

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AO No. 2021-76

AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 4.60 TO ENACT A NEW SECTION TO ESTABLISH A HOUSELESS LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY BOARD TO PROVIDE THE ASSEMBLY AND MAYOR WITH THE PERSPECTIVE OF RESIDENTS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE AND TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF OUR CURRENT AND FORMER HOUSELESS NEIGHBORS.

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage appreciates the cooperative participation of our houseless neighbors as we continue to confront COVID-19's challenges to our public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality values the wisdom shared by our residents whose lives have been shaped in part by the trauma that resulted in their becoming houseless; and

WHEREAS, their voices deepen the Municipality's understanding of the need for our community services to be flexible so that they can be tailored to help each individual overcome the challenges impeding their personal journey into permanent housing; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Assembly desires to incorporate the perspective of individuals with lived experience into decisions that will have an impact on our houseless neighbors; now, therefore

THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY ORDAINS:

Section 1. Anchorage Municipal Code chapter 4.60 is hereby amended by adding a new section to read as follows:

4.60.250 Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board.

A. There is established a Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board to provide input and feedback to the assembly and mayor on housing and homelessness solutions with the goal of centering the perspective of those with lived experience. The Clerk's Office or a designee selected by the assembly chair shall act as staff for the board.

B. The board shall consist of up to 9 members serving three-year terms who self-identify as having lived experience of homelessness. The following experiences are suggested, but not required, to ensure a variety of perspectives on the board:

1. Families.
2. Youth.
3. Single adult.

4. Physical disability.
5. Mental health disorder.
6. Substance misuse disorder.
7. Domestic violence survivor.
8. Veteran.

C. The board shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Advise the assembly and mayor on issues, services and programs regarding homelessness, housing, and related matters from the perspective of those with lived experience in our community.
2. Assist the assembly and mayor in conducting educational and public relations programs designed to create public awareness of the needs of those with lived experience in our community.
3. Make recommendations to the assembly and mayor regarding policies, practices, and legislation from the perspective of those with lived experience.
4. Act as a liaison between those with lived experience and policy makers.
5. Conduct regular reviews of the current community plan to end homelessness from the perspective of those with lived experience.
6. To review budget allocations addressing homelessness and support services from the perspective of those with lived experience.

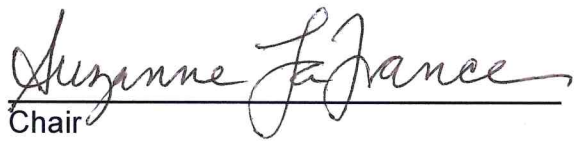
D. The board shall sunset on October 14, 2024, unless affirmatively continued by the assembly in accordance with section 4.05.150.

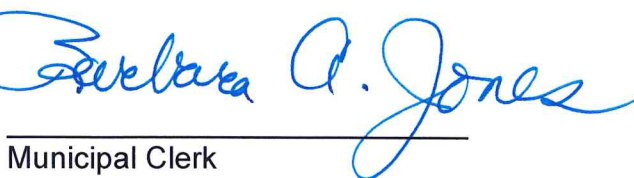
Section 2. This ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 24th day of August, 2021.

ATTEST:

Chair


Suzanne LaFrance


Barbara A. Jones
Municipal Clerk



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM**

No. AM 526-2021

Meeting Date: August 10, 2021

From: Assembly Member Rivera

**Subject: AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY
AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 4.60 TO
ENACT A NEW SECTION TO ESTABLISH A HOUSELESS LIVED
EXPERIENCE ADVISORY BOARD TO PROVIDE THE ASSEMBLY
AND MAYOR WITH THE PERSPECTIVE OF RESIDENTS WITH
LIVED EXPERIENCE AND TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION
OF OUR CURRENT AND FORMER HOUSELESS NEIGHBORS.**

For years, members of the public and my colleagues have known me to regularly ask the following questions whenever we discuss projects or policy ideas which impact those experiencing homelessness: Have you talked to anyone with lived experience? How are you going to integrate the real-world experience of our current and former houseless neighbors?

It is time to move beyond simply asking these questions and systematizing inclusion into our practices. To that effect, I bring this ordinance for consideration to the body. This ordinance seeks to create a Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board consisting of nine members with current or former lived experience.

The board has a variety of duties, including: advising the Assembly and Mayor, assisting the Assembly and Mayor with creating opportunities for community dialogue between the housed and houseless, making policy recommendations to the Assembly and Mayor, reviewing the current community plan to end homelessness, and reviewing various budget allocations made by the Assembly with regard to homelessness and support services.

On top of putting this board into Code, I have worked with various community partners to ensure that this new board has the support it needs to recruit members and meet the goals outlined in the ordinance. Staffing support may be accomplished through the Clerk's Office, and the Assembly Chair may designate staffing by external partners. The new board is distinct from the HHAND Commission but will have a working relationship with it.

One of the current advocacy organizations in our community, the Houseless Resource Advisory Council, has a very germane saying they use in their work: "Nothing about us without us." This ordinance implements this at our policy-making level.

I recommend approval of this ordinance.

Respectfully submitted: Assembly Member Felix Rivera
District 4 (Midtown)



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

Assembly Information Memorandum

No. AIM 139-2021

Meeting Date: August 24, 2021

From: ASSEMBLY MEMBER RIVERA

Subject: AO 2021-76: AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 4.60 TO ENACT A NEW SECTION TO ESTABLISH A HOUSELESS LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY BOARD TO PROVIDE THE ASSEMBLY AND MAYOR WITH THE PERSPECTIVE OF RESIDENTS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE AND TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF OUR CURRENT AND FORMER HOUSELESS NEIGHBORS.

For the Assembly's consideration; please see the attached endorsements from Alaska Black Caucus, Houseless Resources Advocacy Council, and Homeless Action Response Team.

Prepared by: Assembly Counsel

Respectfully submitted: Felix Rivera, Assembly Member
District 4 (Midtown)

HART

(Homeless Action Response Team)

A grass-roots advocacy group

Anchorage Alaska

Anchorage Assembly
Housing and Homeless Committee
Attn: Felix Rivera

Greetings, on behalf of the Homeless Action Response Team I offer the following:

HART endorses the creation of a Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board.

HART strives to bring our community closer together by building bridges and understanding between those who have and those who have not. We have learned a great deal over the years from our interactions with members of our community who are or have been houseless. They come from every walk of life, houseless for a spectrum of troubles that defy cookie cutter solutions.

With the average Anchorage family devoting nearly half of its income to keeping a roof overhead, it is no wonder there are no easy solutions for our community of the houseless. Chasing illegal campers from camp to camp is a shameful, expensive, and futile effort to “disappear” them.

Our Municipality will benefit from the creation of a formal pathway for the integration of lived experience perspectives into decisions that involve law enforcement, emergency responders, health care, behavioral health, social services, and housing.

We encourage the Assembly to adopt Assembly Member Rivera’s proposed ordinance.

Homeless Action Response Team (HART)



Roger Branson



ANCHORAGE COALITION TO
END HOMELESSNESS

August 12, 2021

To the Anchorage Assembly:

The Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) supports AO-2021.76, to establish a houseless lived experience advisory board for the assembly. People experiencing homelessness and their perspectives, expertise and input should be the basis for any policy or plan about homelessness. These important voices are often silenced, and the lived expertise ignored. ACEH acknowledges the dignity of all people experiencing homelessness, a varied group of individuals that changes as community needs change, including unsheltered people and seeks to build more equitable systems based on respect and compassion. The work is possible because of engagement with people who are impacted by community systems but we as a community need to find processes to engage these voices in the very systems they are impacted by. We know that a successful community wide homelessness response must hold the people it serves at the center of our decision making.

The amendment seeks to include people from over-represented subpopulations of the community on the council. This demonstrates the care and consideration that all unhoused people deserve. The creation of the houseless lived experience advisory board is a necessary step to improve development of city-wide homeless services. Formalizing input and review by community members impacted by policy level decision making is a best practice that helps to achieve better outcomes.

Jasmine Boyle

ACEH Executive Director

Hon. Felix Rivera
Member of the Assembly
Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Assembly Member Rivera,

Thank you for introducing an ordinance to create a Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board. HRAC wholeheartedly endorses your proposal and urges its adoption by the Assembly.

Our Anchorage community of individuals and families without a house is a microcosm of our nation's social and economic failures as a society. Ever since our founding, HRAC has tried to bring our stories into the halls of the establishment where they might be heard by compassionate leaders with the will to change things for the better.

We have been, and continue to be, grateful for the support of the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness and the work of their many partners, but our community safety net is fragmented and starved for resources.

Where would we be without federal assistance during these COVID times? We would all be in illegal camps subject to raids by the police and vigilantes. That is no way to treat our fellow human beings who are already discouraged, traumatized, and in need of care. In some perverse way, we should be grateful that COVID opened many people's eyes to the plight of those among us who are houseless.

It has been a little less than a year since the Assembly formally adopted the *Anchored Home* Plan. More than 700 voices from the community were heard during the development of *Anchored Home*, but very few of those voices spoke of being houseless. Even so, HRAC endorsed the Plan because it represents a milestone that continues to give us all a set of mileposts to help gauge our progress.

A housed activist with more than a decade of participation in this struggle, recently noted that they had participated in many work sessions dealing with the issues of the houseless. They were unable to recall a time when someone with lived experience was included in the search for solutions.

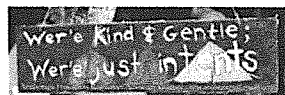
It is time to incorporate the wisdom of individuals with lived experience into decisions that affect the futures of our people.

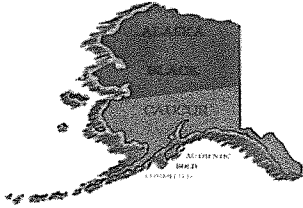
Thank you for bringing this opportunity to do better to the Assembly. We urge all members to vote "aye."

Respectfully submitted,

 , HRAC Scribe

On behalf of the HRAC Steering Committee





ALASKA BLACK CAUCUS

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August 5, 2021

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The Alaska Black Caucus Endorses Municipal Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board

The Alaska Black Caucus is pleased to endorse the creation of a Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board for the Municipality of Anchorage, as outlined by Assembly Member Felix Rivera's proposed ordinance.

Our community is home to thousands of Alaskans who find themselves struggling without access to regular, nighttime shelter that is stable and safe. Each houseless person and each houseless family has their own story about living in Anchorage without secure housing. Many stories involve hunger or health issues, underemployment, violence or other abuse. These tales are painful to hear and hard to acknowledge. There are as well countless stories of people in Anchorage who experienced houselessness for a time, but are now living in safe and secure circumstances. These are stories of courage, perseverance and promise.

As public officials partner with private organizations to fashion effective programs providing shelter and services to the houseless among us, it is vital that they hear and appreciate the full and varied stories of houseless living in Anchorage. A Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board can gather and provide indispensable data and information to those in public office as they strive to get their arms around the complexities of houseless living in Anchorage.

Accordingly, the Alaska Black Caucus not only endorses the creation of this Board. We stand ready to assist the Board in its important work.

Sincerely

Celeste Hodge Growden
President/CEO
Alaska Black Caucus

Overriden August 31, 2021



Municipality of Anchorage
Mayor Dave Bronson

Office of the Mayor

Date: August 27, 2021
To: Anchorage Assembly
From: Mayor Dave Bronson 
Subject: Veto of Ordinance No. AO 2021-76

Pursuant to Section 2.30.100 of the Anchorage Municipal Code and Section 5.02 of the Municipal Charter, I hereby veto AO 2021-76 passed at the Assembly's Regular Meeting of August 24, 2021.

I have reviewed the ordinance, heard the Assembly's justifications for and against the ordinance, and understand the sentiments expressed during public testimony. As you know, addressing homelessness is a pillar of my administration. The homelessness crisis in Anchorage does not require another board or commission to contemplate or pontificate policy suggestions or to make advisory recommendations. Instead, the homelessness crisis demands action.

As you know, the Municipality already has a Homeless, Housing, and Neighborhood Development (HHAND) Board specifically designated to "advise the Mayor and the Assembly on issues related to long and short-term housing, homeless and community development needs... and strategies to effect revitalization of lower-income and at risk neighborhoods." Moreover, the stated purpose of the proposed Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board replicates work being done by the Houseless Resource Advisory Council (HRAC). The HRAC also has voting members who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness. There is no need to create an additional board and incur increased costs to simply replicate the advocacy work already being done by HRAC or HHAND.

Anchorage's resources should be used to focus on helping those experiencing homelessness rather than to just talk about it.