

Lee, Chris

From: Rosemary Moylan <rosemoylan@tds.net>
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 6:14 PM
To: Mayor; Young, Angel; Oatis-McMiller, Glenda; Coggs, Milele; Rainey, Khalif; Zamarripa, JoCasta; Taylor, Larresa; Murphy, Michael (Alderman); Borkowski, Mark; Perez, Jose; Stamper II, Russell; Elmer, Linda; Lee, Chris
Cc: Brostoff, Jonathan; Bauman, Robert; Westmoreland, Lamont; Spiker, Scott; Dimitrijevic, Marina
Subject: File 231836
Attachments: HPC Letter.pdf

Dear Mayor Johnson and Alderpersons Pratt, Chambers, Jr., Coggs, Rainey, Zamarripa, Taylor, Murphy, Borkowski, Perez, and Stamper II:

I am writing to you regarding the above referenced file number but also to specifically highlight that collectively, my business partners and I, currently own properties in your districts. (I have cc'd the Alderpersons of the districts where we do not currently own property.) We are not flashy, we don't own large, high-density complexes, we don't put boulders in front of buildings but what we have done for more than a decade is take blighted properties, many of them city-owned, and invest time and money into making them homes for the citizens of Milwaukee. You could say that we are the Homes MKE initiative that Mayor Johnson highlighted in his State of the City address before there was a Home MKE initiative.

We have attempted to be part of all the positive things highlighted in the State of the City. We are the entrepreneurs that have brought investors and dreamers to the City. We have worked to add to the economic strength of the City and increase the quality of life for its citizens by being investors and small business owners ourselves. We have created jobs and provided safe housing so tenants could in-turn become entrepreneurs and home owners themselves. We have spent tens of millions of dollars over more than a decade to improve neighborhoods and have worked cooperatively and collaboratively with the City.

This peaceful relationship has been called into serious question with the creation of the proposed Grand Avenue Historic District. We have owned 3121 W. Wisconsin Avenue for ten years, we purchased it when it had no walls, holes in the floor so big an adult could fall through them and painstakingly rehabilitated into the beautiful building it is today. All of this was done because we believe that Milwaukee has yet to achieve its best version of itself and that blighted neighborhoods deserve a chance to shine again. However, approximately two months ago, without any warning the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), with questionable motivations at best, thrust upon us an unwanted nomination. Then last month, with no genuine discussion or acknowledgment of our dissension, the HPC decided to ram a historic designation down our throats and the throats of the three other property OWNERS on Wisconsin Avenue. Even members of the HPC have expressed concerns over the timing and motivation of this nomination and the lack of transparency over the creation of this district. This entire process was done so haphazardly that the HPC's notices do not even reflect the proper district for the properties involved! (Please see my attached letter for additional information regarding this farcical nomination process.)

I wonder what possible good comes from handcuffing the property OWNERS, the very investors and entrepreneurs you seek, with an unwanted and unwarranted assault of historical designation. All four property OWNERS have made it clear they do not want this designation and our request to quash the proposal was summarily dismissed by the HPC. Four property OWNERS that took a risk to invest in a blighted neighborhood, what is the incentive to continue to risk and invest in these areas of Milwaukee when the OWNERS have no say in their own properties?

Look what historical designation has done to the Garden Homes and Sherman Park neighborhoods. Investors don't want the hassle or additional costs associated with rehabbing a historically designated building, its not worth it. I know this because our group of investors specifically made the business decision to avoid any properties with a historical designation. How damaging this designation can be is proven time and time again in the many properties in neighborhoods, designated as historically significant, that have been boarded up for so long that many are past the point of being able to be repaired.

How is it Mayor Johnson, that you so publicly identified that the City needs more investors, dreamers, entrepreneurs and actively call upon us to be part of the solution to the City's challenges, yet allow one of the City's committees to undermine the very growth you seek? I implore the Common Council and the member of the Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee to not be another rubber stamp, to right this wrong and vote against the proposed Grand Avenue Historic District.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Moylan