



May 15, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mayor Lucas and City Council
City of Kansas City Missouri
414 E. 12th Street, 15th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64106

RE: Cocina47 CD-CPC-2021-00193

Dear Mayor Lucas and City Council members:

Historic Kansas City and our Plaza advocates, Friends of the Plaza, acknowledge an emerging settlement regarding the site of the Christian Science Church at 47th and Pennsylvania on the Country Club Plaza. Two developer-owners previously deeply at odds appear to have reached a compromise and now look to City government to take action regarding the site consistent with that agreement. Councilmember Katheryn Shields has been in consultation with the parties, and we greatly appreciate her effort and commitment to a best achievable outcome consistent with long established planning, zoning and approval process standards. We believe the public interest and that of nearby owners and neighbors are probably best served by this result. With a slight refinement to the Plaza Bowl Concept set forth in the Midtown Plaza Plan (which updated in 2016 the predecessor Plaza Plan of 1989), we believe stable, reliable planning for this critical civic asset -- the Plaza -- has been maintained and will be in good stead for many years to come.

As has been the case with a number of other projects over the years, HKC agrees that a deviation from the Bowl Concept height requirement of 45 feet at this location is an acceptable aberration to accommodate this new structure. An unfortunate negative is the loss of the historic building on the site. There really is no consolation for that loss -- a very significant scenic and historic feature on the Plaza will disappear. Regrettably, the legal means are not available to save it.

The new structure will exceed in places the 45-foot height limit that applies to the site, but there is a crucial setback on 47th Street which will diminish height of much of that facade well below 45 feet. The Bowl Concept is preserved after a lengthy controversy which does not invite repetition. It should be recognized as well that the site has a grade change not found elsewhere within the 45 foot zone on the Plaza. There are anomalies of height measurement with grade variation and other details that have complicated the dispute.

Accessibility being a critical aspect of Plaza history and design, and convenient parking being critical to accessibility, we [cannot support an outcome that lacks a definite plan for convenient off-street parking](#). It appears that the necessary parking spaces for the uses proposed can be provided by surrounding office buildings. The City's standards require those off-site parking spaces to be leased in perpetuity and signed by the specific property owner that is providing them. Still, there is critical need for a parking and traffic study, comprehensive in scope, for the entire Plaza-Westport area. This study should be funded and undertaken ASAP.

We are highly optimistic about the future of the Plaza. With good stewardship and curation, this priceless

legacy so important to this city will prosper and retain its place among our most important scenic, historic and design assets dear to the hearts of so many Kansas Citians. Further, we believe the Plaza will continue to be a vital economic force in our city, highly attractive to growth and investment, thanks to stable, reliable and well-articulated planning.

The saga of redevelopment at this location has spanned several years in which at least two proposals emerged from different developers hugely out of sync with Plaza planning. After much effort, we can see a better outcome ahead, in addition to growth, investment and tourism revenue.



Vicki Noteis, President



Greg Allen, Past President



Lisa Lassman Briscoe, Executive Director

cc (via email): The Mayor and the City Council
City Manager
HKC Board of Directors