

From: Kasey Mahony
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 10:16 AM
To: Planning
Subject: 530 N. Division St Development

Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional feedback to the presentation at last night's meeting on the proposed development at 530 N Division St. I joined late and must not have caught the correct code to unmute, my apologies that these comments were not shared during public input. From the follow-up questions I heard the commission ask to Mr. Selby it is clear you are giving this proposal careful consideration and I appreciate that. I put some text in bold only to call attention to the main points, please do not misconstrue as shouting :-)

My father, Edward Mahony, has been the owner and steward of 524 N. Division St for 40 years and I spent the first 8 years of my life there before moving to the Burns Park neighborhood, learning to ride a bike in the Saint Thomas parking lot, eating at Northside Diner and Casey's Tavern, and frequenting Kerrytown.

One of the responsibilities of the City is to set and maintain standards and this project falls well outside the current standards; when that is allowed to happen it sets precedence. If the city's intent is to start changing this neighborhood, then those changes should be a part of a larger master plan and approved by the citizens, not piecemeal-ed together as will happen if this proposal moves forward without substantial modifications. I heard one of the commissioners ask about adding a maximum setback and another about maximum height, that only added to my concern that there is no clear or set plan moving forward in this neighborhood.

Even when a project checks all of the boxes it does not always mean it is the right thing to do. The Old Fourth Ward was not developed as an energy-saving district, but a historical one and future planning for this area should take that into consideration. This neighborhood is one area close to downtown that is protected from university development. Every time I pass the corner where the old Blimpy Burger location used to be, my heart sinks a little, I miss the quaint gateway to downtown. The looming building that replaced the structures which contributed to that quaint feeling does not fit the site and looks out of place; while it is beautifully designed, it does not fit the site or the characteristics adjacent to it. I mention that because **I believe the proposed new construction at 530 N. Division St should be, at a minimum, contained to the existing footprint, if not total size, scale and exterior finishes in order to maintain the characteristics of the neighborhood. The only thing to be gained by building a structure as large as what is proposed is to make money and it is not the city's responsibility to ensure that happens. New construction within the existing footprint would be a win-win in my eyes as it would maintain the current look and feel of the neighborhood and could still achieve the goals of energy efficiency and could be designed for more dense occupancy.**

Certainly this project is personal and emotional for my family - when I was 5, I put my footprint in the basement floor of our house after my dad replaced cement following an installation of a new furnace. My family has been making it work within our home's historic footprint and I ask that this development do the same - tear it down if you need to, but please maintain the footprint and characteristics of the neighborhood.

I want to share that my comments come from a place of deep understanding about both historic preservation and the need for development - I work for the Department of Natural Resources in the Parks and Recreation division, I am a district supervisor and responsible for managing 16 counties of state-owned public lands including state parks, trails, boat launches, etc. We balance historic preservation and development nearly every day and I am currently managing roughly 30 million dollars worth of new development within my district and earlier this year one of our projects received the Governor's Award for historic preservation. When we remove a structure that has been deemed not to be a contributing historical factor we try to plan the new construction to fit the historic characteristics of the entire site,

taking into consideration the visual aesthetics of the surrounding area by maintaining a similar size and scale. I heard Mr. Selby acknowledge the history of the neighborhood and noted the known Native American presence in this area. **If the proposal moves forward without substantial modification to the footprint, please consider requiring an archeological survey of the site prior to development.** It is a nominal fee when compared to the cost to develop the property and would help ensure that a more thorough evaluation has been completed.

Can you please let me know when this will be moving to the City Council and if there will be time for public input on this topic at that meeting?

Thank you for listening,
Kasey (Mahony) Cline
3304 N. Timberwood Dr.
Traverse City, MI 49686