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CITY MANAGERS OFFICE
LAWRENCE, KS

To David Corliss, City Manager

Members of City Council

Fr Rud Turnbull, resident, Hobbs Taylor Lofts, 730 New Hampshire Street, Suite 3K and 3L

Dt 16 September 2012

Re Proposed parking garage special assessment

I strongly object to a special assessment levied against residents of Hobbs Taylor Lofts, 730 New Hampshire Street, to assisting paying for the expansion of a parking garage.

The alleged purpose of the expansion is to assist down-town businesses and those who are customers of the businesses.

Given the purpose, it is inconsistent to assess the residential property owners who DO NOT and WILL NOT use an expanded garage.

To benefit the businesses downtown makes a great deal of sense, and to entice residents of Lawrence who do not live downtown to come downtown also makes sense. As an "urban pioneer" who pioneered by buying at Hobbs Taylor, I want to have a vibrant downtown, made up of a variety of businesses.

But assessing only a limited portion of the entire city's population makes a few pay for a benefit for many. If the purpose of the garage is to benefit downtown businesses, arguably they also should be exempt; let the entire city pay for what is allegedly as valued part of our city, "downtown." Further, assessing residents who already have parking makes even less sense: we will be non-users.

I object on still other grounds: Downtown, especially New Hampshire between 7th and 8th Streets, is a playground for the entire city and its visitors: track meets, bicycle races, Busker displays, and block parties are held on New Hampshire Street, between 7th and 8th, but take a look at that block and decide whether you want to keep adding to our costs, to our inconvenience, and to our deteriorating neighborhood:

- There is not a single trash can on the west side between 7th and 8th. Indeed, I have not seen any from 8th to 10th street.
- There is only one trash container in the parking lot between 7th and 8th Streets and behind the establishments on the west side of Massachusetts Street.
- There are only two trash containers on the west side of New Hampshire Street between 7th and 8th Streets.
- There is always an accumulation of trash outside the two music venues – beer bottles, soft-drink and coffee containers, cigarette butts, left-behind clothing, and fast-food wrappers.
- There is always an accumulations of trash in the parking lot that the city maintains with Hobbs Taylor and the owner of the Borders' site – the same trash I listed in the bullet above.
- The parking strips on the east side have decayed.
- It was only after a year of urine-destroyed lamp post bases that they were recently painted.
- There are no planters on the corners of 7th or 8th at New Hampshire, yet Massachusetts Street has planters along all of its downtown corners.
- There is a property between the Mexican Restaurant and the Bottleneck that has taped-together windows, graffiti on its doors, and dangerously overhanging old air-conditioners.
- The signage on the median strip immediately south of "Borders" in parking lot has been torn down.
- There is constant violation of the "do not park after midnight" signs.

- It was not until several shooting incidents that Lawrence government decided enough is enough and shut down the establishment now on the south of the entrance to the parking lot on the west of New Hampshire Street.

The constant neglect of New Hampshire Street between 7th and 8th Street signifies only that no one in city government really cares: we who live and do business (Capital City Bank, Sabatini Architects, Fagen-Emert-Davis, Hillel, etc.) are easily treated cavalierly because Downtown Lawrence, Inc. and East Lawrence Neighborhood Association do not represent, or care to represent, our residential/commercial interests, and, lacking an organized voice, we residents and business owners are easily overlooked and, now, with the proposed assessment, taxed, not for our benefit or for a city-wide benefit, but for a very limited benefit

Add to all of the above the willingness of the city government to subsidize two apartment complexes at 9th and New Hampshire and one must conclude that only “big voices” garner the attention of the city council and manager’s offices.

If that conclusion is debatable, then adduce proof that you care. In the meantime, do not assess residents who have been brave enough to invest in the allegedly valued downtown, only to find that Massachusetts Street is increasingly “Bowery Boulevard” or “Restaurant Row.”

Having lived in three large cities (New York, Baltimore, and Boston) and one small one (Chapel Hill, N.C.), I can tell you: Lawrence government lacks imagination on how to stimulate a downtown, but has plenty of brass in proposing an assessment that should be levied city-wide because downtown is used city-wide.

Bobbie Walthall

To: David L. Corliss
Subject: RE: Parking Garage

From: Jeremy Furse <jfurse@sbcglobal.net>
Date: September 17, 2012 10:00:43 PM CDT
To: "schummfoods@sunflower.com" <schummfoods@sunflower.com>
Cc: "mdever@sunflower.com" <mdever@sunflower.com>, "hughcarter@sunflower.com" <hughcarter@sunflower.com>, "mikeamyx515@hotmail.com" <mikeamyx515@hotmail.com>, "aroncromwell@gmail.com" <aroncromwell@gmail.com>, "David L. Corliss" <DCorliss@lawrenceks.org>
Subject: Parking Garage

Gentlemen, As owner of the property located at 843 Massachusetts St. I would like to voice my opinion on the formation of a benefit district to fund the additional 72 parking spaces in the new parking garage. I am very much opposed to this benefit district. These additional spaces don't benefit downtown any more than all the other unused spaces located in the existing garages. The garage located across from the art center. is used more to park idle city vehicles than anything else. The top floor was totally unused until the city made it free for anyone that wished to park there. The only time that I have ever seen these garages even close to capacity is if there is a large parade taking place downtown and even then I have had no trouble finding a free space on the top level. If these spaces are created they may at sometime in the future be utilized but even then the benefit will be mostly to the Fritzel's for their business ventures in that part of downtown. If the Fritzel's are in need of additional parking for their developments, which is the obvious, then let them fund the additional spaces, if not the entire project. At no time have I ever witnessed people lined up to enter the library or not being able to find a space to park. I have not seen the existing lot full to capacity on any of my walks down Vermont. I would imagine that a single level deck above some of the existing ground parking would be more economical, yield a equal number of spaces and would not have the stigma of a multi story garage. Most people do not feel safe in a multi story garage in the day time. That unsafe feeling is multiplied ten fold after dark. I also own a business in the city of Columbia Missouri. The city of Columbia has built numerous parking garages in their downtown. At no time have they ever saddled the downtown property owners with a benefit district to finance these structures. These structures were paid for by the city at large or by the fees charged for there use. If the city of Lawrence now feels that there is a need for an additional 72 spaces then the city should have been proactive and included them in the original funding request. To decide that they are necessary as an after thought and then put them on to the backs of the downtown property owners is at best misguided. Please rethink this proposal before acting and if you still feel that these spaces are required find another funding solution . In addition please take a walk

through either of the existing garages on any day of the week including Saturday and count the empty spaces.

Sincerely, Jeremy P. Furse

Furse LC

843 Massachusetts St.

Lawrence, Ks. 66044

Bobbie Walthall

To: David L. Corliss
Subject: RE: 700 Vermont Park Garage special assessment

From: Chris Armstrong [mailto:carmstrong@travelladers.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2012 11:48 AM
To: David L. Corliss
Subject: 700 Vermont Park Garage special assessment

Dear David:

Thank you for your recent letter of September 12 in regards to the 72 additional parking spaces for the Lawrence Public Library. Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the meetings next week since I will be out of town.

My thinking is this, a decision was made to locate the library addition in downtown Lawrence and not a satellite location elsewhere in the city where costs would be cheaper. The library is the benefit of all Lawrence and therefore it seems reasonable for all of Lawrence to underwrite the cost of the additional parking. I think property taxes on downtown real estate are already excessive and I would choose for the cost to be paid accordingly.

Regards,

Chris W. Armstrong | Partner
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