

May 10, 2022

To The Historic District Commission
of Indian Village

This letter is written on behalf of parents at the Detroit Waldorf School in regards to the outdoor shelters (on Burns and Fisher street) that were built during the onset of Covid 19. We wish to remain anonymous because the parents are very divided on the schools Covid policies and many of the parents have been ignored by the school administration. We wish to be heard and not ostracized for having different opinions over our children's care and education. The issue of the shelters goes beyond historical codes, it is more an issue of safety that should be addressed. We know that some families who go to school are also on this committee.

The shelters were built as a result of Covid, the DWS faculty felt they needed to build these shelters in order to keep the school open which is not entirely true. Many schools have closed and reopened during covid just as Detroit Waldorf has done. Many parents have left the school because of DWS moving classrooms outdoors and isolating the children into pods and more parents are not enrolling their children next year. These shelters were never part of the long term vision for the school. There has been discussions about building on the property in the future for the growth of the school but the shelters were not the vision of that growth.

For many reasons we do not want the shelters to stay, they were built out of fear and the planning was not well thought out. There are no bathrooms or clean running water. Some of the shelters are a block away from the bathrooms. Children have wet and pooped their pants because they couldn't make it to the bathroom in time, this has happened too many times. Children are napping outside on the shelters sometimes when it is very cold outside. Children have to go back and forth from inside classroom to outdoor shelter which is causing them to be disorganized and takes up time which interrupts their learning. The children are isolated into pods and told they are not allowed to play with other children and we find this painfully disheartening. We fear keeping these shelters will allow the school to continue with this segregation and will lead to psychological damage to our children. We want to get back to normal, back into the classroom where children can learn in a warm and safe environment. There is no sense of community as parents have not been allowed in the building for the last two years. Standing outside at a gate where your child is segregated by shelters isnt community. It is perpetuating fear and we want it to stop. The shelters do not meet many of the historical guidelines for the community as well.

Michigan is not a four season state. Children learn best in a warm comfortable environment. Many children have complained of cold hands in the winters and wanting to go inside. No other school has moved their classrooms outdoors because it is not necessary. The Detroit Waldorf Schools Covid policies have been the strictest in the state with all classes outdoors, masking indoors and outdoors, no parents or family allowed in the school and yet they have had higher Covid cases than schools that kept their classes indoors. We would not be opposed to one shelter being left for outdoor concerts but not all of them for classroom learning. The shelters do

not provide warmth or protection from rain or snow. There is nothing remarkable about them in terms of learning. Waldorf children have always gone outside for play and nature.

Another issue to consider is that Michigan has the highest rate of gun violence and particularly in Detroit. We must consider how safe are the children outside all day. We should not wait until something tragic happens to make changes again.

These are just some of the issues and concerns. We want our children back in their classrooms in the historical building on Burns st. with the beautiful flowering magnolia tree. We have all been affected by Covid and so many of us have made sacrifices. We agreed to these temporary changes and now the world is moving forward toward normalcy and we want our children's place of learning to go back to normal...inside where they can learn uninterrupted by trucks and blasting radios. Their education has been greatly interrupted. We vote NO on permanent status for the outdoor classrooms.

Warm Regards,
Parents of the Detroit Waldorf School