

Lee, Chris

From: Samantha Burgos <samantha.i.burgos@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 26, 2021 1:45 PM
To: Lee, Chris
Cc: Callie Tally; Vedale Hill; Alexis Burgos
Subject: 9/26 BCA Meeting: Letter of Disapproval

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Dear Bronzevill Advisory Committee Members,

My name is Samantha Burgos and I am a resident of the Harambee neighborhood.

It has been brought to my attention that the gas station on Vel R. Phillips and North Avenue is planning on expanding parking, something that is of great concern to me. My main concern has to do with three main areas: (1) creating safe spaces for my children and their friends to play, (2) creating green spaces to help with water runoff issues plaguing the city, and (3) bettering the reputation of a neighborhood that deserves better.

My first concern has to do with the children of Harambee. Far too often our kids are out trying to play and they stumble across broken glass, trash, and drug paraphernalia, among other things that the gas station on North and Vel R. Phillips is a hot spot for. If I want to walk my children to the park by the Black Holocaust Museum, they must first traverse the obstacle course of cinder blocks and trash, hoping to not pop their bicycle wheels or injure my dog's paws in the process. This is hardly ideal for a mother trying to care for her family (pets included) as well as other neighborhood kids, who may be unaccompanied by an adult. It is unacceptable. Can you imagine how the trash will multiply if more parking spaces out of supervision are created behind the gas station? I know exactly what that will look like and we DO NOT need that in this neighborhood.

My second concern is for the constant blatant neglect of the city of Milwaukee to recognize that by constantly building and reducing green spaces, we are damning the city to more flooding and sewage management problems because we are unable to manage rainwater runoff. We absolutely do not need more pavement in Harambee. We are in a pivotal moment of change where we can stand up and rise as a neighborhood embracing and elevating not only the importance of diversity and inclusion, but of environmental concern, as the two go directly hand-in-hand. We do not need further expansion of pavement in Harambee. The gas station can greatly improve the poorly kept green spaces it has and expand green spaces, if that is something they are looking to do. However, expanding paved lots for more drug dealing is NOT something they should seek to move forward with here in our neighborhood. We don't want it.

The third, and most important point, I am bringing up is the reputation of Harambee. The gas station on North and Vel R. Phillips is one of the first things my family and friends see when they get off of the expressway and enter Milwaukee. THIS is how they view Milwaukee. A disheveled unkempt tattered gas station with drug dealers and prostitutes. THIS is the Harambee they are greeted with. They often go out of their way to NOT fill up their tanks at this gas station because of the kind of environment they know they will have to enter to do so. If I could make it a shiny Kwik Trip with kind workers and clean spaces, decently paid workers, and a welcoming environment, I would, because right now it is nothing of the sort. This neighborhood is working round the clock to improve our reputation and show the city the beauty that is Harambee, while the out-of-towners running the gas station could care less about the blood and sweat that we are putting into this important project that is OUR community.

The people of Harambee do not want more paved spaces for drug dealers, bringing more violence into our safe spaces for our children. This is our home and this is our kids' home. Show us that you see us and value our children and their lives and the greater community here in Harambee. We have voices and we are using them now to let you know that we do not need this expansion.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my concern and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any further questions.

Best,

Samantha Burgos
Concerned Resident

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