



February 19, 2010

Dear Editor,

I write on behalf of Habitat for Humanity Calgary to respond to the issues raised in the news item "Habitat issue packs city council" and also the letter to the editor from Ryan Cameron recently published in the Echo about the proposed Monklands Airdrie project.

Firstly, I want to thank all Airdrie residents for taking the time to bring their concerns to us. We welcome your feedback regarding our proposed development. Your opinions are important to us.

As to the suggestion that Habitat for Humanity Calgary did not provide sufficient notification and consultation with the residents regarding our proposed Monklands development, we took several steps to ensure broad notification:

- (a) we held two open house information sessions, one on October 27, 2009 and another on January 26, 2010. Both of which were appropriately advertised as required. All residents were invited to attend and consult with Habitat staff regarding the proposed development;
- (b) on November 27, 2009 an updated information package was circulated to over 100 residents immediately adjacent to the proposed development site; and
- (c) we also provide a forum for comment and concerns on our website, in addition to providing regularly updated information about the project.

Regarding concerns about the cost of the development of the Monklands area, site development costs will be covered by Habitat for Humanity Calgary where appropriate. Re-development of the Monklands park area will be addressed by the City of Airdrie.

We have heard the community concerns regarding density, parking, access and many other concerns and will address this in the next stages of our development process.

Careful site design and high architectural standards will ensure the project is integrated with the surrounding residential area and we will be working with members of City council and community members to ensure that this standard is met. Habitat for Humanity is a certified Built-Green builder and currently builds homes at a platinum level standard. These homes are generally up to 30% more energy efficient than a traditional house.

Mr. Cameron suggested that the majority of homeowners who will occupy the development may be from outside Airdrie, but the project is not proposed in order to place families from elsewhere in Airdrie. Airdrie, like many communities in Alberta, needs affordable housing. Families who would not otherwise be able to realize the dream of homeownership are given a "hand-up, not a hand-out" to ensure a better future for both themselves and their children. Habitat partner families are working families. Habitat Calgary carefully selects families who are able and willing to take on all of the intrinsic responsibilities of homeownership.

Building Homes. Building Hope.

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Habitat for Humanity is working closely with local community and social organizations to ensure that both local and rural residents will have the opportunity to attain a Habitat home.

In all cases, Habitat Calgary actively recruits partner families from the community surrounding the project location. We know that there are many families in Airdrie who qualify for homeownership. By recruiting locally as much as possible, we enable existing residents to stay in their community, allowing them to continue contributing to the success of Airdrie in an affordable and sustainable way.

While we are happy that City Council has approved the re-zoning of this project, we are still working through the development process and there are still several steps that must be taken before we can begin building; including subdivision, development permits, engineering work, and building permits.

We welcome the input of Airdrie residents and we want to provide the community with as much information as possible. Please visit our website at www.habitatcalgary.ca to find out more about the Airdrie Monklands project, family selection and recruitment and the development process. If you still have questions please write, call or email us.

It is our desire to provide a development that the City of Airdrie and all residents can be proud of, helping neighbors become a community and breaking the cycle of poverty through homeownership.

Please help us make a difference in the lives of others: volunteer; or refer a family that you know may be in need of a "hand-up".

Yours truly.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew R. Robertson".

ANDREW R. ROBERTSON
Board Chair, Calgary Habitat for Humanity Society

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