

Eric Engstrom

#279116 | March 26, 2021

Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, Recommended Draft**

Email Communication between BPS and JOHS staff noted for the record: Denis Theriault Tue 2/23/2021 11:55 PM Hi, all. Knew something dropped off my list early this week! Beyond complying with city code and any and all construction or land use notification/approval requirements, JOHS does generally have its own engagement plans. When we identify and then plan for a shelter site, we create an online and paper FAQ landing page for the community, and mail out a postcard with information to neighbors in a half-mile around the site. We also meet with neighborhood groups to answer questions and will also meet with or call nearby stakeholders one-on-one as needed to answer questions. In each case the timing and extent of community engagement is balanced with the urgency of establishing a shelter, the scale and longevity of the shelter project, and other impacts on a project. But the above practices are generally what we've done for the past few long-term projects. And though there's been some pushback here and there on this from some community members, we have not asked for community approval or courted votes before committing to our sites — we commit instead to running good programs that don't adversely affect neighborhoods. More and more, as we've opened several programs, and what was once unknown is now known, that record has begun to speak for itself. (There's also the philosophical and ethical issue of letting people vote on their neighbors.) JOHS and its chosen shelter operator also work with community members, if they desire (not all neighbors have asked), to create a good neighbor agreement or similar MOU that lays out how shelter guests, the JOHS and shelter operators will work with immediate neighbors and neighborhood groups to communicate about the shelter as it operates and to support its success. That also means working with and activating neighbors who want to volunteer and organize more formally to support a shelter. And after a shelter opens, the shelter operator is expected to routinely attend neighborhood meetings and be available to, and a part of, the community where their shelter sits. JOHS is also available to troubleshoot any problem or concern if an operator somehow wasn't responsive — though in the years we've opened shelters, that's not been an issue. Hope that offers some additional help! DT Denis Theriault (pronouns: him/he/his) Communications coordinator Multnomah County A Home for Everyone | Joint Office of Homeless Services c. 510.875.8546

Testimony is presented without formatting.