

Reparations

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To: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Jane Prince <jane.prince@gmail.com>; #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Tyrone Terrill <whtt830@gmail.com>; debbi montgomery <debmontgomery@comcast.net>

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Good morning Councilmember Prince. I wanted to thank you for inviting me to the reparations meeting. I found the discussion helpful. I didn't participate in the discussion because I wanted to learn more about the city's plans and the nature of the committee. Even though I didn't participate I was troubled about something I was hearing. I heard that the city was sorry for its role in doing harm to people of color in the past and there would be intentional efforts made to do further harm in the present. What troubles me is that I am aware that the council is voting tonight on a project that would do harm to people who are vulnerable and those vulnerable people happen to be people of color. I am referring to the vote on the Lexington property.

Unless I have been given the wrong information luxury apartments will be built on the Lexington site if the council approves. I understand that this would be in opposition to the planning commission. I also understand that there are questions regarding the original letter, proposal, recommendation (whichever is the right term) that was originally submitted for the site. In talking with Armando, I understand that Wilder recognizes that it was a mistake to make this decision. Unfortunately, Wilder is not in a position to correct this mistake without penalties and possible legal action against itself. Given the values the council says it supports, and the planning commission opposition, and Wilder's desire to correct it's mistake the council should clearly vote no. If I understand Armando, Wilder would be able to pull together a plan that would edify instead of erode the African American community and other communities of color.

In light of the reparations committee desire to do no further harm to the African American community I am having reservations about the message and the upcoming vote of council members. If I understand correctly, some of the same council members who voted to pursue reparations and establish the committee will also vote to approve this project. If that is indeed the case I respectfully ask you to disband the reparations committee. I won't take time to tell you why. I'm going to believe that the councilmembers are wise enough to recognize the disconnect between rhetoric and reality. This type of activity is what allows systemic racism and oppression to continue.

While I have your attention let me add that I didn't bring the issue up last night because I know from talking with my representative that there could be no discussion of the matter. So, I have chosen to write to you and I hope that you will forward my email to other members of the council. I couldn't locate the email addresses of the other members, or I would have included them.

Thank you for taking time to read this. I hope that you will use your influence to lead the council in voting against the Lexington project. If not, I trust that you will lead the council in dismantling the reparations committee.

Regards,

Pastor James Thomas
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church

We must not see our circumstances by how we see them but by how God wants us to see them.

Emmet Fox