

RESOLUTION ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING Temple Beth El

WHEREAS the Torah commands us to give the needy what they lack, which the code of Jewish law, the Shulchan Aruch, clarifies, “If he is starving feed him, if he needs clothing clothe him, and if he needs items for his house, buy those items;” and whereas the Talmud adds, “The person who has no land (meaning home) is lacking human dignity” (Yevamot 63a).

WHEREAS the Reform Movement has advocated for low-cost housing and aid to the homeless for more than sixty years; in 1989 URJ resolved to increase the permanent availability of affordable housing and to encourage members of Reform congregations to become more involved on these issues in their local communities.

WHEREAS 91% of congregants surveyed in Temple Beth El’s 2008 Social Justice and Action Audit felt the Temple should focus on local issues, with the #1 issue being poverty, which included affordable housing and homelessness; more than 235 congregants in over 170 TBE member families volunteer their time through Temple programs at agencies serving the homeless and working poor, including Urban Ministry Soup Kitchen, Room In The Inn, WISH, Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army Center of Hope, Hall House and at Crisis Assistance Ministry.

WHEREAS the lack of affordable housing in Charlotte has reached crisis proportions – more than 3,000 Charlotte Mecklenburg School students have no home to return to after school, over 5,000 adults are homeless every night, and more than 17,000 units of affordable housing are needed to keep even more of the working poor from descending into homelessness.

WHEREAS the concentration of poverty in central Charlotte neighborhoods severely hampers our community’s ability to educate all its students, and the dispersion of affordable housing provides an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty that contributes to homelessness.

WHEREAS Charlotte’s Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness addresses the need to shift to supportive and service-enriched housing rather than solely a shelter-based system -- this plan has been endorsed by the mayor, the county commission, the Foundation For The Carolinas, the United Way, the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services, and local agencies serving the homeless population.

WHEREAS the local cost of services for a chronically homeless individual average more than \$37,000 annually versus \$10,000 for providing service-based housing (Urban Ministry Center).

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Temple Beth El, its leaders and its members advocate achieving better results by addressing underlying causes of homelessness rather than only treating its symptoms.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Temple Beth El, its leadership and its members help the community by speaking out in public forums and supporting local housing policies that appropriately address the need for affordable housing throughout our community.

Approved by Temple Beth El Board of Director April 6, 2010