



Councilmember Ben Bartlett
City of Berkeley, District 3

CONSENT CALENDAR
March 27, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Council Member Ben Bartlett
Subject: Support for Youth Spirit Artwork's Tiny House Village project

RECOMMENDATION

The City Council should approve the following actions supporting Youth Spirit Artwork's 25 Youth Tiny House Village project:

1. Waive all building, zoning, planning, inspection, and dumping fees;
2. Waive parking, open space and lot coverage requirements;
3. Allow outdoor activities to 8 pm.
4. Waive City prevailing wage requirements to support a volunteer-driven and youth job-training project;
5. Emergency sleeping cabins shall meet provisions of State of California Section 8698.3;
6. Allow building permit submission as accelerated plan check (BP-3A) turnaround;
7. After completion, City to provide ongoing maintenance on the project with recycling and solid waste management renewable annually by council vote.

BACKGROUND

On any given night as many as 400 Berkeley youth (ages 18 to 25) find themselves homeless, or couch surfing, sleeping in unstable housing settings, desperately in need of consistent, basic care and other supports necessary for success. Youth facing housing instability have difficulties pursuing academic excellence and their vocational goals, and face life threatening additional challenges and risks. Our low-income African American and Latino Berkeley youth face challenges of displacement from the community where their families have lived for decades, severely impacting their vocational success, as well as our community's historic diversity and cultural richness. Youth hold the key to our future and while working to pursue goals and dreams, our community must find ways to provide stabilizing housing to these transitional aged young people in poverty. This is an emergency housing crisis that is only growing worse.

In response to this growing homelessness crisis locally and regionally, the City Council voted unanimously on January 19, 2016 to declare a Homeless Shelter Crisis. This resolution was reaffirmed in 2017 and is currently operating. The resolution serves as a key step in both expediting actions needed toward solving the problems of homelessness, minimizing the red tape of potential solutions, as well as encouraging creative partnerships and innovative solutions. Encouragement of the development of tiny homes and tiny home villages has been a key area of consideration and focus for the new City Council. This would include expedited legal

processes, fee and other waivers to facilitate the creation of tiny house villages for housing homeless people, and fall within the intended scope of the Emergency Shelter Ordinance.

Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA) is a ten-year old interfaith jobs and job training non-profit located in South Berkeley which is committed to empowering and transforming the lives of homeless and other underserved low-income Bay Area young people, ages 16-25. YSA is a proven community leader in youth-led efforts, providing innovative jobs training and placement, as well as engaging youth as leaders in community revitalization.

The Youth Tiny House Village project is part of YSA's larger ten-year organizing campaign to create "100 Homes for Homeless Youth." With the strong leadership of homeless and other YSA youth leaders and over twenty committed community volunteers with building expertise, YSA has been working for over 18 months on plans to develop a model Youth Tiny House Village (THV). This involves the completion of up to 25 tiny houses for homeless and unstably housed Berkeley young people, 2 on-site resident manager living units & two support building remodels.

YSA began its efforts with the design and construction of a tiny house prototype, teaching youth construction skills, which was unveiled October 28, 2017. YSA's tiny house prototype has been featured in multiple local publications, including a prominent SF Chronicle front-page article highlighting innovative, model tiny house solutions to the current Bay Area housing crisis.

YSA has now identified and secured a site for the Tiny House Village. Six volunteer-led working groups are currently actively engaged in organizing and design efforts. The Tiny House Village project plans rely primarily on private funding for construction and development of the village.

Construction of tiny houses will engage YSA youth trainees and groups of volunteers from the interfaith religious community in an active "Adopt-A-Tiny House" program, building houses in two sets of three weekend build days, twelve houses at a time in 2018/19. As many as 100 religious community volunteers are being tapped for the project, from as many as a dozen congregations with strong support of BOCA (Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action).

The strong focus of YSA's THV program model will be on youth jobs training and placement as well as academic success of Berkeley youth, with case management services and deep support in a caring community through engagement with Youth Spirit Artworks. Multiple local non-profit partners are being enlisted to collaborate in this effort, carrying out elements of the work to insure the project is a success. Collaborators in the THV effort already include: Ecology Center, Berkeley Youth Alternatives, The Way Christian Center & Covenant Worship Center, Life Long Medical Center, Black Pine Circle School, Rising Sun, YEAH Shelter, Urban Adamah, Berkeley City College, Kala Arts Center, Bayer Bio Tech Partners, Multi-Cultural Institute and UC Berkeley Public Service Center.

In addition to housing homeless and unstably housed couch surfing youth, this project will also empower underserved young adults with job skills through engagement in construction efforts, community outreach and organizing, and project management. A stable of resource providers have already agreed to be involved in collaborating with YSA on the THV long-term success.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time. Minimal solid waste removal fees.

CONTACT PERSON

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