

Mark Kaplan letter (2)

June 23, 2015

Dear Commissioners --

I'm writing ahead of your meeting this evening, June 23rd, in regard to your tentative acceptance of preliminary plans for the proposed arts corridor for East 9th Street.

I beseech you all to reverse the last City Commission's misguided support for this travesty -- which another Lawrence developer presciently referred to as an '*ant track*' last week. This is exactly what the Lawrence Arts Center has prostituted itself for these past 18 months, on behalf of a Kansas City-based developer, by hiring a Kansas City-based architecture firm, to stage dog-and-pony shows in our historic neighborhood, to obtain 'buy-in' from confused and intimidated residents and property owners of Old East Lawrence's north end.

This proposed project represents a veritable attempted rape of our historic low- and moderate-income residential district, which forms almost half of our community's Original Town Site. It's nothing more than an effort to create a commercial strip on East 9th, to connect the heavily-taxpayer subsidized Warehouse Arts development on the 800-block of Pennsylvania street with downtown's bars and restaurants -- in spite of the fact that there are eight single-family homes from Lawrence's historic period lining East 9th, between Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, depicted below.

I AM NOT opposed to the thoughtful development of the Warehouse Arts District. But it needs to be designed with the sanctity and security of the surrounding largely single-family district on its flanks in mind -- and can be accessed by patrons through the use of the existing street grid. Old East Lawrence's historic north end is already being surrounded by development and proposed projects on three sides. Any development of a commercial thoroughfare along E. 9th Street, egregiously subsidized with further millions in taxpayer largesse, will comprise a hangman's noose around this fragile, ancient district.

If the commission decides to allow this vulgar project to proceed this evening, I personally pledge to work with the phalanx of other neighborhood residents opposed to this redevelopment scheme, by attacking the Lawrence Arts Center's funding base, by letting its many individual and institutional contributors know that this otherwise laudable and valuable organization has sold its soul to out-of-town profiteers, on behalf of the destruction of what so many of us have struggled for more than forty years to protect. We will also act on political and legal grounds, to interdict ongoing funding of the project by ArtPlace, in Brooklyn, New York, which unknowingly accepted the many lies and distortions so plaintively ensconced in the Arts Center's *Free State Boulevard* grant application from 2013.

Thank you for your public service....

Respectfully,

Mark Kaplan