



# HISTORIC BREWERS HILL

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

To: City of Milwaukee Plan Commission  
Fr: Historic Brewers Hill Association Board of Directors  
Date: June 13, 2016  
Re: The Hills Luxury Commons

### **THE HISTORIC BREWERS HILL ASSOCIATION**

Milwaukee's Historic Brewers Hill is a socially, racially, economically, and culturally diverse neighborhood just north of downtown Milwaukee. The Brewers Hill neighborhood is bounded by Holton to the east, Pleasant to the south, Dr. Martin Luther King Drive to the west, and North Avenue to the north. Our neighborhood is one of two primarily residential areas from the City of Milwaukee's original settlement period in the mid-1800s. Today, Brewers Hill is an urban, residential neighborhood comprised of over 900 household units. Our residents are equally proud of our rich history and diversity. We also pride ourselves as being incredibly involved in our neighborhood and City affairs.

The Historic Brewers Hill Association is a voluntary association, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit that was established over 30 years ago. We are a member and volunteer-driven organization, comprised of anyone who is committed to our goals as stated in our bylaws. These goals include promoting property rehabilitation, eliminating blight, improving the family environment, developing an increased sense of community concern, advancing racial harmony, providing an effective voice in governmental affairs, and encouraging local home ownership. To accomplish these lofty goals, HBHA's members devote an incredible amount of time to advancing our goals and cultivating a safe, prosperous, and beautiful neighborhood for all.

Members of the Historic Brewers Hill Association elect a board of directors to guide our organization. The Board of Directors volunteer their time and resources to serve our neighborhood. Our nine member Board of Directors includes a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and five at-large directors. We meet regularly throughout the year, in addition to the general member meetings and social events.

### **OUR VISION**

The Historic Brewers Hill Association has a vision for the parcels of land that are before the City Plan Commission today. This vision, under perfect circumstances, would include single-family homes, town homes, and duplexes – all with yards - designed to complement the historic nature of our neighborhood. As our goals suggest, we believe that owner-occupied homes are good for the neighborhood and good for the City. Also, under a perfect scenario, the Historic Brewers Hill Association would like to see a small portion of these parcels turned into a pocket park, allowing

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residents to have a vibrant green space in which we can build neighborhood relationships and enjoy fresh air and sunshine in close proximity to our residences. Within our borders described above, we have limited community park space to enjoy.

However, the Historic Brewers Hill Association appreciates that the above-referenced vision is not viable under current market demands. The Historic Brewers Hill Association keenly understands the market demand to live close to downtown, generally, and in our neighborhood, more specifically, and to live in apartments, not single-family homes. While we will not give up on advocating for local home ownership, we understand the dynamics of the current market place.

### **SUPPORT, CONDITIONED ON FACTS PRESENTED**

Beginning in early 2016, the Board of Directors facilitated several meetings with Royal Capital Group - two neighborhood meetings held in March and at least three meetings held with representatives of the Board of Directors. The developer also hosted a neighborhood meeting in May.

The latest proposal reflects revisions addressing many concerns expressed by both the Board of Directors and its membership. These revisions include a reduction in building height along Reservoir Avenue to lessen the visual impact for the multi-family building to the north, the addition of walk-up direct entry units to incorporate activation onto the street along Reservoir Avenue and Hubbard Street, reduced building massing of both Phases, the majority use of glass and/or natural-like brick building materials, creating varying articulations along the building facades of Reservoir Avenue and Brown Street, increased the setback along Phase B's southern property line to better accommodate the multi-family building to the south, adjusted parking access points to better align with surrounding properties, generally concealed off-street parking with relatively quality materials such as brick facades and windows, and provided extensive landscaping both on public and private right-of-ways to enhance the pedestrian environment. While the Board of Directors advocated for an increase in the number of two-bedroom units, the reality of the current lending environment appears to favor majority one-bedroom construction in this market.

The Historic Brewers Hill Association Board of Directors met on Thursday, June 3, 2016 to review the Royal Capital Group LLC development plan for The Hills Luxury Commons and voted unanimously (8-0) to conditionally support The Hills Luxury Commons, subject to the following facts that Royal Capital communicated to our neighborhood:

- Phase A & Phase B of The Hills Luxury Commons maintains a unit mix of 80% market rate and 20% non-market rate.
- The Hills Luxury Commons are developed according to the renderings provided to the Historic Brewers Hill Association on May 27, 2016 for Phase A (23 pages) and Phase B (25 pages).
- During the course of both development phases, Royal Capital Group LLC will notify the Historic Brewers Hills Association Board of Directors of any change requests submitted to Department of City Development.
- Phase C of The Hills Luxury Commons will be townhomes, as communicated by Royal Capital Group LLC to the Historic Brewers Hill Association during the public neighborhood meetings.

- Historic Brewers Hill Association be provided direct contact information with the selected management company of The Hills Luxury Commons (once hired).
- The owners of the development, Royal Capital Group LLC, be engaged with the Historic Brewers Hill neighborhood and Association.

Moving forward, the Historic Brewers Hill Association looks forward to continued engagement with the City of Milwaukee to advance initiatives in our neighborhood to make the proposed development – and future developments, better. The Board of Directors calls upon the City (Department of Public Works and City Development) to work with the neighborhood in good faith on various street calming initiatives, as recommended in the attached Traffic and Streetscape Improvement study the Historic Brewers Hill Association commissioned in 2015. The study suggests a variety of traffic calming measures; however, simple measures can be implemented that will yield big impacts, particularly with the increase in density of The Hill Luxury Commons and potential future redevelopment projects. These measures are discussed in more detail in the attached study but ones the Board of Directors would like considered include increasing the number of 4-way stops, adjusting overnight parking restrictions, and striping of bicycle lanes along Reservoir Avenue and Palmer Street.

## **CONCLUSION**

After having met with the Royal Capital Group, LLC and neighbors over the past six months relative to this development, the Historic Brewers Hill Association offers its support of the Hills Luxury Commons, subject to the facts articulated by the Royal Capital Group, LLC. We look forward to a healthy relationship with the developers and with the City to strengthen, beautify, and improve safety in our neighborhood. We also look forward to welcoming Phase C, which would feature owner-occupied townhomes and increase the diversity of this development. We anticipate working with the developers and the City in ways to improve safety for the influx of new neighbors to our neighborhood. Last, we hope to continue dialogue with the City and area developers in ways that we can utilize future development opportunities in the Historic Brewers Hill for local home ownership.

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