

Establishing A Policy To Liberalize Access To Public Spaces For Survival

Referred to: The Health, Human Services and Housing Committee (Chairman Uchitelle and Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Stewart), and The Public Works, Capital Projects and Transportation Committee (Chairwoman Petit and Legislators Erner, Fabiano, Litts, and Nolan)

Legislator Phil Erner offers the following:

WHEREAS, Local Law No. 3 of 2023 designated “the development, maintenance, management, and/or provision of Affordable Housing” as “a public purpose” of Ulster County government; and

WHEREAS, Res. No. 330 of 2023 created a Housing Action Fund to “be appropriated pursuant Local Law No. 3 of 2023,” with \$15 million “assigned to Affordable Housing to be utilized in compliance with Local Law No. 3 of 2023”; and

WHEREAS, Res. No. 492 of 2022 urged the governments of New York State and the United States of America to enact a Constitutional right to food; and

WHEREAS, Res. No. 400 of 2022 created an agricultural crisis relief program for Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, Res. No. 558 of 2023 approved the “Ulster County Food Security Grant”; and

WHEREAS, at present the people of Ulster County have an especially acute and growing need for temporary/emergency housing through the Department of Social Services (DSS) and partner organizations; and

WHEREAS, the County must go farther to address the spectrum and diversity of urgent material needs that unhoused, or inadequately housed, people face, which besides securing permanent housing often include obtaining adequate food and the means to prepare and store it, and access to sanitary facilities for washing and basic bodily functions; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County possesses property throughout the County, which fulfills basic material needs for workers while at work and which during emergencies has been used in other ways to fulfill the people’s urgent needs; and

WHEREAS, the housing crisis is an emergency requiring a corresponding response; and

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WHEREAS, the people have the right to survive by any means necessary that does not jeopardize others' ability to do so; and

WHEREAS, County administration has undertaken a Study of County-owned space; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Ulster County shall use the results of the Study to determine County property suitable for the unhoused, or temporarily/emergency housed, people of Ulster County to use to fulfill basic material necessities of survival, substantially similarly as those possessing permanent housing including for housing and/or shelter, pursuant to Local Law No. 3 of 2023, and furthermore the need for food, and for sanitary facilities including washing and basic bodily functions; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that it shall be the policy of Ulster County to prioritize the unhoused, underhoused and vulnerably housed when considering purposes and/or uses for current and future county property, activities and endeavors to better serve the community as a whole,

and move its adoption.

DEFEATED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 11 NOES: 11
(Ayes: Bartels, Criswell, Erner, Greene, Heppner,
Hewitt, Levine, Nolan, Petit, Sperry, and Uchitelle)
(Absent: Legislator Stewart)

No Action Taken in Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing on July 5, 2023 with consent

Postponed in Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing on August 1, 2023

No Action Taken in Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing on September 6, 2023 with consent

Postponed in Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing on October 11, 2023 with consent

