

★ Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

39 H

Date March 26, 2007

Communication from the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association.

Moved by _____ to receive and file.

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
HENSLEY				
KIERNAN				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
VLASSIS				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED		

CERTIFICATE

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Mayor

City Clerk



March 23, 2007

The Honorable Mayor of the City of Des Moines
and Members of the City Council
City of Des Moines
400 Robert D. Ray Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

By e-mail and U.S. mail

Dear Mayor Cownie and Members of the City Council:

I write on behalf of the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association ("BNA") in support of the request by Rice Development Partners, LLC ("RDP") to rezone property in the vicinity of 3001 Beaver Avenue, the site of the former Rice School, and the request of Joe's Square, LLC to rezone property at 4049 Fagen Drive, both of which are set for hearing on your March 26, 2007, agenda.

Since its founding in 1990, the BNA has recognized the importance of well-maintained homes, vibrant businesses, active places of worship, and vigorous schools to advancing our mission of promoting the common good and general welfare of our neighbors. Each of these facets is interdependent, and each must be flourishing for our neighborhood to thrive. For this reason, the BNA affirmatively supports neighborhood-sensitive development in Beaverdale. Our failure to do so would be contrary to our mission and the best interests of our neighborhood.

In line with its support of neighborhood-sensitive development, the BNA has actively sought to influence situations in which development might occur in Beaverdale. One such situation arose last year when we were formally notified of the decision by the Des Moines Independent School District to sell the property where the former Rice School was located. In response to this notice, the BNA joined with other neighborhood organizations to proactively seek involvement in the school district's decision-making. Our common goal was to ensure as much neighborhood input in the process as possible. When the school district later issued a request for proposals for the sale and redevelopment of the site, it also took the unprecedented step of forming a committee of neighborhood, city, and school district leaders to vet any proposals put forward.

The BNA has also actively sought to capture and convey our neighbors' comments as to any development that might occur in our neighborhood. This effort predates the school district's decision to sell the Rice School site, as the BNA and others have continually solicited neighborhood opinion in regard to development in the course of a revitalization effort that is now in its fifth year. Information gathered during this revitalization effort and any additional

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comments gathered by the BNA specific to development of the Rice School site were shared with the school district committee considering development proposals put before it through BNA representation on the committee. Taking these comments and other information under advisement, the committee recommended, and the school district selected, the proposal of Rice Development Partners for purchase and development of the Rice School site.

While the RDP proposal as currently presented may not be ideal to every Beaverdale resident, it is before you as the outcome of a lengthy process that provided numerous opportunities for neighborhood input and comment and thoughtful consideration by many individuals in regard to which of six proposals submitted to the school district presented the best option for Beaverdale. Moreover, this process will not end should you approve the RDP rezoning request, as the request contemplates further public input as development moves forward. The BNA intends to continue to be an active participant in this process, recognizing that some reservations remain in regard to aspects of the current RDP proposal.

Nevertheless, the question before you now is whether to approve the request by RDP to rezone the site of the former Rice School and the request of Joe's Square LLC to rezone the property at 4049 Fagen Drive so as to permit development of both sites to move forward. The BNA affirmatively supports both the RDP request and the Joe's Square, LLC request and asks that you do so as well. We believe your support of these requests would be fitting recognition of the lengthy process that has brought the RDP proposal before you, confirm your continued support of our neighborhood's ongoing revitalization efforts, and affirm that a thriving Beaverdale is integral to the City of Des Moines.

The BNA will, of course, continue to monitor issues in relation to the development of the Rice School site. If we can provide you with any additional information, or if there is any other way we can assist you, please contact me at 707-3844. Thank you for your attention to this matter, which is sure to have a substantial impact on our neighborhood as well as the city as a whole.

Sincerely,



Bill Miller
President, BNA

CC: Mr. Richard (Rick) Clark, City Manager
Mr. Richard (Rich) Clark, Rice Development Partners, LLC
Mr. Joseph Giudicessi, Joe's Square, LLC
BNA Board of Directors and Membership