in Monument and we know it's not going to the Broadmoor.

Neighbor: Nope!

Neighbor: However, you could have purchased this piece of land over off of Powers at half the cost. But you're not going to do it there because there's multi-million dollar homes being built over there now and tons of high high-rise apartments going in, having beautiful views of the mountains. This site was selected I think for a different reason. It was something nefarious. Because this over here, without talking to locals, in a sense you're here, you said because "We wanted to." But, if you wanted to really win over the local community, it should have been done when they had a voice.

Neighbor: Correct.

Neighbor: Yeah.

Neighbor: So, when my daughter-in-law first emailed you for this whole thing, "Well, yeah we've talked to a few people, you know, neighbors or whatever." I bet you 95% of the people in this room either heard this was happening from the newspaper. I learned it from this young gentleman, he calls me up one morning goes "Can you believe what they're doing over there?" I said, "What the

hell!." So I go over to his house and start reading and I'm going. How many of you ever heard anything?

Neighbor: Not before yesterday!

Neighbor: Today!

Neighbor: Yes. Exactly.

Neighbor: Today!

Neighbor: Exactly! Today!

Neighbor: No matter what good that you guys are doing

Neighbor: Is it good when you don't go around to all the community? We're the community. The people here are the community. I'm sorry but 29th or whatever, you're not the community for right here. These are the people that live within two, three, four blocks of this, okay? Of this mess that we've got going down here right now that the city won't do anything about. Nobody will take these people to the Broadmoor and drop them off.

Neighbor: They have too much money. They can buy them off.

Neighbor: You know the people from the Broadmoor, they've got all their freaking money because they won't give these guys any money, all right?

WB: So, we appreciate. I mean I love what you're saying. I really do.

Neighbor: Yeah, but you don't hear what I'm saying.

WB: Once again, let me say we're doing this voluntarily. We're not required by the city to do this meeting. We came to you and maybe we didn't come soon enough.

Neighbor: After the fact.

WB: Well, it's not after the fact. I mean the only thing that's happened, we haven't started digging. The only thing that's happened is we purchased property so realistically we're at risk. To try and make a difference.

Neighbor: Well, now you know how we all feel!

Neighbor: But don't you think you should have gone into the community before you ever purchased the property?

WB: That's why we're here, man. I mean

Neighbor: Ok so, for example, down on, I'm just saying this, East Las Vegas Street next to Mountain States Pipe and Supply. They put up a four-story homeless shelter down there.,.

Neighbor: So, put it down there!

Neighbor: ...10 years ago. Look at that mess! Look at the mess. What they promised everybody that was going on down there. Look at the mess down there. We've got the soup kitchen. What's wrong with this whole thing is, we're really not tackling the problem here. We're not tackling the problem because we're not giving anyone mental health

SK: Housing tackles the problem.

Neighbor: I can speak to, I am familiar with the tiny house community that's going right on Sierra Madre. There right next to The Salvation Army. I know that the Mill Street Neighborhood was very upset and very concerned about that property. I think they're in early stages, but I think they've tried to be really good neighbors and I think that the community, I don't know I feel like you're inviting people to be a part of making this work. The police Issue, oh, you know, that's a whole, maybe it will help. Maybe you're being here,

SK: We're hoping. So, if we could say something about that. We, on purpose, did not want to have housing near where, all people in homelessness deserve help. And, the young people we're working with are frightened of the adults. Because, that's not who they want to be. They don't want to be that guy who's 40 in the shelter. They want to be you. Every, to the penny, "Own my own house. Have an apartment. And, have kids." They all want to have kids. So they can do better than their parents did. So, we hear you. We wanted it to be a bit removed because the youth have not those sort of chronic behavior issues. Are there issues? Yes, because again, we know teenagers. And, they don't have the issues typically that adults have already lived into. And, all adults deserve help as well.

Neighbor: Okay so the next thing I want to know, and I'm sure everybody else does too. We want to know when it comes to the meeting with the city.

SK: Yeah, absolutely.

Neighbor: We want to know that.

SK: If you could please put your name on that list, we will make sure you personally get that news but obviously it will be in the paper. You had a question.

Neighbor: As I understand it, you going to be bringing 50 people between the ages of 15 and 24?

SK: 18. They will have to be at least 18.

Neighbor: 18-24. And, they're going to be able to roam the neighborhoods day and night, whatever. Is that correct?

SK: We're not locking them in. This is not. They didn't commit crimes. This is not a locked facility. They have different levels of disabilities and they can be out and do things. If they're causing crime doing things, we'll be calling the police on them. I mean sometimes that happens. So, we hope the neighbors would as well.

Neighbor: But, there are no consequences for committing crimes anymore.

SK: I don't know what to say about that particular thing. You know, our services work. 85% of the time, a young person is stabilizing. They're getting an education. Many of the youth have jobs. Maybe they can't hold a full time job, but they're getting jobs. Our rule is to maximize their independence and not have them living on the street and getting worse.

SC: So, if I could sort of thank everyone for coming tonight. Like, this is a process. And, this is the first step in this process. Talking with you about it. I really would like everyone to sign up so that we know how to get in touch with you with the updates that you are asking for. And we also have the contact information for Shawna, Wayne, and then folks from Cohen Esrey, the actual developer that works sort of like a contractor and builds the actual facility. So, if you have questions, specific questions, you go home tonight and think of questions. Those are the people you should reach out to. So.

SK: Please. And, thank you. We're super excited that so many people are here.

Neighbor: I know you haven't done it yet, but you did purchase the property roughly two months ago. We heard your side. Why you're for it and why these community members are against. So what would be their process? What do they do as far as petitioning the city planners, City Council? What's their best avenue?

SC: So, you have your City Council members. There's a community meeting that's put together through the city's planning. Those are probably the two places I would start.

SK: Yeah, contact city planning. Thank you so much.