

RJ Myers
816 New Jersey
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

July 13, 2006

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JUL 13 2006
CITY MANAGERS OFFICE
LAWRENCE, KS

Dear City Commissioners,

The formation of the Old East Lawrence Preservation Alliance was born of necessity. After attending numerous ELNA meetings, the total nebulous nature of the Harris Construction project became obvious. A group of long time residents decided to create a petition as a way of sounding out the support, or lack of in, the immediate environs. This modest request far exceeded our expectations. It repudiates Harris' contention that the neighborhood is 100% behind his endeavor.

The magnitude of this development in a small working class neighborhood requires that a great deal of study be made of the real impact such a proposal would have on the inhabitants of the environs. We fear that scrutiny has been lacking, if not non-existent. One of the purposes of the watch dog group is to keep all players honest. The unwillingness of Mr. Harris to engage in any real dialogue has exacerbated the situation -- not to mention his condescending attitude, which in my opinion borders on megalomania. His supposed exchange of ideas with our neighborhood has mainly consisted of showing up at our annual picnics with a dog and pony show of architectural drawings which seem to morph every year. Our misgivings about the true nature of Mr. Harris's intentions first surfaced when a leaked internal document called 'Cool River 2002' exposed the ultimate goal of the project, which is clearly designed as a satellite downtown, complete with trolley system to facilitate transportation, and a water park. Given the unresolved problems of downtown night life, most residents remain unenthusiastic to say the least about this aspect of live, work, play. The consensus in East Lawrence is that downtown is a mess and a dangerous one at that. The last thing we need is for our quiet streets to be turned into cursing corridors for late-night carousers in search of one for the road. Until East Lawrence concerns are addressed we feel the C-5 zoning issue is the equivalent of giving Mr. Harris a loaded gun, allowing him to create his entertainment district in the middle of our residential neighborhood, and to its detriment.

Our grievances with the project do not end just with the Harris secret agenda, but involve a list of other matters from oversized parking lots to increased traffic next to a historic church and school to a complete and lack of green space, not to leave out the critical mass density.

We do not pretend to be experts on New Urbanism, but it would seem that neither does Mr. Harris, as his overall plan seems to violate some of its basic precepts. Is Mr. Harris hiding behind an obfuscated definition of New Urbanism? The people of East Lawrence are not lab rats for some new experimental twist on the New Urbanism movement. That is why on the behalf of almost 140 citizens, who signed our petition (over half owner occupants) of the north end of the east side, we ask that the Lawrence City Commission devote more study to this proposal, and provide an zoning overlay district which will protect the residential character of our neighborhood, as well as facilitate the redevelopment of the East Bottoms.

Thank you,

RJ Myers

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RJ Myers", with a stylized, flowing script.

Old East Lawrence Preservation Alliance

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Lawrence, Kansas 66044

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City Hall
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

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CITY MANAGERS OFFICE
LAWRENCE, KS

Dear Commissioners,

For the past year -- residents and property owners of our neighborhood have depended upon the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association (ELNA) to negotiate for protections for the fragile north end of our district, in light of Harris Construction's proposal to build fifty-four condominium units on the west side of the 800-block of Pennsylvania, as part of a potentially much larger live/work/play development covering all the old East Bottoms, and Lawrence's original industrial district to the south and east.

Unfortunately -- the ELNA's price for project acceptance has been limited to the requirement that a percentage of the finished condominiums be offered as 'low-income' only. The issue of density went unaddressed -- leaving the proposal for 54 condos on twelve city lots, across the alley from historically quiet single-family homes and streetscapes, as a block-busting endeavor aimed at the heart of the district's north end.

The Old East Lawrence Preservation Alliance (OELPA) organized a petition drive, in May, to give voice to the roughly 125 residential owner-occupants in the neighborhood's northern, and oldest half -- in this question before the City Commission regarding disposition of the imposition of a new zoning classification across the area. We expect that the commission, in its role as representatives of the public interest, are able to act now, on behalf of the integrity and protection of this significant portion of Lawrence's nationally-historic Old Town Site, by requiring the developer, Harris Construction, to abide by a number of mitigations, enumerated in the attached petition, which would offer protections for the existing Old East Lawrence district.

Five days before this item appears on the commission's agenda -- the petition effort has collected almost 140 signatures, representing a solid majority of the resident property owners of our neighborhood, north of East 11th Street.

We are hereby asking the Lawrence City Commission to intervene on behalf of the history and heritage represented by our neighborhood, by placing restrictions upon

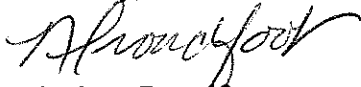
allowable uses in the new zoning overlay district, reducing the proposed residential density, elimination of commercial uses immediately adjacent to the existing neighborhood, and restriction of overall building heights. We are also asking that a portion of new residential units be affordable, and large enough to attract families. We are asking for formal recognition of the area's cultural legacy, through design and installation of a new historical marker, a host of new Kansas state historical listings of nearby residential properties, improvements to area streets, sidewalks, plantings and lighting -- and dedication of a portion of the project's property tax assessments to pay for it all.

We acknowledge that while many aspects of the proposed redevelopment of Lawrence's old industrial heart could be exciting and productive for the neighborhood, and the city at large -- by our measure, the development and its design **MUST** make considerations for the existing district, which contains numerous single-family homes, a historic African-American church, and vintage neocolonial primary school. Working people built this neighborhood -- and the rest of Lawrence -- and they lived where they worked. The preservation of our built environment offers the nation a symbolic testament to the cultural legacy of America's workers, and its manifestation in this unique community where the American Civil War was born.

At a very minimum -- in the vein of the demands made by our petition, the text of which is attached below -- the OELPA wants the density of Harris Construction's residential condos on Pennsylvania Street reduced by a third, to thirty-six -- and a commensurate overlay zoning district created and vetted by the city, on behalf of the northern half of the East Lawrence district, as a companion to the C-5 over-lay rezoning which accompanies this first stage of East Bottoms redevelopment.

If mitigations aren't granted by the developer, Harris Construction -- or the Lawrence City Commission, on behalf of the public partnership necessary to see the project through to completion, the Old East Lawrence Preservation Alliance, in stewardship of the neighborhood and our homes, will have little choice but to seek remedy by all legal and political means necessary.

Sincerely,



Nicolette Proudfoot

President / Old East Lawrence Preservation Alliance