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Anchorage Assembly Leadership Statement on Navigation Center Vote

October 26, 2022

At last night's Regular Assembly Meeting, by a vote of 3-9, the Assembly declined to adopt AM 496-2022 to amend the Roger Hickel Contracting contract for the Tudor/Elmore Navigation Center and Shelter. Adoption would have allowed the original contract for \$50,000 for pre-construction to be increased to \$4.9M for site preparations and construction.

Chair Suzanne LaFrance and Vice Chair Christopher Constant have issued the following statement on the issue:

"Last month, the Administration informed the Assembly that it gave the contractor the greenlight to start construction, even though Assembly approval had not been given, which is in violation of Municipal code Title 7 (7.15.080). At that point the Administration halted the project and committed to provide more information to the Assembly.

"However, after several worksessions on the topic, the Administration has still come up short on providing the answers to the Assembly's questions and addressing significant project concerns, expressed by Assembly members and the community. In addition to the issues surrounding the construction contract, the administration has yet to identify a fund source for the remaining \$4.3M they say is needed to make the facility operational and the building permit for the project still has many open issues to be resolved, such as the structure's ability to withstand earthquakes, high winds and snow loads.

"In the past few weeks, it has been mentioned by members of the Administration that if it weren't for the Assembly, the Navigation Center would be completed by now, but this is contrary to the fact that the Assembly has supported nearly all of the mayor's requests for the Navigation Center over the past year. The reason the Navigation Center is delayed is because the Administration has yet to present a thorough plan to see the project through to completion. The Assembly is still waiting to see an overall plan for the project and we are waiting for a comprehensive project budget that includes design and construction costs, FFE, permits, and contingencies, as well as a detailed operating plan and budget, and a total project cost estimate that we can be confident in.

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“We encourage the Administration to continue working on putting forward a comprehensive project plan, as many Assembly members have expressed support for the concept in general and have indicated they can get to a yes vote if presented with an adequately detailed proposal. The need for overnight shelter and navigation services in our community is great and a fiscally responsible and well planned project is very likely to receive Assembly and community support.”

More information on the Tudor/Elmore Navigation Center and Shelter can be found at: <https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Pages/FOCUS-Housing-and-Homelessness.aspx>.

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