



CAPITOL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
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May 6, 2017

The Honorable Jackie Biskupski
Mayor, Salt Lake City
City County Building
450 S. State St. Room 306
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear Mayor,

I'm writing on behalf of the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council to bring to your attention an incident which we believe was a serious failure of the community input process on a major project in our neighborhood. The project in question is a mixed-use residential / commercial development on the east side of 300 West between 500 and 600 North. The developer is Clearwater Homes. As I'm sure you're aware, the RDA has been involved with this site for several years. Our Council has followed it closely and has received periodic updates from the city on its progress.

Last December, the developer's architect presented a development proposal at our regular monthly neighborhood council meeting on behalf of his client. Our meeting minutes reflect many comments that were made by council members present. Concerns included insufficient parking in an area already short of parking, excessive building height and the viability of storefront live-work spaces. Nevertheless, the staff report to the Historic Landmark Commission (3/16/17) states that "no comments were received as a result of [the community council] meeting." The staff report made a favorable recommendation to the HLC for approval of the project. Furthermore, the project approved by the HLC differed in important ways from the project that was presented at our meeting. Needless to say, none of the comments made by the public at our meeting were addressed in the approved design.

A member of our Board called the planner who wrote the report to ask why the public comments were not included. The planner told this person that he did not attend the meeting himself but relied upon the developer's account for his staff report. Partly as a result of the omission of the public comments in the staff report, the HLC approved the project which is now going forward, leaving the community's concerns unaddressed. The same person contacted Nick Norris to inform him of this and request that the project's approval be suspended to allow the community's concerns to be heard and addressed. Mr. Norris responded that he has no authority to do this. He also said that the City has no legal responsibility to involve community councils in such projects.

The Board of the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council believes that this represents a serious failure of the public input process. This is not only a matter of responsiveness but also jeopardizes the success of the project and the commercial center of our neighborhood.

The Board respectfully requests that you reopen this process to address this failure, if it lies within your power as Mayor to do so. If not, perhaps you could facilitate an informal meeting with the developer so our community can at least present our concerns and hear their response. In any case, we would like to participate in revising the City ordinances that establish the role of community councils in future developments and related policy decisions, a process we understand is underway.

Respectfully,

Laura Arellano
Board Chair, Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council

cc Stan Penfold, City Council District 3; Nick Norris, Planning Director