

September 19th, 2017

City Councilors, Clergy, Community Members Demand of Aloft Hotel: ‘Where are the jobs?!’

Center City Organized for Responsible Development (CCORD)

PHILADELPHIA – At \$183,000 in public subsidy for each hotel room, the Aloft may be most heavily subsidized hotel in the history of Philadelphia on a per room basis. Today, clergy, community members and CCORD, the local registered community organization, rallied to demand that the Aloft keep its promises or return the public money it received.

When the Aloft was awarded a grant from the state of Pennsylvania in 2013, the company promised to create 170 full-time jobs, 115 of which would be at a “destination restaurant.”

The hotel opened last month with no such restaurant. Only a fraction of the 170 jobs that were promised have actually been created.

Councilwoman Helen Gym and Councilman Mark Squilla joined a delegation of clergy who entered the hotel to ask the general manager how the company intended to follow through on its promises. Reverend Robin Hynicka, pastor of the neighboring Arch Street United Methodist Church and president of CCORD, the local RCO, spoke at the rally. “When developers ask the public to help fund their projects, they need to be held accountable to the promises that they make. We demand that the Aloft Hotel either create the jobs they promised, or give us back our money.”

The hotel project has already been criticized by Congressman Bob Brady who represents the district. Brady said he was “deeply troubled” that the hotel received \$15 million in subsidies that are meant to go to low income communities even though the hotel is located in center city. “This project is neither located in a low-income community, nor will its benefits accrue to the residents of the surrounding neighborhood” Brady wrote in a letter to US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin.

The Aloft Hotel received a total of \$33 million in public subsidies:

- \$2 million in a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant from the state
- \$5.9 million in an estimated property tax abatement from the city
- \$10 million in Historic Tax Credits from the federal government
- \$15 million in New Markets Tax Credits from the federal government

Community members held up 115 silhouettes of restaurant workers to represent the missing jobs, and a banner was dropped from the side of Arch Street United Methodist Church that read “LOSTJOBS.org”.

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