

Text of **Senator Jeff Hayden's Letter to the Members of the Minneapolis City Council.**

February 3, 2020,

To the Members of the Minneapolis City Council:

I urge you to strongly consider the proposal made by the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute (EPNI), as it promotes environmental justice and improves air quality in our neighborhood. The Indoor Urban Farm Project proposal will bring jobs, affordable housing, and organic foods to our community. The proposal is supported unanimously by the following organizations and groups: East Phillips Improvement Coalition (EPIC) Board of Directors, Sierra Club, Green Team, Seward Co-op. and over 500 individual signers on support petitions. The proposal also meets every goal of the South Side Green Zone and is in the South Minneapolis Opportunity Zone.

In 2016, former Representative Karen Clark, Senator Patricia Torres-Ray, Senator Bobby Joe Champion, and I sponsored legislation that granted \$300,000 to EPIC in order to assist in finishing design projects. These funds were successfully secured with additional assistance from MN's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). As indicated in the grant, EPIC and others helped from an inclusive non-profit corporation with the name East Phillips Neighborhood Institute Inc. (EPNI) to be responsible for the creation of the Indoor Urban Farm. Other goals of the project include: Second chance job opportunities, job training, coffee shop/world café, community kitchen, cultural markets, and a bicycle shop on the Midtown Greenway.

The members of EPNI have expressed deep frustration as there has been no effort by the City to understand, honor, or even hear the hard work of the community or abide by the principles of the Blueprint of Equitable Engagement endorsed by the City of Minneapolis. They would like the Minneapolis City Council and Staff to do the following: Seek an alternative site for the Water Yard *or* begin to have meaningful conversations with EPNI and the community to return to the 3-acre option at the Roof Depot site and begin to move other neighborhood polluters out of East Phillips.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hayden