

## Paula Smith

---

**From:** Candy Mercer <candy@candio.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 9, 2020 6:07 AM  
**To:** Paula Smith  
**Subject:** Re: 2828 Martin Way

### External Email Alert!

This email originated from a source outside of the City's network. Use caution before clicking on links or opening attachments.

is it possible to route foot traffic from Martin...it is closest to the bus stop....and i get its a regulation but why? it does not make sense? it increases traffic on our street vs the main arterial, and in this case as I have noted means that there is more potential impact on Applehill in terms of legal substance abuse, which is a question not a single person has been able or willing to answer....where are people going to drink and use drugs?

This is one of the largest issues I see with integration and the entrance, as previously proposed would have helped. It it possible to get a waiver?

I live in the single family home closest to the project as a renter. I am one of the people who this is going to affect the most. I am already one of the most affected from the Jungle et al as I am the closest to Martin Way. I have had people in my yard, I cant use my shed due to too many breakins, I cannot leave even a garden tool in my yard or it is stolen, mail has been stolen, ugh...and I have had to make homemade fortifications around some of my windows to make them less appealing for a break in. I also am going to work on doing some landscaping etc to make access to the back of my house more challenging. I am an older disabled person living alone. I do not not have means to move. But I am sick of living under siege, and I am concerned that 120 more low barrier clients is going to add to my stress level, I have PTSD. I found people camping in my yard a few nights ago. I had to call the cops, I do not like doing that, but there is no way I am going up there alone to "open a dialog." So that is a secondary concern that the project will incentivize the nearby camps, how is that going to be handled???

This is not knee jerk NIMBYism. This change in the QOL has been large, and it has caused negative effects to my mental health. Honestly, with this project the notifications and outreach has been abysmal. And when we have a pro forma meeting it is not to get input on the decision, that has all been top down. We are treated more as a nuisance to be dealt with than real people with real concerns. Sharon Lee is especially guilty, but also Meg Martin and the city reps, though on the whole Cary Retlin has been responsive to me, but it has still felt like they are placating to make sure that there is not complaint on the project. I never get the feeling that anyone really cares about our input or has attempted to make us a partner in the project. Maybe its not required by law, but that does not mean it makes for a good policy with such a contentious project.

We began cautiously optimistic, but seeing how the project has been handled, and how we have been blown off, and then the way Meg Martin has banned me from the Advisory Board for no good reason, people are losing trust and confidence. This is all on you guys...with better outreach and messaging you would not have us being so skeptical. But yeah....when Sharon Lee tells us our neighborhood will be better and implying it is shabby, and that values will rise, people see through that immediately. She is not liked by anyone because of her arrogance.

I am going to attach below the correspondence between Meg Martin and me, so you can see for yourself. The letter is very troubling in multiple ways. She could have just said the board has decided you are not a good fit for the project and be done with it, but she had to go into this torturous psychological territory where in the end she tries to diagnose me, which is an ethical lapse for a MSW as I am not her patient, and furthermore she does not even have the criteria for the diagnosis correct which quite alarmed the multiple mental health professionals I sought opinion from. I gave it to them blind and w no preface, just what do you think. The consensus was universally shocked. When I told them who it was

and what her position was they were disbelieving and it raised their concerns even higher that this person was in charge of the mental health of vulnerable people. I am not sure what to do with this...it raises serious questions about Martin's leadership. I have also been collecting off the record stories w former clients and other service providers who also raise serious questions but are afraid to speak.

The above may not be specifically your wheelhouse, but I feel a duty to warn and get it out there, and feel free to forward the materials to the proper people.

How this ties in, is that she has lost our confidence that she will have the interest of the neighborhood weighed equally with the interests of her project. At the unveiling of the Homeless Response Plan in FEB she revealed that she thought the very mild LE component was too punitive. She does not seem to have interest in LE at all as a tool for managing addiction. Best practice indicates 4 pillars to successful drug policy...prevention, treatment, harm reduction and LE. For best results, the four need to be applied in balance. The IW model, as well as most others in Olympia stresses only harm reduction and nearly no LE, despite powerful testimony from former users (and their parents) that LE saved their lives. So her inability to set boundaries around drug use concerns me, and brings me back to why we feel strongly the entrance to the project, at the least for pedestrians should be on Martin Way. It just makes more sense on so many levels.

Why would there be any problem with making that change? It would go a long way toward making the project integrate better and does not automatically funnel substance abusers 115 feet from my driveway. My security should matter. I do not want to have to be making calls and being the neighborhood tattle tale for multiple reasons. If the entrance is 115 from my house I will be forced into witnessing the comings and goings, and related issues.

Please consider this when planning, considering equity as well....the apartments behind the project are lower income with lots of kids and working class....their bus stop is also about 100 feet from the entrance. How will this best protect them? Esp if their are SO in the mix, who are not known as they did not give ID or a real name per IW current policy. At least if the entrance was on Martin there would be less contact with these kids. Its not just the SO issue, or people doing drugs in the woods across from the project, its also other behavior related to severe persistent mental illness that could also traumatize the kids. Again...move the entrance to Martin Way and fence in the Pattison Side and you will make a whole lot of moms and dads much happier about the project.

Planning is supposed to be thoughtful as to the needs of the neighborhood. This one single change could make such a large difference that is is hard to accept why it cant happen.

Thank you for listening.

Candy

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE FROM MEG MARTIN TO ME AND MY REPLY When I presented this to my personal therapist she was stunned that someone would have this opinion of me, and be so far off base. She said it was "slippery" and it "left a bad taste in her mouth and beyond being just unprofessional it crossed ethical boundaries, and that is why I am taking it more seriously. I had already made the decision that I had to make all my interactions w Martin public, and my therapist on her own told me that this woman is not to be trusted, she does not like you and she is "not safe" for me to be alone with. This is pretty unprecedented for me, and rather disorienting, esp given Martin's overall reputation. That is why I went to people outside of Olympia to get other professional opinion to make sure it was not just an over reaction on my part.

Hi Candy!

OK so, first of all, I'd love to reschedule a one on one to check in. I literally just saw your last facebook message -- I suck at keeping up through messenger because I don't get notifications on my phone. It was nice to see you at council last night. I tried to find you after the meeting to chat, but I think you were already back inside the chambers. Anyway, there are quite a few things coming up with the Martin Way site, and the day before yesterday I sent out an update to the

group of folks who signed up to be on the neighbor advisory council. I didn't include you on the email and I want to be vulnerable, and honest, and tell you why. Please read this email with a calm and loving tone because that is genuinely how I feel.

Candy, I want to have a working relationship with you that is built on trust and understanding that we are both coming to the table with good faith, and a trust that we are working towards similar goals to help people. I have always operated in our conversations with that assumption. I think you are a good person and really smart and have been through so much. Increasingly over the past year or so I have seen/heard/witnessed many things from you that have led me to feel like you are not coming to the table with the same end goal in mind. When I say "end goal" what I mean is a goal in which homelessness is resolved through safe, affordable and supportive housing as well as increased access to treatment for physical and mental health related issues which in turn will decrease negative and potentially illegal behavior in our community and neighborhood to some degree. At one point I thought we were very much on the same page about that even if we had different ideas about how to get there, and to be honest I'm not sure we are anymore.

As someone who has been doing this work for a very long time, have been living in our neighborhood for 5 years, seen and experienced all kinds of similar hardships you have experienced, and have lots of lived experience myself with my own mental health, I have to be honest that I see that you are struggling with compassion fatigue and burnout. You have told me this before and it's really difficult to navigate -- I get that and have a lot of empathy for that. I was disappointed to see that you were talking about the Martin Way development on film in a way that you expressed some kind of feelings about not qualifying to live there, rather than seeing it for what it is -- supported housing and shelter primarily for permanently disabled people with zero or extremely low income (ABD, SSI, HEN), and serious challenges related to their physical and mental health. The folks who will be prioritized to live there need lots of support to be successful in housing. To make comments like the ones you did in the QOL video reinforce the idea that there are some people deserving of help and others who are not, and I hope that you know me well enough to know that I don't subscribe to that. That's why I made sure that I could support you in the Housing Authority list process because we should be helping everyone get connected to whatever resources are most appropriate for them. The personal (to me) impact of your comments that are now being shared widely on social media, is that I have lost trust that you are coming to the table for solutions with the big picture in mind, but rather it seems that you are coming to the table for solutions that fit into your moral or personal box of acceptability. That is a sign of burnout. When you can't see where you stop and the other person starts.

I am still willing to work with you -- most definitely! Like I said, I think you are a good person! I just have to express that I am struggling to trust you fully, and I imagine that you might be struggling to trust me as well. When you said that you weren't going to record our last one-on-one meeting it made me feel like our conversations were no longer safe. When you video tape disabled and struggling people to expose them and provide a myopic and simplified view into an endlessly complex situation makes me feel that you are not a person I can trust in this work. I have never used our time together in any kind of way other than to understand where you are coming from better, see if there is middle ground for us to connect on, and try to provide information to you in hopes that you will better understand why we do things the way we do.

All this said, I feel really strongly that you know what's up with the Martin Way property and don't get surprised by things in the development of this process. I hope you understand that I can't have someone on the advisory council that I'm not completely sure is coming to the table in good faith. I care a lot about you, Candy, and I hope this can help us have an honest and courageous conversation next time we get together. <3 <3

The update: We have been in a bit of a "hurry up and wait" process working hard to apply for funding and slowly working on design over the fall/winter. We have incorporated the neighbor feedback/desires/concerns into the design process that we heard last fall, and have some preliminary, beautiful designs that I am hopeful the neighborhood will approve of.

So, here's what's happening:

- Late last week we heard that we were awarded the 9% Low Income Tax Credit allocation from the WA State Finance Commission. This news means that we have secured the remainder of the funding needs for the brick and mortar (capital) funds for the construction of the building. Now that this decision has been made, the LIHI development team will start the process of finding a contractor to work with, getting clear construction timelines, finalizing plans with the architect, and applying for construction permits with the city. It still looks like construction wouldn't likely happen until late summer/fall of 2020 at the earliest, but there will be clearer timelines being developed soon.
- The property sale has not been transferred to LIHI yet, but that process will also be finalized in the near future. Along with this, a parallel process to secure a "development agreement" with the city of Olympia is in motion and would go before the land use committee for review and then a public hearing/meeting that is legally required of the city would be scheduled, as I understand it. The public hearing has been scheduled for Feb. 25th, and there will be a public notice and something in the Olympian about it at the end of this week. This development process would show plans for a possible "phase 2" building plan since the lot is so large. We have mentioned this to the neighborhood before, that another set of apartments could fit on the property, and it makes sense to plan phase 1 in a way that looks ahead and considers the full picture. The development agreement is focused on land use issues like parking, storm water, fees, etc. and allows for early ideas/input to be added by the neighborhood.
- I scheduled another VFW neighborhood meeting that Interfaith, LIHI, the architect working on the designs, and the city can come to. It will be 6pm on March 2nd -- will you be able to attend? This is in addition to the public hearing at Land use, but I think more communication is better.

Please feel free to update neighbors in passing -- I will also encourage the city to send out an email update to the list they have on file - we don't want folks to feel surprised or like they weren't included. Thank you, Candy and I really do hope we can sit down together soon. Take care.

#### MY RESPONSE:

Dear Meg,

All said with true love and respect for what you do, you are a hero.

I feel you do not understand my positions at all. I feel you are making a lot of assumptions and are mistaking my intent. I am on the same page, I want everyone to get what they need to stabilize and heal. I bear no ill will toward any individuals, and am a champion for people getting into recovery and into healthy situations. I do not see where I have not advocated for that. I absolutely agree with your stated goal, though I argue that the ill effects of open drug use and theft cannot wait for housing to be attended to, and does not depend on housed status to address.

I do not believe that unsanctioned encampments are the answer. I feel they only lead to more suffering and increased chronic homelessness. I do not feel aiding people in continuing their addictions is compassionate. I do not feel that allowing people to shoot up down town in open view of families is healthy. This is not hate.

Where our tension comes from is that you are advocating for the people you work with, and I am advocating for the health of our community. There is going to be a differing of opinion because the two are not in a alignment right now. There is too much harm being caused to Olympia, and to continue to allow it is not an option. The situation is out of control.

You spoke of equity in the new project, equity between shelter guests and residents. I bring up a question of equity in the video, of how I am personally affected, and you find that problematic? The project by its nature is picking who is worthy to help, and that is my exact critique, it is not open to all who might need it, or open at least in part to help people like me as well.

I am extremely low income, and right now I am taking care of myself, but barely. I am running a GoFundMe to help with my rent because it is the only option available to me right now. I am fully and permanently disabled, I recently had a medical setback which put me in a class where I needed a caseworker. I do not think you realize the extent of my disability, and my medical issues, and the depth of my struggle over the past decade to stay housed.

I see a lot of inequity in the system, and one of those is that in order for me to get housing help right now in Olympia, I would have to become homeless. How is that a good thing? That is my larger point. I really try to leave my own situation out of my work, but it is frustrating. It is almost like I am penalized for making good choices and making staying housed one of my top values. I know that is not the intent of the system, but it is the effect. I had a woman who was staying on my couch, actually homeless, and more disabled than me, but again, she was on my couch so not considered homeless and could not get help. She also would not have qualified for 2828 though she absolutely needed it. How is that fair? That is our system, perverse incentives.

My goal is to have a reasonable working relationship with as many stakeholders as possible. I think you misread my intent or ??? about recording our last meeting??? I never record for one thing, but I do recall intentionally positioning it as a one on one off the record relationship building conversation as opposed to an interview, and that was specifically in order so we could talk frankly. I also treat such conversations with integrity, I do not reveal sensitive information etc. as well as protecting my sources ethically.

And just because I spend time with someone, or talk to them, does not mean I automatically agree, another false assumption that is made about me. I get hate for talking to the activists, to the council, to the conservatives...just for talking. Its ridiculous frankly. I am independent, and plan to continue as such.

I feel you are making the worst possible assumptions about me and my goals, and I respectfully feel you have misread me greatly. If you believe what you say about me, I get it, but the thing is it simply not true. I have a lot more in common with the people in the camps than with wealthier people, I don't even have teeth. I lost all my teeth due to my illness, I got them pulled at UG Dental Clinic, angels they are. I get mistaken for homeless all the time, and in general, people are nicer to me, except when the watch over me at Fred Meyer in the self check out. I use the Food Bank and Concern for Animals. I know what it is like to have to ask for help. It is the only way I survive, people helping me.

I see potential in everyone, and I am familiar with learned helplessness. I am familiar with addiction. I get it. You do not give me credit for my life experience and how it relates to my work. I believe in agency and resilience. I feel people need to be encouraged to better themselves, and I believe they have the power to do so (excepting those with severe persistent mental illness etc). I believe that trauma is best addressed head on, and that people need to hear and deal with hard truths.

I do not think we should hold the homeless to differing standards of behavior or conduct than we do for ourselves and our loved ones. Everyone bears responsibility for when they cause harm to others. I get by without harming anyone, without stealing.

One of the problems in Olympia is no one is willing to stand up and say no its not cool to do things like shoot up outside the Community Care Center. Do you find that acceptable? Would you allow it outside of your project? What would you do to make sure it stops? This is not making a moral judgement on drug use either, its making a judgement on drug use etiquette. You don't do drugs in front of kids, or at least that was our code back in the day. Have some boundaries, and both self respect and respect for the community.

Sorry, I am bordering on snarky. But I do not like having to point this stuff out. I take no joy in saying the Mitigation Site is a failure. It pains me deeply. I am reporting as honestly as I can.

I do not want the story to be about me, but it is impossible for it not to be sometimes. I straddle the lines between reporting, participating and being affected by the issue. So keeping boundaries is a work in progress, and I can

appreciate because of my differing roles, it would be complicated to have me on the board, and I can see how even politically that might be, given the quantity and quality of hate thrown at me.

You may not believe this, but none of the men I was on the tour with expressed any hatred, or dehumanization. They saw the humanity in the people we encountered, and they wanted the best for them. I do not agree with their approach, and do not feel it is a good fit for our community, but I do think that they are right in seeing the potential in people and trying to guide them toward it. I spent a lot of time with Tim, and his story was remarkable.

I really do not have animus of any kind against the project per se. I have concerns about impact certainly. 180 beds is a LOT. It is pretty much 1-1 ratio, and it is going to affect the neighborhood, you cannot argue that it will not. It falls on your shoulders to make sure that impact is mitigated and that you are proactive in that. I have seen no indications that you will not.

I do not know if you have read my other reporting on 2828, but I think you will find it was factual and fair. It is on Next Door I think, if you want to search for it.

Thank you for feeling you could bring me your concerns in a forthright fashion, I appreciate that.

Dear Candy,

thanks for your thoughtful response. I've never discounted your struggle and I'm sorry the impact of my email was you feeling discounted and not seen for all you've been through-- that was never my intention.

You are right that I am interpreting your words and actions very differently than what you wrote in your response to me yesterday. I also think as people working together we should be able to hear feedback about how our actions and words are affecting one another regardless of difference in opinion of interpretation.

You asking me if I think shooting up in front of the CCC is acceptable tells me that you don't understand our program model or position very well. Of course I don't find that acceptable or something I want to have happen in her life, or our community. If the CCC has been open that person would have been held accountable for those actions like we do every day when people violate our space use agreements, and she would have been supported lovingly throughout, and given a chance to make a different decision. Personal responsibility is really important, as well as understanding the reasons behind people's behavior.

Her behavior is within a very complicated context and to drop in on that one moment in her life, and that one moment in the life of the CCC, then amplify it through QOL without any broader context tells a wholly incomplete and incorrect narrative. Drug use will always be something in our society as it has been forever, whether it's dependence on marijuana or alcohol or opioids or methamphetamines or caffeine or food or television... It's part of human nature to cope however we can and we tolerate, or at the very least, ignore a massive amount of harmful substance use in our own lives and in our community who use everyday behind closed doors because we've decided it's socially acceptable/don't have to see it in public. Exposing people through the QOL videos felt like "punching down" when it wasn't accompanied with any other broader context.

Things are not good in society, they haven't been for a long time and that's why I got into this work. I don't think encampments are the answer either, and I know that shame and blame and isolation are what keep people addicted. The opposite of addiction is connection and belonging. That's what we're going for.

Amplifying this incomplete narrative causes harm and makes it very difficult for solutions to happen in our community. That reality doesn't negate the harm she's causing with her behavior, I see both as harmful and have never shyed away from talking about the negative impacts of homelessness, drug use, and unmanaged mental illness. I'm not sure what part of the community you're referring to that aren't willing to stand up and talk about the harm. I've been doing this work a very long time and that's not at all been my experience.

I really do want to continue this conversation in person because I think in general that's always going to be an easier way to meaningfully connect than through email. Again, I'm coming from a place of love, respect, and hope that we can keep working together towards a better life for all of us. ❤️

---

**Candy Mercer**  
[candy@candio.com](mailto:candy@candio.com)

On Wed, Apr 8, 2020 at 12:27 PM Paula Smith <[psmith@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:psmith@ci.olympia.wa.us)> wrote:

Candy-

Thanks for contacting me with your comments.

I will add you to the WebEx meeting and you should then get an invite.

Currently, city staff is reviewing the project based on city codes and standards that are in place.

A homeless shelter is consider a type of group home. Group Homes in the zoning district HDC-4 is an outright permitted use. The Unified Development Code states that a permitted use is a use allowed by law, subject to the provisions applicable in that district. Permitted uses are not subject to a public hearing and Land Use decisions are issued by the Director of Community Planning and Development. Any decision though made by the Director can be appealed to the Olympia Hearings Examiner.

From one of your concerns below regarding wanting access to be taken off Martin Way, from my understanding, the Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS) are dictating that the access for the project be taken off the lesser street, which in this case is Pattison Street.

I hope some of this information is helpful.

Sincerely, Paula

*Paula Smith*

Associate Planner

360.753.8596 [psmith@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:psmith@ci.olympia.wa.us)

---

**From:** Candy Mercer <[candy@candio.com](mailto:candy@candio.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 8, 2020 8:51 AM  
**To:** Paula Smith <[psmith@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:psmith@ci.olympia.wa.us)>  
**Subject:** 2828 Martin Way

**External Email Alert!**

This email originated from a source outside of the City's network. Use caution before clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please include me on the email list for the public meeting.

My main concerns: Last year both Cary Retlin and Meg Martin assured the neighborhood that all access to the project would be from Martin Way to blunt the impact on Pattison and Applehill, now we are told the entrance will be on Pattison. Why cant it remain on Martin with environmental aspects such as fencing and landscape to keep people from entering the neighborhood which could reduce impact on Applehill.

Also where are people going to use drugs? This is not rhetorical. This is a low barrier project and there will be substance abusers on the premises though substance abuse is not allowed on site. Residents of the units will use in their unit most likely. Where will shelter guests use? Occams razor suggest in the vicinity of the project which is Applehill. What will be done to address this?

We are also concerned about the lottery for shelter beds and that the project will incentivize unsanctioned camping in Applehill. We have been successful for over a year keeping campers out with a zero tolerance policy. How will the city protect us from illegal camping?

We also do not want to have to police our neighborhood. We want the shelter to have zero impact. We do not want to have to call things in. We want them to be proactive in setting boundaries with clear consequences for residents who break the neighborhood agreement. These should be spelled out, not the vague policy in the current IW handbook. Discipline should be clear and fair with the penalties applied equally.



We have a baseline of what the neighborhood is like without the project, the emergency shelter, of which we have not gotten ANY communications on, will be a test to see if the full project can be successfully managed. We are going to have zero tolerance for needles, dealing and drug use in our neighborhood. If we see people using or dealing we are going to call it in to OPD not the shelter. We do not like having to do this, but we must, because we cannot trust IW to handle it at this point, esp given Ms. Martins criticism of the overly non punitive LE component of the citys new homeless response plan. Her critique of the plan she herself worked on does not engender trust that she will care for Applehill, it shows she will defend her clients right or wrong, and put them first. That is her job, our job is to keep our neighborhood safe.

Speaking of which, what about SO? We have a lot of children living adjacent to the project. Currently IW does not require ID or even a real name to access services? how can they check against SO registry if they do not even have a way of verifying ID? that is not good practice, and again shows lack of regard for impact on others.

We are concerned about how the city, IW and LIHI have interacted with the neighborhood.

We asked for a citizen advisory board and it was granted but there is not clear and transparent process for who and how people will be selected. I was told in a torturous and unprofessional letter from Meg Martin that I will not be invited to serve even though I live closest to the project and have the support of my neighbors. This is not fair.

The project needs oversight. Who will be providing that oversight?

How will tenants be selected, beyond CE? Why is it that you have to be homeless to have your application considered? Why can the project serve any low income medically vulnerable person in need of services, why do people have to be on the street first? this goes against the best practices in homeless prevention.

How will residents be selected to ensure the projects success?

I have a lot of concerns about IW ability to be good neighbors. They do not seem to have good control of the situation, this comes from speaking with many people who have interacted with the current shelter, both guests and other providers. We are concerned that IW is more concerned with preventing trauma than setting boundaries on behavior. Also there are questions as to the success rate of IW model as they do not seem to get many people into housing and services (from what I have heard). Most of the shelter guests are de facto residents, I get the need for that, but also that is not the purpose of a shelter? Are not shelters supposed to be temporary solutions not permanent living situations? It begs the question why are they not more successful getting people out of their shelter?

So far, the city, IW and LIHI has treated the neighborhood as a nuisance in the way of the project, that we must be managed and placated. Communication is sparse, and late, never proactive. IW has made no efforts at outreach. We are not treated as equal partners in the process, much less given the respect that we might actually be able to contribute to making the project more successful. It is demoralizing to see how we have been treated, and how

excluded we have been from the process beyond the most cursory meetings, where our concerns are managed but not truly heard and acted on.

As a planner, I know you have a mandate to do better. Please do. This could have been handled WAY better, and due to the actions of the city and Meg Martin there is a lot of suspicion and lack of trust which could have been avoided with more transparency and respect....take the LIHI claim, on the 2828 website, and in meetings that this project is going to INCREASE our property values (I rent) which is laughable, absolutely. yet they tell us this with a straight face and with utmost sincerity.

---

**Candy Mercer**

[candy@candio.com](mailto:candy@candio.com)