



Historic Water Tower Neighborhood

March 5, 2010

Re: Common Council File #091458 - Mercy Housing Detailed Plan Development Zoning Change
Common Council File #091514 - 2353 N. Farwell - Land Sale

Alderman Nik Kovac
200 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Ald. Kovac:

We are writing to inform you that the Historic Water Tower Neighborhood (HWTN) unanimously passed, with one abstention (and as president, I also do not vote), a motion this week expressing our concerns regarding the speed and lack of public disclosure and input related to the proposed sale of public land and re-zoning for the Mercy Housing project (between Murray, Thomas and North Avenues).

HWTN shares other neighborhood groups' strong interest in having time to consider and have input into the mass, height and aesthetic of any structure on this site, and the impact that the increased traffic and loss of parking will have in our neighborhoods. Some also have questions about any city support for additional new housing on the East Side in light of rampant vacancies and foreclosures. We had hoped these issues might be addressed in public forums and discussions with the developers and city officials well before the City officially considered any sale of public land or rezoning.

Despite hearing at our February 3 meeting that this project was on hold, we learned this week that it has suddenly been scheduled for numerous votes, and that the City plans to formally consider selling public land, before it approves zoning changes. We are concerned that these actions are scheduled for Committee approval even before any public meetings, discussions and input occurs. We believe this process is contrary to established protocol and does not take into account the opinions and needs of property taxpayers in the area.

We respectfully request your assistance in assuring HWTN and our neighbors that this project will honor established procedure and allow the opportunity for significant public input before proceeding. If the process is allowed to move too quickly, the developers and the City will not have time to adjust the proposal to accommodate neighborhood ideas and needs.

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Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jeff Bentoff

Jeff Bentoff
President

c: Public Works Committee
 Zoning, Neighborhood & Development Committee
 City Plan Commission
 Rocky Marcoux, Commissioner, Department of City Development
 Vanessa Koster, City Planning Manager, Department of City Development
 Mayor Tom Barrett
 Greenwich Village Association