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Subject: The City Y Lot

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Members of the Ann Arbor City Council,

As the Chair of the Energy Commission and a member of the Environmental Commission, I wish to relate to you some of the comments expressed by at least some of the members of these commissions. If there were time I would ask the Commissions to send a more formal resolution to you. Given the time constraints, this will have to be a more informal letter from myself. I am forwarding this to the other Commission members in hope that they too will send correspondence to you. Several of us also related this to the Committee on "Connecting Williams Street" (at that time, staff stated that no immediate sale of any of the properties was not planned).

Basically it all comes down to the fact that this parcel is one of a very few that the City can have an impact to achieve some of its goals as stated in both the Climate Action Plan and the Sustainable Framework. Under State law Cities can not enact ordinances that require more stringent energy efficiency standards than the current State Energy Code. Similarly other standards of excellence such as LEED can only be used as a means of granting premiums. As a result, the majority of new downtown construction has been just good enough to meet code with a few green perks when they appeared to have marketing value.

When the City sells a piece of property it can negotiate additional features and even add covenants in the deed that can steer the developer in a direction more in line with the City's greater goals. You have a chance here to make sure that the building built upon this property becomes a shining example of what can and should be done to create a more vibrant community that will have less impact on the environment and achieve a greater level of resiliency in the future. These features have proven to be good for marketing and for maximizing occupancy and worker satisfaction, but since they have not made it into the accounting sheets of the market analyzers are not incorporated into buildings as often as they should be.

It is my sincere hope that you as a Council, will recognize this great opportunity and instruct staff to include a requirement for excellence in design into any sales agreement.

Please feel free to contact me or any other members of these commissions about this subject.

Respectfully yours,

Wayne Appleyard
Chair of the Energy Commission