

June 13, 2016

City of Milwaukee Planning Commission

Re: Royal Capital Group's Brewers Hill Commons

Dear Commissioners:

My husband and I are long-time residents of Brewers Hill. We purchased and renovated our home at 104 W. Reservoir Ave. in 1994. We have raised our two sons here (both are now students at Rufus King High School) and have been actively involved in the Brewers Hill Neighborhood Association. Today I write you with guarded support for Royal Capital Group's Brewers Hill Commons. Our hesitation in offering full support lies in our deep concern that the size of this development is an indication of what is yet to come on several major, as-yet-undeveloped parcels on the eastern edge of Brewers Hill...future development that – if it mirrors the size and scope of Brewers Hill Commons – will dramatically alter the nature of our historic neighborhood.

Many years ago, I (Nancy) testified at a Commission hearing about a proposed development by Tandem Development Group. At the same, I expressed concern that the large size of their development risked permanently altering the historic nature of Brewers Hill from one of primarily duplexes, small apartment units, and single family homes into something akin to Prospect Ave. At the time, a commissioner replied, "Things change and [residents] should expect that," implying that resistance to any kind of development is unrealistic. I disagreed then, and I disagree now. Like residents of other Milwaukee neighborhoods (e.g. Historic Water Tower District, Cambridge Woods, and Murray Hill) who have ferociously protected the historic nature of their neighborhoods, residents of Brewers Hill welcome and encourage developments that compliment but do not overwhelm our neighborhood.

The issue in Brewers Hill is simple: **Brewers Hill is a neighborhood, filled with families of all ages. It is not "downtown" or a "commercial corridor."** Brown St., Reservoir Ave., Hubbard St., and Palmer St. are neighborhood streets. They are not Water St., Prospect Avenue, Commerce St. or E. Erie St. (Third Ward). The playground at Carver School is busy year-round, with students, neighborhood kids, and families using the basketball courts and play structures. Residents of all ages bike the streets and walk their dogs. The streets of Brewers Hill were not designed to accommodate the dramatic increase in auto traffic that will result from large scale developments.

Recent, successful large-scale developments (the North End, Beerline "B" condos, Marine Terminal Lofts, and several under construction now on N. Water St.) have taken place on commercial streets. The large developments being proposed for Brewers Hill are taking place within the borders of a residential neighborhood.

Please, when making your decision today, keep in mind that this is a historic neighborhood. What you decide today will impact our neighborhood going forward, as other developers will certainly look to your decision as guidance in making the next proposal.

Sincerely,

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