

March 8th, 2021
City Plan Commission
Attn: Commissioner Lafayette L. Crump
809 N. Broadway
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Commissioners:

As property owners and business operators immediately adjacent to the proposed development at 6th at Vine Streets, City Place II, we are writing to express our concerns.

What are the potential impacts to the future design of Phase III on Lot 2 if this zoning change is approved? If the height increase were approved for Phase II, does this also extend to Phase III? Four stories would be out of scale at 5th and Vine. Furthermore, what assurances can be given that Phase III actually takes place?

The rear of the first phase, City Place I, is completely flat with scant architectural interest. The proposed east elevation of Phase II faces towards a residential and active commercial neighborhood, and is only slightly more interesting than the west elevation of City Place 1. With the lot slated for Phase III remaining undeveloped for the foreseeable future, more architectural interest on the east elevation could temper our opposition. This is a concern as we have been investing in and taking financial risks to build and beautify our buildings and land along the east side of 1700 block of 5th Street.

We understood that the apartments at the City Place development would be a mix of affordable and market rate units. This did not happen in Phase I and appears to not to be happening in Phase II. Especially if the project is now adding an additional 8 units to the building, what percentage will be available to accomplish a mixed development? Carver Park, Lapham Park, Hillside, Thurgood Marshall and City Place I, all within a few blocks of this proposed development already are making affordable housing available. It is unclear why this concentration of affordable units makes sense in this location. If the developer wants to enlarge the building for more units, let them be market rate.

It is widely acknowledged that concentrating large numbers of subsidized housing units in a limited area is not the best strategy for making quality housing available in a fair and sustainable manner. Based on recent positive economic momentum in the area on three sides of this proposed site, there is an opportunity for high quality mixed income housing projects. It does not appear that this is on the table. We think neighboring property owners deserve an explanation why it is not.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael and Sharon Grinker
Seth Jenn, LLC and Stay Human, LLC