

Metro Louisville Council  
Public Hearing  
November 14, 2017

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE LOUISVILLE METRO COUNCIL, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO ALLOW ME TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY TO *OPPOSE* THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION WITH REGARD TO THE STRUCTURE LOCATED AT 609 BLANKENBAKER LANE.

MY NAME IS KEN HERRINGTON AND I AM A RESIDENT AND PAST PRESIDENT OF GROVE HILL, A SMALL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION CONSISTING OF FIVE HOUSES LOCATED *IMMEDIATELY* NEXT TO THE PROPERTY IN QUESTION ON BLANKENBAKER LANE. OUR SMALL INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION *IS NOT* A PART OF INDIAN HILLS NOR RIVERWOOD. WE BELONG TO METRO LOUISVILLE JEFFERSON COUNTY.

...I WORK IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY AND AM NOT AN ATTORNEY. MY COMMENTS ARE MY OWN, AND I AM NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY OTHER PARTY TO THIS PUBLIC HEARING.

FIRST, LET ME APPOLOGIZE UPFRONT IF MY COMMENTS APPEAR TO BE OFFENSIVE. THEY ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN PERSONALLY AS I RESPECT EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT TEN YEARS AGO, OUR SMALL GROVE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION WAS ALSO A VICTIM OF A LOCAL PRESERVATION GROUP THAT ATTEMPTED TO PREVENT, OBSTRUCT AND HARASS *OUR* DEVELOPMENT. WE LIKE TO THINK THAT WE ARE NOW A PRODUCTIVE PART OF THE GREATER LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY, AND I MIGHT ADD

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**THAT WE PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT TAX REVENUE TO THE COUNTY.**

**FOR THE RECORD, I AM A PASSIONATE HOBBYIST OF HISTORY. I CURRENTLY SERVE ON THE BOARD OF NEARBY *HISTORIC* LOCUST GROVE. I AM A PAST GOVERNOR OF THE SOCIETY OF COLONIAL WARS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY AND CURRENTLY SERVE AS THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR TO THE GENERAL SOCIETY IN BALTIMORE. I AM ALSO A MEMBER OF SEVERAL OTHER HISTORIC AND PATRIOTIC NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.**

**ADDITIONALLY,... I AM A 30 YEAR VETERAN OF THE US MARINE CORPS RESERVE WITH SERVICE THAT INCLUDES THE VIETNAM ERA, AND HAVE *ACTIVELY* PARTICIPATED IN THE GULF WAR AND THE COLD WAR.**

**MY PROPERTY IS 42 PACES FROM THE PROPERTY LINE OF 609 BLANKENBAKER LANE, AND I CAN SEE THE ABANDONED STONE HOUSE IN QUESTION FROM MY DRIVEWAY. ...PLEASE SEE MY EXHIBIT 1 THAT WAS TAKEN YESTERDAY FROM MY DRIVEWAY. ... AS YOU CAN SEE, IT IS AN UNLIT PROMINENT *SHADOWY BLIGHT* ON THE NEARBY HILL TOP!**

**I FIND IT INTERESTING TO READ THAT THIS VACANT STONE HOUSE IS BEING CALLED "HISTORIC!" ... FROM MY STUDY OF HISTORY AND HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE, THIS IS STRUCTURE IS NEITHER COLONIAL, FEDERALIST, ANTEBELLUM, NOR VICTORIAN. NO MILITARY HERO OR FAMOUS PERSON HAS EVER LIVED THERE NOR HAS VISITED THIS STONE HOUSE. IF THE INTENT WAS TO *PREVENT* THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROPERTY, THAT**

**STRATEGY HAS FAILED, IT'S TOO LATE ...LET'S DO NOT MAKE A SECOND MISTAKE BY PREVENTING THE DESTRUCTION OF THIS BLIGHTED STRUCTURE. IT SIMPLY MUST BE DEMOLISHED. FUTHERMORE, IN MY OPINION, TO CONTINUE TO DELAY, OBFUSCATE, HARASS, AND DELAY THE INEVETABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROPERTY IS FUTILE, AND EXPENSIVE TO ALL PARTIES.**

**HOWEVER, I WOULD ALSO RECOMMEND THAT A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS TO DETERMINE THAT THE PROPOSED NEW HOUSING IS APPROPRAITE AND COMMENSURATE WITH THE NEIGHBORING RESIDENCES. IF NECESSARY, THIS MIGHT MEAN A REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF PROPOSED UNITS, HOUSES OR LOTS.**

**MY WIFE AND I MOVED TO GROVE HILL OVER FIVE YEARS AGO, AND THIS STONE STRUCTURE HAD BEEN VACANT PRIOR TO OUR MOVE, AND IT HAS REMAINED VACANT. IN SPEAKING TO THE LOCALS WHO ARE MY AGE, ...AND I AM OLD, THEY KNOW THIS HOUSE, AND CALL IT ...THE "WITCHES HOUSE." THAT IS THE ONLY NAME THAT I HAVE EVER HEARD THIS VACANT HOUSE CALLED, THE WITCHES HOUSE! NOW, THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION SOMEHOW PROCLAIMS THIS VACANT STRUCTURE TO BE "HISTORIC" AND WANTS TO PRESERVE "THE WITCHES HOUSE" ....WHY? .....IT IS TOO LATE TO PREVENT THE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT!**

**...IN MY HUMBLE OPINION, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROPERTY WAS A TRAGIC MISTAKE. IT SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN APPROVED. THE STEEP TOPOGRAPHY JUST DOES NOT SUPPORT A DEVELOPMENT OF SEVERAL HOUSES *WITHOUT* SIGNIFICANTLY LOWERING THE**

**HILL TOP WHERE THE VACANT STONE WITCHES HOUSE NOW SITS.**

**WITH THE TOTAL REMOVAL OF ALL TREES AND VEGETATION, THIS PROPERTY NOW TRAGICALLY LOOKS LIKE A *MISSILE TESTING RANGE* TOPPED OFF WITH THE "WITCHES HOUSE," ...LIKE A CURSE! WHY SHOULD OUR SMALL COMMUNITY, THAT IS NEXT DOOR TO THIS PROPERTY, BE PUNISHED WITH THIS ABANDONED, AND BLIGHTED HOUSE SITTING ON THE HILLTOP HORIZON?**

**IN 2013, A VERY WEALTHY FRIEND OF MINE WAS INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING THIS STRUCTURE AS HIS RESIDENCE, AND I REFERRED HIM TO MR. TURNER. HE DID NOT BUY THIS PROPERTY, AND I LATER ASKED HIM WHY. HE SAID, HIS ARCHITECT AND PLANNER TOLD HIM THAT IT WOULD TAKE UP TO \$2 MILLION TO BRING THIS STONE HOUSE AND LANDSCAPING UP TO HIS LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE. WHILE MY FRIEND COULD HAVE WRITTEN A CHECK FOR THIS STONE HOUSE, HE HAD NO INTEREST IN THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD OF THIS MASSIVE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, AND ALSO CALLED IT... "A WASTE OF MONEY."**

**SO,... IF WE CAN SET THE BENCHMARK COST OF CALLING *THE WITCHES HOUSE* "HISTORIC" FOR \$2 MILLION, ...WHO IS GOING TO PAY FOR THIS TAX BURDEN? WE CAN'T USE *OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY*, WHICH SEEMS TO BE THE MANTRA FOR PRESERVATION GROUPS. IT IS SIMPLY NOT THERE.**

**...IF THE ALLEDGED "200 PEOPLE" WHO SIGNED THIS PETITION TO PREVENT DEMOLITION WERE ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE \$10,000 EACH TO REBUILD AND PRESERVE THIS HOUSE, HOW**

MANY WOULD HAVE ACTUALLY SIGNED? LOUISVILLE CAN'T EVEN AFFORD TO PAY FOR PARKING AT THE BIG FOUR BRIDGE, AND WE ALSO NOW HAVE THE LOUISVILLE BOTANICAL GARDENS FOR THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT.

OUR VERY SMALL GROVE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION IS THE CLOSEST, AND THE COMMUNITY *MOST* AFFECTED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT. THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION DOES NOT LIVE HERE AND DOES NOT HAVE TO SUFFER THIS VISUAL BLIGHT, NOR HAVE TO CALL VARMIT EXTERMINATORS LIKE MY NEIGHBOR WHO LIVES NEXT TO THIS PROPERTY HAS HAD TO DO. OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, HE HAS PAID TO REMOVE 14 RACCOONS AND POSSUMS ON HIS PROPERTY THAT HE BELIEVES CAME FROM THE "WITCHES HOUSE."

WHILE I CONSIDER MYSELF A STRONG SUPPORTER OF HISTORY,... AND ALSO THE *PRESERVATION* OF MONUMENTS, I DEEPLY RESPECT *TRUE* HISTORY. HOWEVER, I AM PUZZELLED BY THE PRONOUNCEMENT TO MAKE THE WITCHES HOUSE... "HISTORIC."

I PROPOSE THAT WE MAKE THIS VERY SIMPLE,... AND USE, WHAT I WOULD CALL, ....COMMON SENSE LAW.

LET'S FIX THIS DEVELOPMENT DISASTER NEXT DOOR THAT I CALL "A MISSLE TESTING RANGE," ...TEAR DOWN THE WITCHES HOUSE, LOWER THE HILL TOP SO THAT ACCEPTABLE NICE HOUSES CAN BE CONSTRUCTED COMMENSURATE WITH OUR COMMUNITY. I ALSO RECOMMEND AND PROPOSE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN BE REVIEWED TO DETERMINE

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**THE QUALITY AND STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENCES AND THAT THEY MEET THE STANDARDS OF OUR COMMUNITY.**

**WHY BURDEN OUR COMMUNITY WITH AN UNWORTHY HISTORICAL PROJECT THAT WILL NEVER BE INHABITED AND WILL ALWAYS NEED OPM THAT COULD BE USED ELSEWHERE AND IS BADLY NEEDED TO HELP FAMILIES...**

**AGAIN, I APPOLOGIZE IF I HAVE OFFENED ANYONE. ...IF THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS, I WILL EXCUSE MYSELF. ....THANK YOU.**