

Testimony for City Council Public Hearing on Grant Request for CCEH – from Roy Schweiker, Concord NH

This grant is supposed to help deal with homelessness and it does that by creating more apartments. Buying existing apartments may be cheaper than turning offices into apartments but doesn't increase the overall supply. But conversion apparently doesn't lead to efficient apartment layouts - these apartments are often 800 sf with one being about 1100 sf - or roughly the size of the 3-bedroom ranch house I lived in for 3 years. I suspect a commercial landlord might reconfigure these as 2-bedroom apartments and obtain a higher rent, but not meet the need of CCEH's mostly single clients.

Economists will say that if you subsidize something you will get more and not less, and over the last decade the improvement in services for the unhoused has resulted in a large increase rather than a decrease in clients. One community cannot fix this problem itself - if a philanthropist created the hundred apartments necessary to house all the known clients in Concord, there would soon be two hundred people from Manchester and Lowell waiting in tents in Concord for the next apartments.

I think the city needs to be more proactive in setting guidelines for the projects it will support. What Concord needs most are places where clients stay a short time before transitioning to better quarters, but tenants are unlikely to find a better deal on the private market than the large apartments this grant will create and may linger indefinitely. They may also be tempted to take in roommates, which is one way to get people off the street but unfortunately is a violation of Federal law for subsidized apartments. This means CCEH will have less opportunity to place other clients there and will just become an ordinary landlord. I've heard the same thing in the domestic violence arena - a woman I know whose boyfriend cracked a sheetrock wall with her head is still living with him because when she called 211 she was told there is a 2-month wait to get into a woman's shelter.

I attach a floor plan of an apartment I rented for a year which is only 300 sf but contains all necessary facilities for someone who doesn't own a lot of stuff. [From [https://royalcrestnashua.prospectportal.com/nashua/royal-crest-estates-nashua-042393/floorplans/the-hampton-965267/fp\\_name/occupancy\\_type/conventional/](https://royalcrestnashua.prospectportal.com/nashua/royal-crest-estates-nashua-042393/floorplans/the-hampton-965267/fp_name/occupancy_type/conventional/)] There would be cost savings in building such small apartments which might be just what some people want while others would move on to a better one making room for new clients. Someone should make sure they are allowed under Concord's proposed zoning.



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BEDS / BATHS  
Studio

SQ. FT. \*\*  
300

PETS  
