

December 6, 2010

To the Honorable Members of the
Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee
City of Milwaukee
City Hall, Room 205

Dear Committee Members:

File No. 091458 relates to a change in zoning from Local Business (LB2) to Detailed Planned Development for approximately 54 apartments, on land located North of East North Avenue and West of North Farwell Avenue, in the 3rd Aldermanic District.

This zoning change is requested by Mercy Housing Lakefront and will allow for the construction of approximately 54 residential apartments and 109 structured parking stalls. Of these parking stalls, 48 will be dedicated to public and US Bank use. These residential units will be geared toward workforce housing.

A land sale from the City of Milwaukee to Mercy Housing is in process, as well as a proposal to vacate a portion of East Thomas Street to allow for outdoor amenities and to accommodate the building footprint. In the future, a Certified Survey Map will be submitted to create a separate parcel for the development. The bank is included in this zoning change because zoning changes are required to follow parcel boundaries.

The apartment building will have a mix of studios, 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. Mercy Housing Lakefront will be the long-term owner and property manager at the site. Building materials will include masonry, and perforated, smooth and corrugated metal panel, face brick. The overhead garage door along North Murray Avenue will have translucent glass panels. Active space will be along the first floors of Thomas and Farwell. Parking will be along the first floor on Murray Avenue.

On December 6, 2010, a public hearing was held and at that time fourteen people spoke in favor of the proposal, and five people opposed it. Of those who opposed the file, two were representatives of surrounding neighborhood associations, including Murray Hill and Water Tower Landmark Trust. Those in support stated that the project will be good for the east side of Milwaukee and the immediate neighborhood, and that there is a need for workforce housing. Those opposed stated that there are currently many vacant rental units on the east side. For the most part, attendees agreed that Mercy Housing Lakefront has been responsive to neighborhood concerns and comments that they heard at several neighborhood meetings. Jim Plaisted of the East Side Business Improvement District (BID) stated that the board is looking at how the proposal fits with the draft architectural review board guidelines, and expects to take a formal vote on the project in January. Since the proposed change is consistent with surrounding uses and the Northeast Side Comprehensive Area Plan, the City Plan Commission at its regular meeting on December 6, 2010 recommended approval of the subject file.

Sincerely,

Rocky Marcoux
Executive Secretary
City Plan Commission of Milwaukee

cc: Ald. Nik Kovac