

I want to build a “fact sheet” : that I will convert to an opinion article that I will submit to the ADN and other news organizations about “lessons learned” from the last 4 days of testimony at the Anchorage Assembly regarding AO-58 and 66. Please feel free to add what I missed and or other observations, keep it shorty and factual please.

IN the days of Testimony regarding the Anchorage Assembly’s “plan” to solve Homelessness we learned:

- that, there are many, many superior sites available to perform the functions that the Muni seeks to do, and that some of these sites are already owned by the MUNI or by the MHLTA and would be cheaper or free,
- that, the MUNI did not undertake any studies to understand the impacts on neighborhoods near the sites that were chosen,
- that, the purchases are likely illegal under the CARES Act guidance, as the MUNI is interpreting legal guidance as “most favorable” to their plan,
- that, if deemed illegal the MUNI will have to pay the money back and the property taxpayers will be on the hook,
- that, the MUNIs plan for operations costs for these facilities are as of yet unknown and are likely to cost the taxpayers more in the future
- that the MUNI does not have the right partners at the table, notably absent are the State of Alaska, the VA, the Tribes, and the MHLTA,
- that, there are too many of the “wrong” partners at the table that absorb money meant to resolve homelessness, BUT that essentially are just self-perpetuating, AND that there is not an effort underway to define their roles as part of a larger plan
- that the MUNI “plan” does not have a component to address the neighborhood disruptions caused by crime, homelessness and addiction AND, that the purchase of the 4 properties is likely to add to neighborhood dysfunction and decline
- that, the purchase of the Golden Lion will place a facility next to a school and a wildlife refuge, AND, that the Assembly ignored testimony about how placing the facilities by schools in Juneau led to the school being locked down several times, and eventually shuttered for good.
- that, the Assembly was not interested in the techniques used in Juneau that reduced crim form 1000 reports per year to 50 per year, and that there is no public safety component to their “plan”
- that, the Assembly believes that the neighborhood patrols that are currently in use are doing an adequate job, and that their “plan” does not seek to enhance Patrols with lessons learned from Juneau and other jurisdictions
- that, the Assembly will not consider using trespass, vagrancy, loitering or other laws to incent people to move off of public and private lands and into homes and treatment
- that Assembly-persons Dunbar, Zaletal, and Rivera do not believe that any person currently homeless should be incarcerated, EVEN IF that person has committed a crime
- that, Mayor Berkowitz and others will resort to charges of “racism” if you oppose their plans and notice, that different demographic groups (which they collected data on) should be involved in this process and planning for success AND, that Assembly members themselves can engage in overt racist statements , and there will be no repercussions

- that, the narrowly drawn Anchored Home, considers none of the aforementioned public safety, neighborhood character and defense, cost measures, inclusivity of partners, etc, AND, is the plan that the Assembly is backing
- that, property values in the impacted neighborhoods will likely decline, AND the character of the neighborhoods is likely to be diminished
- that, rural – not urban or sub-urban - facilities are the best setting for therapeutic facilities
- that, the Assembly “plan” and the Anchored Home “plan’ does nothing to incent people to stop self and socially destructive behaviors, and relies on the same voluntary compliance that has created the conditions which Anchorage now suffers under
- that, the Assembly has no plan to cease the surrendering of public and private spaces to homeless camps and persons
- that, the plan does not address or seek to change the impediments to Title 47, which provides for mental health confinements
- that the “plan” does nothing to protect landlords who would house a re-entry population, or seek to change laws that would protect those same landlords from abuse
- that, the MUNI, has spent untold tens of millions of dollars on the following the existing Anchored Home “plan”, lost scores of neighborhoods and public spaces and private property value and security, AND that the Assembly has no interest in changing course to take these issues into consideration
- that, the MUNI’s current proposal will involve spending over 100 million over the next few years, without any mention of metric to judge it for outcomes or efficacy