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Sent: Sunday, September 05, 2021 10:46 PM
To: HDC <HDC@a2gov.org>
Subject: 415 W. Washington

Hello- I am writing to you about 415 W. Washington. I see that there will be another working session on September 9th and I would like my comments to be included in the record.

First of all, the images in the SmithGroup presentation are very out of scale. They present the "preferred option" as not much taller than the houses on Third Street and also those on W. Washington. Anyone who has walked down those streets will see that those houses are much smaller than portrayed in the presentation. At its July HDC working session SmithGroup and city planners persisted in saying there would be affordable housing in their "Current Preferred Option" although both those city planners and the housing director had previously admitted there was no possibility of affordable housing on that site due to it being on a floodplain and close to RR tracks. I notice that affordable housing is mentioned again in the latest presentation. Why is this?

In 1990, the Old West Side Historic District Study Committee Report ruled that the current buildings and accessory structures on the 415 W. Washington site are contributing structures to the OWS Historic District. Although, in Spring of 2015, money had been allocated to repair the structures, most of it was not used and the City allowed the buildings to deteriorate. Then, in 2018, the City succeeded in getting permission to demolish the buildings. This is the definition of Demolition by Neglect. There is an Ann Arbor ordinance against such demolition by neglect. Please see

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The City's "Preferred Option" would still loom over the neighborhood, as was stated by several HDC commissioners at the July working session.

I would like to see an alternative to this "preferred option" - something other than simply more luxury housing. This site is in the Old West Side Historic District and more attention must be paid to that fact. How about preserving and renovating the buildings instead of demolishing them? The City talks about its sustainability goals, but demolishing and building new is not the best option for sustainability. Keeping and renovating the historic buildings on the 415 W. Washington site, with the use of sustainable materials, would be much more environmentally friendly and in keeping with the City's A2Zero plan. How about preserving, renovating and repurposing the buildings to provide artist space to replace that which was lost when the Y was built? This is just one idea of what could be done with the preserved buildings on the 415 W. Washington site. But I would like to see something that would be a gentle transition from downtown to the Old West Side neighborhood, something that would benefit the entire city instead of only the people who could afford to live in the City's latest preferred option. Something that fits with the character of the historic district in which it stands.

Thank you. -Peace, Kitty