

To: City Council of Malden

From: Ose Schwab, 55 Granite Street, Malden M 02148, Ward 6.

Date: 2/11/2025

RE: Public Comment: Resolve 80-25: That it is the sense of the Malden City Council that they express their support for the Sale of Surplus Property for the Purpose of Affordable Home Ownership.

I am deeply concerned about the City of Malden's decision to sell surplus properties, particularly the Oak Grove Community Center and the Middlesex Courthouse on Summer Street. While I support increasing affordable housing, such actions must include clear and responsible communication—especially with residents who have invested time and ideas in shaping the city's future.

These properties were previously considered for arts, culture, and community engagement. Many participated in focus groups to explore transforming the courthouse into a center for the arts, generating excitement and hope—only for the conversation to suddenly disappear without explanation.

Now, the City Council is set to vote on selling these properties without first inviting community input. This lack of transparency is troubling. What happened to the ideas shared in earlier discussions? If the city could not act on those plans, what alternative efforts have been made to creatively address both arts and housing needs? Has the council considered requiring dedicated community spaces or additional affordable units in new luxury developments?

Selling these properties without exploring creative, community-driven solutions dismisses their economic, social, cultural, and civic value. It also raises serious concerns about the Council's commitment to transparency and vision.

Malden has access to incredible resources—leaders, cultural institutions, and best practices from the talent in and around Boston. Why not tap into that collective wisdom before making irreversible decisions?

I urge the Council to pause this vote, engage the community meaningfully, and consider innovative, forward-thinking solutions before moving forward.