



To Whom It May Concern at the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA):

As residents of Glendale, we write this letter to respond to a letter that was sent out to PPA Glendale Committee on 12/11/15 about your contract with Sherman Associates for developing four possible plans for Glendale's future as it was delivered to PPA Glendale Committee. To begin with, we want to acknowledge that MPHA mentioned during a meeting with Glendale Committee task group leaders (both Glendale and Prospect Park residents) in September that, after Defend Glendale residents and PPA Glendale Committee members questioned MPHA about the status of their rehabilitation plan which we had been requesting for months, MPHA staff said they would begin contracting with an organization to compile, at the time, three different alternative plans for Glendale, only one of which was a rehabilitation plan—now that they are claiming they are exploring four options, still only one is a rehabilitation-only plan. When we asked about the details of the plans, they would not share those details with us or that they hired Sherman Associates for this work. MPHA also did not publicly share these plans during any of the community meetings since they made the contract with Sherman Associates in September 2015.

All this occurred after many emails and public pressure by the PPA Glendale Committee and Defend Glendale, as well as the PPA Board meeting that passed the resolution to protect and preserve Glendale. MPHA was publically pressured to provide these documents to PPA and to the residents of Glendale, especially the Hess Roise Report on the Glendale Historical Assessment that MPHA refused to release to residents and the public for over a month and half. The Hess Roise report was included in a flash drive from MPHA that also contained hundreds of pages of other documents that we had been requesting from the MPHA since June 2015 that we still continue to pour through. We discovered the Sherman Associates contract last week, which was just one among the hundreds of documents we received from MPHA simultaneously just over a month ago. The fact that MPHA failed to mention the \$75,000 contract with Sherman Associates during any public or committee meetings since September clearly shows the lack of transparency. This also continues to exacerbate the lack of trust that residents and the greater community have about MPHA.

MPHA's partnership with Sherman Associates to develop these four plans was not mentioned in the last four monthly public forums hosted by MPHA since the contract was made, and MPHA's attempts to blame residents for not knowing about this contract is shameful and manipulative. It is manipulative in the same way as withholding key information for months from residents despite repeated requests, and as manipulative as trying to get residents to suddenly form a resident council after MPHA's own antagonistic actions against the last resident council resulted in its dissolution—which MPHA staff have not publicly acknowledged. It does not go unnoticed by Glendale residents that MPHA staff passed out fliers on a Friday afternoon for an informational meeting about the resident council to be held the upcoming Monday during the middle of the work day (1:00 PM), clearly trying to undermine the work of Defend Glendale—which came about as a result of MPHA's harassment of former resident council leaders to the point that led to its dissolution this past February. This also raises questions about MPHA possibly violating HUD guidelines by coordinating the resident council, from which they should be completely removed and separate.

Importantly, MPHA's letter does not acknowledge how problematic their decision is to contract with Sherman Associates, who has been the center of tenant complains and abuses at its nearby Riverside Plaza towers. Sherman Associates has neglected essential building maintenance, charged residents onerous fees for basic maintenance and repairs, and increased the cost of rent significantly in recent years—familiar abusive management practices that Glendale residents have repeatedly complained about regarding MPHA. If MPHA seeks to cultivate trust with its residents, why would it contract with a developer that has a publicly-known reputation for abusing low-income residents and privatizing formerly public housing?

MPHA claims to be transparent and accountable to the residents and to the broader public, but they are only transparent and accountable on their own terms when it is most convenient and politically expedient for them. When they cannot get support from the resident council leaders, they harass and antagonize them until they resign. When they cannot get support from the PPA Glendale Committee, they have their own staff join the neighborhood association in order to control it from the inside and ensure residents do not have a voice anywhere that is not constantly monitored and policed by MPHA. When that fails and they cannot get the support of organized residents through Defend Glendale, they rush to form a resident council that they can control through their already evidenced repertoire of harassment and coercion.

At Defend Glendale, we genuinely seek to form a productive, respectful, transparent, and open relationship with MPHA staff. Unfortunately, MPHA has repeatedly shown its refusal to cooperate with residents on their own terms, to truly listen to their needs and concerns, and to actually serve their interests in such a way that “contribute[s] to the well-being of the individuals, families and community we serve” (The stated mission of the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority: <http://www.mphaonline.org/about/>). We call on MPHA to explain these processes clearly to residents proactively and seek resident approval first, rather than informing residents only after you have made decisions. We also call on MPHA to clearly articulate to residents why you chose to contract with Sherman Associates, especially in light of recent protests by lower-income residents at the Riverside Plaza towers against Sherman Associates' abusive practices. Finally, we call on MPHA to acknowledge that residents refused to participate in MPHA's November 12<sup>th</sup> “Visioning session” because of their refusal to grant any time on their agenda to the over 100 residents that either participated in creating their own vision or signed on in support of that vision in advance, instead choosing to silence those residents in a dehumanizing and antagonistic manner. Until that time, we consider MPHA's refusal to acknowledge these matters as an outward sign of their ongoing refusal to be transparent and cooperate with residents on residents' own terms.

Sincerely,

The Defend Glendale Campaign

## Learn more:

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