

June 21, 2015

Dear Mayor Farmer and City Commissioners,

The draft Work Plan you have before you tonight regarding the East 9th project does not fit with the culture, heritage and social fabric of the East Lawrence neighborhood, and needs substantial modifications before it could be accepted.

As a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee for this project I was surprised to see how little had changed between the May 20th and June 10th versions of the Work Plan, considering the thoughtful discussion members of the committee had about it at our June 3rd meeting. At the end of that meeting, the Plan was to be forwarded to you pending specific amendments regarding the timeline, participation of local artists and the inclusion of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association in the review process.

Although the timeline was pushed back in some places, no provisions have been made in the new draft of the Plan (the one you have before you tonight) for local artists or the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association in the review process. These considerations are in addition to concerns that both the East Lawrence Neighborhood's process to create a conservation overlay around 9th Street and the city's own cultural plan are being put behind the East Ninth project when they should happen first. This doesn't make sense. The overlay and cultural plan should help inform how and what a successful and sustainable East Ninth project could be, but only if they happen first.

These glaring oversights continue a pattern that has eroded trust and confidence in this project for many residents. To address these issues, I urge you to not accept the Work Plan tonight. Much more work on it needs to be done before it embodies the high value we place on our precious historic neighborhoods, and celebrates our rich and diverse local arts and cultural community.

Sincerely,
Dave Loewenstein