

## Harrison Recreation Center - Southeast Asian Community

March 3, 2017

### General comments:

- The question is if the goes up to \$12/hr and the gas goes up \$2.00 or more are we going to survive?
- We have too many people so the cost of living is not enough. There are too many expenses. We don't make enough to make a living.
- There are a lot of people out there complaining about the wages, but they don't have the guts to bring it to City Council.
- I take care of my children for \$14 an hour, but gas and utilities, insurance and other bills are so expense.
- I'm retired, I get a check once a month, housing costs and living cost are so much and even the doctors cost so much. How are we going to live?
- Like in Europe, they have a subway so people can travel to work, we do have some transportation but not for everyone. In the Twin Cities, we have light rail, but it doesn't go everywhere. We stores like in Aldi were we can bring our own bags and pack our own food, but at other places the food is prepackaged and you just have to take and buy what is packaged so there is a lot of waste. Finding ways to eliminate the waste could help lower expenses.
- I work for \$15 now and we had a petition to put the minimum wage on the ballot, but it was blocked by City Council because big business lobbied City Council. McDonalds can afford to pay \$15/hr, but they don't want to. We took the city to court and were able to get the initiative put on the ballot for a week, but the Minnesota Supreme Court overturned the original ruling. I'm an immigrant and I understand what it's like to have to work 2 jobs just to try to make ends meet. We know that \$15/hr would lift a lot of people out of poverty.
- I'll present an alternative view - when the issue came to City Council, we were following the law. We have a charter and were doing what we could do to follow the law. The idea that the big boxes were coming in to lobby City Council isn't accurate. I

didn't meet with Target. I was simply following the law. I think in the end, what the Supreme Court did was interpret the law as what they thought the law is. The idea that raising the minimum wage will lift people up is certainly a perspective, but we also have to take into consideration our small businesses in North Minneapolis and our geography. We may end up losing business to some of our neighbors if Minneapolis raises the minimum wage. The idea of 71,000 people being raised up is good, but they could lose their jobs and be displaced, and lose their jobs to the suburbs. So I want to say that I'm an immigrant too and I don't think that matters in terms of how the minimum wage will impact a person. There is more that needs to be considered about the positive and negative impacts.

- My sister and I have been running our business for 7 years, we're still working for our own paycheck, so we aren't making a lot of money. The city has passed a lot of laws and ordinances lately that are raising my costs, my to-go orders have gone down because people don't like the taste of food in cardboard (had to move to cardboard to-go boxes when the Styrofoam and plastic bags ordinance passed). My orders went from 100 down to 45. The problem that I see is that big companies would not be as impacted as small businesses. As a small business, I would have to close. I understand the sick time ordinance, because I don't want my employees to come to work sick, but with a \$15/hr minimum wage plus the other ordinances it's killing small businesses. If I close, I have 7 employees that would lose their jobs, including my sister and I because we still work for our paychecks.

**Comments in response to what considerations the City should take into account if moving forward on a minimum wage policy:**

- What about exemptions for specific types of businesses? If everyone is going to get a raise then everyone should get a raise. For example, the gas station, if they have to pay their employees a higher wage, they are going to raise gas prices, how are they going to get things in balance?
- For larger business it's no problem, but for small businesses it's a problem. Every year the cost of living is going up, but every year the wages don't go up.
- For small business, can city hall collect lower taxes, and lower fees, so they can live?