

9 December 2015

Historic Commission -- City of Ann Arbor

John Beeson  
Jennifer Ross

Ben Bushkuhl  
Tom Stulberg

Patrick McCauley  
Robert White

Ellen Ramsburgh  
Cc: Raymond Detter

Dear Commissioners:

I write to you today as 1) a long-time resident of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Township; 2) a long-time professional working in Ann Arbor who cares very much about the health and well-being of the community; 3) a past resident of the Historic Old Fourth Ward; and 4) a lover a historical architecture and context (I live a field-stone farm house c. 1835 on Pontiac Trail.)

I very much support the approval of the proposed Glen Hotel, an application which will be reconsidered at your hearing on December 10. It is a worthy project which deserves significant reconsideration under the "public benefit exception," the reasons for which include:

- 1 this contaminated land currently poses a threat to public health and safety. Moving this project forward would solve this issue once and for all. Frankly, it is surprising to me that the city has left this toxic land sit for so long a time. I remember the old gas station (a commercial use) and I understand from the application that the site is highly contaminated as evidenced by the Baseline Environmental Assessment that was included with the application. As a member of the community, I would like to see this developer receive a notice for their project to proceed so that this site can be properly cleaned up.
- 2 this mixed use hotel, conference, retail and residential project will contribute to the city's low income housing fund which I see as a great benefit to the city. In my professional capacity I spend well into six figures on hotel accommodations annually and I am very familiar with the properties currently at our disposal. Beyond the low income housing fund contribution, I also believe that providing this mixed use project is a benefit to the community in and of itself as it provides an independent, upscale, full-service property in our community in close proximity to the hospital area, theatre area, campus and downtown. This amenity is not currently provided in Ann Arbor and is tremendously needed. For that reason, I would like to see the applicant receive his notice to proceed.

Beyond these two compelling benefits, I personally want to see this land developed privately so that it is contributing to the economic health of the community and, at the same time, providing a distinctive public amenity which we have lived without for far too long. I do not want to see this project blocked for preservationist reasons only to learn some time down the road that the land has been acquired by the U-M. If that were to happen – not a far-fetched possibility – the land would be developed with no long-term tax benefit to the city and, concurrently, usher in a new wave of University development "creep" into one of our important and historic residential neighborhoods. I like the way this project creates a kind of literal and figurative buffer again that outcome.

Please consider this project, one which you can control and influence, instead of a future U-M project for which you will have little or no say in the permanent outcome.

Submitted respectfully,



Michael J. Kondziolka  
Director of Programming, UMS