

**MEMO**

**From: Marty Cerny, President, Housing Plus NFP**

**To: Neighbors of 5639 N. Artesian**

**Date: November 20, 2020**

**Re: Proposed zoning change to create a new legal basement unit**

Our non-profit company has been retained by Martin Abraham, owner of the legal 3-flat at 5639 N. Artesian. Like so many such properties, there is a full unfinished basement space that could be built out as a new apartment. This is to explain why and how this can take place.

How: To achieve the increased unit count from three (3) units to four (4), a spot zoning change from RS-3 to RM 4.5 is needed. The property structure itself would not have to be expanded. The proposed new unit would have to comply with the Chicago Buildings Code to receive the necessary construction permit.

Why: Generally, there is increasing interest from government officials, property owners, and housing advocates in allowing such unproductive spaces to be converted to new dwelling units. The reasons are many. There is a dire shortage of housing for many populations such as seniors and people with mobility impairments. It is the nature of new garden units to be categorized as both naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) and, at least, livable and visitable for people with modest mobility difficulties.

Generally, the dire shortage of housing is exacerbated by properties such as 2- and 3-flats becoming tear downs in favor of developers building larger and more expensive housing. Lost in such transactions are the NOAH units. Income from an additional unit can sometimes preserve these smaller rental properties for the owner and counter rising operational costs and taxes.

Specifically, the interest in adding the new unit at 5639 N. Artesian is entirely family driven. Martin’s family, wife and four children, and both sets of in-laws currently occupy the three units. Both sets of in-laws have mobility issues necessitating one to trade the 47 steps to the third-floor unit for six to a new garden unit. The new garden unit will be designed as “adaptable” to accommodate the potential future need for wheelchair accessibility. Martin has already installed a wheelchair lift for the first-floor unit accessibility. With assistance from Housing Plus, Martin will apply for a home modification grant to undertake a $20,000 subsequent project to make accessibility most efficient for both the garden unit and first-floor unit. See photos attached.

Marty Cerny

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