

Boulware, Christine (CI-StPaul)

From: Cliff Carey <cliffcareycarpentry@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 07, 2015 10:28 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7; #CI-StPaul_Ward5; #CI-StPaul_Ward1; #CI-StPaul_Ward2; #CI-StPaul_Ward3; #CI-StPaul_Ward4; #CI-StPaul_Ward6; Sage-Martinson, Jonathan (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Spong, Amy (CI-StPaul); Boulware, Christine (CI-StPaul); Coleman, Chris (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Letter re:proposed demolition of HRA owned properties in Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District

October 7, 2015

Dear Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Board and Staff:

This is a request to have all of the items pertaining to the demolition of HRA owned properties in the Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District withdrawn from the 10/8/15 Heritage Preservation Commission agenda pending a community meeting to consider the impacts and/or opportunities that the properties in question represent to the Dayton's Bluff community. (208-210 Bates Avenue, 216-218 Bates Avenue, 716 Wilson Street, 275 Bates Avenue, 700 Fourth Street East, 767 Fourth Street East, 737 Plum Street) The number of properties currently being considered for demolition warrants a delay in action and opportunity for the community to be informed and engaged in the process. It appears to represent a systemic breakdown in the information flow to the community in a way that allows for authentic dialogue, problem solving, and priority setting on publically owned assets within the district.

This request does not suggest that anyone on city staff is not doing their job. We appreciate the efforts that have been made to advance the preservation plan for this community and the positive impacts that those efforts have produced. It is also not meant to suggest that none of the HRA properties should be demolished. It is simply a request to implement a thoughtful, informed, and transparent decision making process that engages the community in a meaningful way.

The Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District, the first primarily working-class district in the City of Saint Paul, does not find its significance in block after block of individually significant properties, but as a collection that reflects the character, stories, and cohesiveness of the district as a whole. In areas where the district has been allowed to flourish through public investment or has independently attracted private investment it has done quite well. In fact it has succeeded in creating a level of stability and investment that are absent in many adjacent areas.

The concentration of city owned and neglected properties has been a burden to surrounding properties in the area in question, and the removal of all of these properties is an additional blow to those that have bought and invested into their own properties with the understanding that it was protected and would be held to the standards advanced by the district guidelines.

For these reasons we respectfully request the opportunity for the community to discuss the process further with the HRA and to allow us to have an active role in these important decisions.

We hope you will consider this request and look forward to working with you to address the issues.

Sincerely,

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cc: Mayor Chris Coleman

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