

Dear City Commissioners,

1-24-16

I would like to make a few comments in reference to the HERE project to be heard at this Tuesday's Commission meeting. The number of parking spaces is a bit confusing as there has been much juggling of numbers and location for the allowed parking. It would seem that the numbers are similar to the expectations but are dependent on acquiring and tearing down property to the south as well as redesigning the present garage and using on street tray parking. I support recommendations 1 or 3 that require adequate parking to be identified before apts are occupied. If 3 is chosen it is important that there is a 12 month deadline to have the necessary parking acquired and in use.

This entire development has been a disaster. It is too large and the idea of automated parking was inappropriate. Even if the elevator could have been implemented, who was going to fix such a thing in a timely manner? The neighbors did not get involved early on because that portion of the neighborhood close to the hotel called for a higher density. We believed that the city would follow our neighborhood plan in a reasonable fashion. We got involved when HERE asked to not provide 100 parking spaces. In the end it seems to me that HERE should have provided the parking as per the city code with an accessible parking garage and planned the number of rental units accordingly. Unfortunately working this out after the fact is difficult. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely, Candice Davis

Bobbie Walthall

To: Diane Stoddard
Subject: RE: HERE agenda item

From: Dennis Brown [mailto:djbrown806@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, January 22, 2016 6:25 PM
To: Diane Stoddard
Subject: HERE agenda item

Diane, can you send this letter to the City Commissioners?

City Commissioners: I am speaking personally here. The Lawrence Preservation Alliance will provide testimony at the February HRC. I want to review how, as I see it, the HERE group has impacted our city so far.

HERE came to town trumpeting a style of luxury apartments such that Lawrence has never seen. We were told this would attract out-of-town and foreign residents to Lawrence who were used to a better brand of living quarters than we currently provide. The commercial component of the mixed use project would offer "spectacular" retail. The robotic parking system was state of the art. This is not hyperbole. This is what was said.

Due to the Kansas Legislature eliminating historic environs review from state law, the huge proposed project did not have a hearing before the HRC, like the Varsity House a few years before did. The developer got everything they wanted.

On a 3-2 vote (Amyx and Schumm dissenting), the City Commission approved an 85%, 10 year NRA (HERE pushed for 90%), which is now used as exhibit A by opponents of incentives to scrap the entire program even though this is an excellent tool in the toolbox for far more appropriate revitalization projects. Thanks HERE.

Now, it turns out the state of the art parking system really was pie in the sky...it ain't gonna happen. The spectacular retail? If I'm to understand the current staff report, that's gone too. No gold leaf lettering on your Kansas sports gear I guess. Now it's all restaurant use, which, again, if I am to understand the staff report, actually increases the parking spaces required by code. The developer has not offered to reduce density due to their inability to deliver on their parking system component. Thanks HERE.

If the developer is not going to take the rap for these failures, who is? Apparently the neighborhood and preservation communities will have to, as the plan is to tear down an older residential structure (1137 Indiana), directly next to the state and nationally listed Hancock Historic District, to construct a parking garage. Granted, there's not much left of the environs of the historic district, because a previous city commission, over preservationist objections, decided it would rather have the Oread Inn instead.

The proposed demo of 1137 Indiana will trigger review by the HRC. The thing is, if this had been part of the original proposal, the entire project would have gone through HRC, not just this one component. Not that they planned it this way, but, for those local developers who dislike historic review but have gone through the process, could dumb luck smile on these guys any more than this?

This group came to town with the notion that what they were peddling was better than us. Now we find out they are not better than us and we have to bail them out of their high-minded folly. Shouldn't KU be helping them out of their mess, since many of the HERE residents will be paying out of state tuition to them? The preservation community sure didn't ask them to come here. Why should the preservation community be asked to take the hit? Thanks HERE.

Dennis J Brown