

Testimony Letter of Support for LD #1931

Wardtown Park opened in the early 1960s and has grown over the years into a 60-site, resident-owned manufactured home community. But that transition didn't happen overnight. We began the move to controlling our own destiny in 2014. Our park at the time, was owned by the Freeport Housing Trust. They decided that rather than put the park on the market, they would see if the residents were interested in purchasing. That's when, with the help of The Cooperative Development Institute and ROC USA, we formed Wardtown Mobile Home Cooperative, Inc. that would, in May of 2015, purchase and take control of our community.

Now, the community is not only a successful business, but also a thriving neighborhood. The process of the cooperative buying the land beneath our homes brought this community closer together. Not only do we know far more of our neighbors than ever before, but we look out for one another, too.

Our member households elect our board of directors, which works with a financial manager and also appoints various volunteer committees to help with special projects, celebrations, community improvement and more. The board submits a budget every year, and the entire membership votes on it and any changes to the rent before the budget becomes official. Our rent has stabilized since becoming a ROC - something we're not only happy about, but also proud of. We're running the million dollar business that is our community on our terms, by our rules, for the betterment of ourselves and our neighbors.

This is the reason that we support LD #1931. Had we not been lucky enough to have a landlord that was willing to give the residents the right to first refusal, we would not be where we are today. ***A community that is in control of our rent and rules and when something breaks down, (and it does) we respond quickly and the repair is done safely and correctly.***

Thank you for your consideration.

Carol Hodgkins, Wardtown President
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