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June 5, 2020

Michael Van Overbeke
VanOverbeke, Michaud & Timmony, P.C.
79 Alfred Street
Detroit, Michigan 48207

Re: 2827 John R. Proposed Development

The Brush Park Community Development Corporation (the "CDC") forwards this letter to provide our formal response regarding the proposed development for the property located at 2827 John R. Street at the corner of John R. Street and Alfred Street (the "Project").

The Project plan includes the rehabilitation and reuse of the existing carriage house structure for commercial use, as well as the new construction of a five-story commercial/residential building and the new construction of a three-story parking/residential building. The plan was presented before the CDC and the Brush Park community at a public meeting held on May 19, 2020. Community members attending the meeting were generally receptive of most of the changes made to the Project; however, there were still objections to the revised plan.

By a vote of 4 in favor, 5 objections, and 1 abstention, the CDC Board voted to not support the Project. Attachment A contains the opinions offered by the Board during the voting process for your consideration; please note, the opinions have no bearing on the Board's vote and are included for reference only.

We thank you again for your presentation and look forward to continuing to discuss your Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karissa Holmes", written in a cursive style.

Karissa Holmes, Vice President

Cc: City of Detroit Planning & Development

ATTACHMENT A: POLL COMMENTS FOR "2827 JOHN R."

Below are the opinions submitted by CDC Board Members during the voting process for reference and consideration. Please note, the opinions have no bearing on the Board's final vote and are included for reference only.

Comment 1

I think the developer has done a great job with the design and functionality of the space. However, the issue of traffic and parking is an extremely important issue that the developer is not addressing. Our neighborhood has a very real example of the issues that will occur with the parking deck at the Inn on 97 Winder, and that property has 1/4th of the capacity of this deck. If it were not feasible for the developer to move parking entrance/exit to alley, I would vote yes on the project.

However, based on the explanation from the developer, the Alfred entrance is just a design preference. The explanation that "high-end condo units need parking entrance on Alfred" is not a good enough justification to inconvenience current residents or for the CDC to reverse its stance on curb cuts and potentially approve another potential parking nuisance for the neighborhood.

Comment 2

I applaud the developer for making many positive changes to this proposal; however, that does not change the fact that there is still a "red flag" major problem with the plan, that is, the curb cut on Alfred Street. Where there is a functioning alley present, all developments should use the alley for vehicular access; that is what they are for. This project is no exception.

The fact that the curb cut is existing or that there are other existing curb cuts in the neighborhood should not matter. It has been a goal for the community to increase walkability through various means, one of them being by eliminating curb cuts and using our existing alleys.

An acceptable modification to the plan would be for vehicular entry/exit to take place from the alley, and for valet to be handled curb side along Brush Street in the span of one or two on-street spaces, as it is in other urban areas.

Residents along Alfred Street, adjacent to and across from this development, also oppose the development plan at this time for this reason.

Comment 3

I am going to abstain on voting on this until/if Michael Van Overbeke can respond to [Comment 2, paragraph 3]. I was in and out of the meeting due to an emergency, so missed if that was brought up and addressed during the meeting, if it was I missed it. This does seem like an interesting solution. I know some developments, such as the Scott, have had to do street/curb cut access and not sure if 100% alley access is doable from an engineering standpoint, so would be interested in a response from developer.

Comment 4

I understand the concern voiced by some about the garage entrance on Alfred using the existing curb cut. Please keep in mind that even if it is feasible for the developer to move the garage entrance to the alley, it will not guaranty a more 'walkable experience' on Alfred (or Edmund for that matter) as vehicles will be able to exit the alley on either street (in addition to John R). The E-W alley adjacent to the proposed development site dead ends into a N-S alley in the middle of the block.

Comment 5

By designing this development to include a two lane wide curb cut onto Alfred Street, this developer is ignoring the unanimous concerns of Alfred Street residents and CDC board members who also live on Alfred Street. Between Woodward and Brush, Alfred Street is residential. We have ground floor retail slated for the City Modern mixed-use buildings, which have retail entrances that do not face Alfred Street. This was intentional. City Modern planners also directed all parking structure traffic into alleys.

At multiple prior CDC and CPC meetings, other Brush Park residents and I communicated Our concerns to this developer. He has ignored our requests to move the parking entrance/exit around back to the alley, and he's now compounded the problem by adding more commercial space to the buildings most recent design. Adding a highly active commercial driveway at this location will create a safety hazard to pedestrians, including our children and parents. It will create a source of noise and traffic congestion.

Now that construction has begun on the new townhomes, at the Woodward end of Alfred Street, we can nearly see how Alfred Street development will look completed. Between Woodward and Brush, all of the doorways lead into residential use spaces. The only exception here is with VanOverbeke's property. Amid our homes, and across the street from one of our senior housing buildings, VanOverbeke proposes his busy commercial garage entrance. I am prepared now to stand with my community and insist he use the alley

To accomplish this, we may be left with no other choice but to sue.

Comment 6

I am especially grateful to those of you who have reached out to me and other Alfred Street neighbors with empathy and to learn more about current conditions on the street and alleys where we live. I feel it's important to note that the seniors living at 124 Alfred Street do drive and many park on Alfred Street. They are already finding it difficult to navigate our street parking situation.

We don't think a parking garage entrance and valet stand should be allowed directly across from the entrance to their homes. We can support VanOverbekes garage if the entrance/exit is off the alley, and the valet stand moved to John R. In my previous comments I've shared Alfred Street residents concerns about the proposed developments impact on pedestrian safety. As [another Board Member] pointed out, our block of Alfred is already pierced with an alley opening. All the more reason to use the existing alley.

All the more reason to use the existing alley opening off of Alfred, for vehicles. As [another Board Member], that's what the alleys are for. In fact, that alley (north of Alfred, between Woodward and John R) has three points of entry, as apposed to two. Not only does that alley have 50% greater access than other alleys in Brush Park, that alley is one of the most under utilized by vehicles in our community. There are currently only two properties with small parking lots that face it..

There are currently only two properties with parking that face it.. VanOverbekes small law firm lot and The Edmund condos lot. In contrast, the alley behind my home at 82 Alfred only has ONE point of vehicle access, at John R (it's pedestrian only, at Woodward) and yet I use it, the John R Apartments high rise building uses it, and Bedrocks 124 Alfred parking deck exclusively uses it, in addition to their surface parking lot.

VanOverbeke has publicly stated that the city has over the years offered to improve the alley behind his law firm, efforts which he claims he blocked. Does he think that's his personal alley? If that alley isn't big enough, even with its THREE entrance/exits: John R, Alfred St, and Edmund Pl, for his proposed

development's vehicle traffic needs, than perhaps Michael has over programmed the site. As I mentioned previously, he has compounded these issues by adding yet another level to the building.

yet another floor of commercial space. Didn't we just have the same issue with him regarding his development at 112 Edmund? Michael has sold off majority interest in 112 Edmund, and it isn't even under construction yet. Michael completely cashed out of The Edmund. At any point in the future he may partially or fully cash out of this development as well. That's his right.

Regardless of whether he stays involved, we the community who actually live here will be stuck with design elements that impact traffic flow and pedestrian safety.