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To: Mayor Tom Barrett; Hines Jr., Willie; Koster, Vanessa; planadmin; hatala@mkedcd.org; Bauman, Robert; Wade, Willie; Murphy, Michael; Hamilton, Ashanti; D'Amato, Michael

Subject: Downer Avenue

As one of the over 1000 neighborhood signatories to request height limits on the Downer Avenue projects, I find what is happening now simply amazing, offensive and amazing. What most neighbors wanted was some development and certainly improvement of Downer while keeping this a livable residential neighborhood.

What we are getting is a commercial district totally at odds with the neighborhood, and totally outside the boundaries that were proposed to us at the public meetings.

The 11-story condo was most opposed [many of those who supported it were the first to move out of the city!]. The developers argument was that this was in keeping with three other structures in the neighborhood. That is three buildings, representing something like 4% of the East side neighborhood north of North Avenue. The original zoning was 4 stories, very in keeping with the neighborhood, and many of us did actually support a variance of two stories to encourage redevelopment.

At the last public meeting I can remember, we were promised this was a **ONE** item only variance that the city would grant for the 11-story condo. There was no mention of the sale of the parking lot. There was no discussion of the Park and Downer development, and there was to be only ONE variance for condo development.

The parking lot was sold by the city and sure enough, there is a five story parking lot emerging [was this a legal variance?]. And why were the hearings not public? The condo project seems to have been sold and divided, giving the separate owners, in fact, **TWO** variances [is this even legal never mind considerate or truthful?] and now there is a request for demolition of part of Downer Avenue.

This is a historic neighborhood and some effort must be taken by the city and the HPC to preserve it before complete commercialization and destruction takes place.

I am well aware that the city is under siege and taxes are soaring. I am well aware of the need for new revenues. But I am also aware that many local residents work very hard to keep their neighborhoods in scale, as livable and safe environments.

In due respect, I ask you to stop the encroachment of downtown commercialism and keep the historic elements of Downer Avenue and the East Side that make people still want to live here and care for their neighborhood. You must preserve some of the positive incentives for people to continue to want to live in, and pay taxes in, this city.

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