

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2022

RECOGNIZING and expressing the appreciation of the Mayor and the Council of the City of Cincinnati to Alexis Kidd-Zaffer during Black History Month 2022 for her work with Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses, an organization that provides invaluable services to the City of Cincinnati, in particular, our West End Community.

WHEREAS, Alexis Kidd-Zaffer was born and raised in Sandusky, Ohio, before relocating to Cincinnati in 1996 to attend the University of Cincinnati and falling in love with the West End community; and

WHEREAS, after years of impressive work in public service and youth empowerment - including volunteering with the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC) - Alexis Kidd-Zaffer was appointed Executive Director of Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses (SHNH) in 2015; and

WHEREAS, since 1961, SHNH has served our West End Community through a varied, ever-growing arsenal of social services, including resources, community gathering spaces, youth programming, crime prevention initiatives, and eviction prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, Cincinnati's West End has a powerful, storied history as a popular re-settlement neighborhood for African Americans migrating from Southern states to find work in the Queen City during slavery; as a sanctuary area for European immigrants fleeing persecution in their home countries; and as home to the oldest Jewish community west of the Allegheny Mountains, 'the birthplace of American Reform Judaism'; and

WHEREAS, by the 1930s, the West End was a cultural, religious, and social hub, home to 70 percent of Cincinnati's African American population and established branches of prominent civic organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and the Negro Civic Welfare Association; and

WHEREAS, the 1944 Federal Highway Act and the ensuing construction of I-75 set in motion decades of institutionally-enshrined demolition of the neighborhood's built environment - including hundreds of businesses and places of worship, and 10,000 homes - and displaced thousands of West End residents under the guise of 'urban renewal' and 'slum removal'; and

WHEREAS, this destruction and the following years of disinvestment is intrinsically linked to the West End currently being one of our poorest neighborhoods, with the fourth lowest average income, the fourth highest infant mortality rate, and among the lowest life expectancy in all of Cincinnati; and

WHEREAS, using the 'settlement house' model of service, SHNH was created in the shadows of this history, ensuring Cincinnati leaders and investors listen to the voices of low-

income residents, and plays an indispensable role in shaping, preserving, and reviving the West End neighborhood through affordable housing advocacy, anti-displacement initiatives, and community outreach efforts; and

WHEREAS, SHNH annually serves as a 'safe-haven' for approximately 2,500 - 3,000 at-risk children, teens, families, seniors, and disadvantaged citizens; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Alexis Kidd-Zaffer, SHNH grew from a small group of dedicated volunteers to a robust and financially stable organization with a broad network of partners and full- and part-time employees; and

WHEREAS, during unprecedented regional and national emergencies, Alexis Kidd-Zaffer and SHNH have spearheaded collaborative initiatives to support residents in crisis, such as opening remote learning sites and trauma-care telehealth services, and providing food delivery to senior homes during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Cincinnati, and in particular, the West End neighborhood, is an undeniably happier, healthier, and more prosperous place because of the loving, compassionate leadership of Alexis Kidd-Zaffer and her lifelong dedication to fulfilling the fundamental human needs of her neighbors; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That the Mayor and this Council hereby recognize Alexis Kidd-Zaffer for her work with Seven Hills Neighborhood Houses, an organization that provides invaluable services to the City of Cincinnati, and in particular, our West End Community.

Section 2. That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of Council.

Passed: _____, 2022

Attest: _____

Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Submitted by Councilmember Greg Landsman