

Date: July 14, 2020  
To: Whom it may concern  
From: Mary Somnis, Executive Director, and the Board of the  
Cook County/Grand Marais Economic Development Authority (EDA)  
Re: Letter of Support for Hamilton Habitat Affordable Housing

Cook County, MN has suffered a shortage of affordable and workforce housing for decades. Contributing to this shortage are several factors, including:

1. More than 90% of the land in Cook County is public, under the jurisdiction of the Federal, State and County governments. These lands are not available for private development.
2. The geologic, topographic, and hydrologic conditions of the land that is available bring excessive costs to development projects. Ledge rock, sloping hillsides and wetlands exist throughout Cook County.

For the past five years, housing development has been the top priority of the EDA. A study done in 2015 indicated that Cook County needs to develop 25 single family homes per year for five years plus 65-75 rental units. Total need is approximately 200 units of housing. Recent projects have created 11 single family homes and 30 rental units.

The EDA stands in full support of the efforts of Anna Hamilton and Sara Hamilton with the 501c3 non-profit, Hamilton Habitat. They have developed one affordable home, to date, and are pursuing their next projects. Their commitment to create affordable housing is driven by care and concern for the community members, not by an opportunity to gain profit. This is difficult work and the EDA appreciates every effort that Hamilton Habitat is making to address the need for affordable housing in Cook County.