

Elmer, Linda

From: D'Amato, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, July 10, 2007 4:11 PM
To: Elmer, Linda
Subject: FW: Milwaukee River Residents Group Follow up regarding ZND Meeting July 3rd

Michael S. D'Amato
Alderman, 3rd District
Milwaukee, WI.
mdamat@milwaukee.gov

From: Mary Hertel [mailto:dchertel@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tue 10-Jul-07 2:52 PM
To: D'Amato, Michael
Cc: Bauman, Robert; Hamilton, Ashanti; Murphy, Michael; Wade, Willie; Witkowiak, James; Mayor Tom Barrett
Subject: Milwaukee River Residents Group Follow up regarding ZND Meeting July 3rd

Alderman Michael D' Amato
Chairperson
Zoning & Neighborhood Development Committee
Milwaukee Common Council
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202
7/10/07

Re: ZND Meeting of July 3, 2007
Rivianna Proposal

Dear Alderman D' Amato:

We appreciate the opportunity provided at the July 3, 2007 ZND meeting allowing us to express certain concerns regarding the proposed Rivianna project along the Milwaukee River. We look forward to continuing our involvement in this development proposal in a very meaningful way.

During the meeting you and other members of the committee asked several questions of us regarding our statements of wanting "predictability" in the order of new development as it occurs in the Fifth Ward, and our concerns regarding the impact of value of our early investments in the Historic Third Ward. We want to shed some light on these topics for your consideration.

Regarding the matter of predictable patterns of development, we suggested that the practice of granting a "one-off" zoning variance to such a critical piece of property, located at a critical juncture of new and future development, was not in the best public interest. Rather, we recommended that a more thorough, thoughtful process of design evolution take place so that the very best project can be attracted to this site. In the absence of a highly visible, inclusionary process of neighborhood building that a more thoughtful approach would ensure, we argued that the rezoning of this critical property would create a sense of unpredictability in the minds of people looking to invest their home-buying dollars in the city. The committee rejected that notion.

7/10/2007

We believe this to be a real issue. As well, we believe that city professionals have taken this view for some time as well. In the City of Milwaukee's own Zoning Code, one of the stated purposes of the Zoning Code is to "encourage compatibility of adjacent land uses". More to the point with this development proposal, the Zoning Code is intended to "maintain a compatible scale of development within the city".

Both of these stated purposes of the City's Zoning Code speak clearly of the concerns we expressed at the July 3 meeting. And any design professional would without hesitation opine that these two objectives are reflective of one another; compatible land uses and compatible scale of development form a single cohesive perspective on appropriate development patterns.

When the City has placed these concepts into practice, it has further illuminated our point. The Park East Redevelopment Plan is the most comprehensive and detailed planning document ever produced by the Department of City Development. Within this plan and the department's own introductory statements on the City's website, the stated intention of such an elaborate and expensive planning process is "to guide future development of the area in a predictable manner that optimizes long-term public and private investments".

We can only conclude that the City's own stated planning approach and purpose mirrors exactly the point that we made at your July 3 meeting, namely that predictability is a critical component of the process of city building. It is a characteristic that we as residents rely on you, as elected representatives to extract from the many proposals that come before you.

On another matter, we were asked by Alderman Murphy if we had conclusive evidence to present that inconsistent zoning and granting of inconsistent development rights has an adverse impact on property values. We have taken his advice to research the matter and have found numerous pieces written both in academia and within the real estate community to support the view that the legislation and administration of predictable and highly visible zoning practices aids in the creation of value. We are poring through many of these documents and will present you with those that we find most applicable to the situation at hand.

Finally, with regard to visible and predictable zoning practices, we will contact local realtors and downtown residents to determine how they feel about making their investments (or in the case of real estate brokers advising their clients to make investments) in the city under two scenarios – one where predictable and highly visible zoning practices are administered and one where individual parcels within a neighborhood can be uniquely zoned without reference to, or consistency with, a comprehensive plan.

We appreciate your invitation to continue our dialogue with you on this very important property, with the end result being the formation of the best project for this incredibly important piece of property.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Hertel
Vice President
Milwaukee River Residents Group

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