

Residents, Aldermen Weren't Aware Planned Parenthood Opened on West Side

By Eric Feldman / Fox Illinois Tuesday, May 10th 2016

Original article found online at: <http://foxillinois.com/news/local/residents-aldermen-werent-aware-planned-parenthood-opened-on-west-side>



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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (WRSP) — Some people in the area say they had no idea a Planned Parenthood would be moving to Bruns Lane until they saw the signs that it was set to open. But Planned Parenthood said that was the plan and thinks it will fit in well with the community.

Planned Parenthood has moved into a bigger facility from its original location in downtown Springfield to serve its 2,500 or more patients.

Now it's on Bruns Lane, which was news to residents living nearby.

"So it was a surprise," said Andrew Costerisan, who lives a few blocks away.

Surprise also for Ward 9 Alderman Jim Donelan, who represents this western part of Springfield.

"I would have appreciated whether it's any business or organization that's coming in to, I'd love to know about it ahead of time," said Donelan.

The Springfield Right to Life group sent Fox Illinois a statement that says in part;

[Planned Parenthood] is bad for business, bad for Springfield and its citizens. Where ever PP located, it negatively affects property values - several neighbors are upset about the move to the Bruns Lane location without any input from the community. There were no zoning hearings on this facility opening. I doubt few of the local businesses knew anything about it. Our informal survey showed that no one knew.

"That organization has always been opposed to the work that Planned Parenthood does," responded Brigid Leahy, who serves as the director of public policy for Planned Parenthood in Illinois.

Planned Parenthood said the property was already zoned and that the negative affect on property values isn't true. It says there's a reason the organization didn't reach out to Donelan or the community.

"Other Planned Parenthood health centers that have moved or built in other locations have been targeted and so we decided that we wanted to keep things private," said Leahy.

But nearby resident Andrew Costerisan said even though he doesn't agree with everything Planned Parenthood represents he's treating his new neighbor with an open mind.

"I think it's a good thing ultimately if they can show that they provide value to our community in a way that is peaceful still," said Costerisan.

Planned Parenthood said only a small percentage of its work involves abortions. Other work includes providing birth control and STD testing. At this facility it only offers medication abortions, using a pill as opposed to surgical.

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