

Public Comment: September 9, 2021 Board Meeting

LIVE Comment Registrants:

Name: Eric Cook
Board Item: Skinny Building

Name: Patrick Clark
Board Item: Skinny Building

Name: Jill Diskin
Board Item: Skinny Building

Name: Dean Bog
Board Item: Woods Village

Name: Pastor Lutual M. Love Sr.
Board Item: Woods Village

Name: Saundra Cole
Board Item: Woods Village

Name: Michael Wilson
Board Item: Woods Village

Written Comment:

Name: Joshua Butcher
Agenda Item: Skinny and Roberts Buildings

Comment: This building is one of the skinniest in the world, has it's own wikipedia article and many other articles written on it, and more importantly has an important history for our city -- I think the public deserves some input and options on this building before it's bought by PNC. Once PNC owns the property there's no telling what could happen, and it would be a shame to lose a landmark such as this.

Name: Hanna Diehl
Agenda Item: Skinny and Roberts Buildings

Comment: Please remove the sale of these buildings from your agenda until further research can be put into their historical significance for marginalized communities of Pittsburgh.

Name: Kayla King

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please retain the skinny building and designate it a historic marker for its place in Black Pittsburgh history.

Name: Julie Asciolla

Agenda Item: Skinny and Roberts Buildings

Comment: The Skinny Building is a historic landmark that makes Pittsburgh unique. PNC does not have a good track record of preserving historic structures. They demolish and build non-descript buildings that add nothing to the urban fabric.

Please do not sell the Skinny Building to PNC in order to preserve it for future generations.

Name: Eve Bender

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove the Skinny Building from the URA agenda to leave time to consider options in favor of preserving it. It must NOT be sold to a developer!

Name: Elizabeth Schongar

Agenda Item: Skinny and Roberts Buildings

Comment: The Skinny Bldg & Roberts Bldg are quirky landmarks in this city. And now we know they are a civil rights landmark as the site of the first Black restaurant downtown. Please remove the vote about these buildings from the agenda while ways to ensure that we preserve our history are explored.

Name: Melissa McSwingan

Agenda Item: Skinny and Roberts Buildings

Comment: Hello, I am contacting you regarding the sale of the Skinny Building & Roberts Building to PNC. Before the URA enters into a binding agreement with PNC, I would like to see time given to allowing the public to learn more about the situation and to give time for consideration of options. Due to disinvestment and other factors over the years, our city has often been too quick to give priority to developers and big business over people & historic places. We've lost so much already that time should be given to letting the public know what is happening. Also, if a sale happens, it should be with a local historic designation of the Skinny & Roberts Building - not simply word from the prospective buyer that they will save something or the facade. PNC demolished an entire city block with historic buildings just across the street! If we keep going at this rate, we will have wiped out all connections to Pittsburgh's past and those that have come before us! Let's do business with people, history, and environmental/social concerns in mind. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Kimberly McShea

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove the sale of the Skinny Building from the agenda. As an important historic building, more time is needed to research options for the future of the location.

Name: Ms. Jude Rutkowski
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please do not sell the skinny building this needs to be a historic landmark

Name: John Schalcosky
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove 241 Forbes Ave aka the "Skinny Building" off of the agenda. This historic structure needs time to be reviewed.

Name: Billy
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove the skinny building from the sale agenda. That building should be preserved as the landmark it is.

Name: Alexander Dvorshock
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please do not sell this building, and/or its neighbor until it can be fully assessed and weighed that the building is on important insignificance to Civil Rights in the United States. These things can take time and although development is on all our our minds, it would be unfair to the community and our history to ignore the opportunity and responsibility to preserve this building

Name: Terry Lee
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: It seems that this building holds an important place in the cultural history of Pittsburgh, serving as an Vital place in our battle for equality and civil rights. This property should be a landmark, rather than another site for development. Let's honor our history, rather than selling it to the highest bidder.

Name: Bonnie Culbertson
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Having lived in Pittsburgh for almost my entire life, I find it mind-blowing that I have only just recently learned about the history of the Skinny Building in Downtown Pittsburgh. With it's fascinating past and significance to the African American roots of our city, it would be a tragedy to lose a place that holds so much meaning to such a large population of our city. I'm urging the URA to remove the future sale of the Skinny Building from the agenda next week until further options regarding the preservation of the building can be explored.

Name: Arif Volkan Vural
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please protect one of the landmarks of the downtown Pittsburgh. This building, with all its oddity, is one of a kind both in terms of its size and its role in Civil Rights movement.

Name: Michael Ursiny
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please save the Skinny Building in downtown Pittsburgh. Enough of our history and heritage has been lost in the name of Redevelopment.

Name: Joshua Pruss
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Growing up in Pittsburgh I always loved architecture and even today I find myself gazing at the buildings finding new bits and pieces. Today is in discussion a unique building with significant history in our little city that I believe will benefit the public at large. The history of civil rights in this country is a rough and treacherous road spritzed with a fresh coat of paint every now and then to say things are fine. I firmly believe that to begin a new path is to create a common memory within the community to strengthen its roots of humanity and love. A common memory that occurred in this building where people of all colors could eat and enjoy themselves despite the backlash from adjacent business. Preserving the perseverance of the human soul is what we need to solidify a future where we all have a common memory of togetherness that we can look forward to - and not one where we look back on what we could've done in hindsight.

Name: Geraldine McGill
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: I implore everyone involved to Not sell the Skinny Building to PNC or any other greedy, shortsighted entity! This building has a History, and as such, needs to be preserved, and remembered. Thank you.

Name: Kathleen Obarski
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: I've lived in many states and visited many cities. The story is always the same. Buildings which were solidly built, have historic significance, are architecturally interesting, or have meaning to the population are destroyed and replaced by nondescript cookie-cutter boxes or typical suburban establishments. Often the populace doesn't know what's going on because deals are made "behind closed doors" or the plans are divulged too late for interested parties to make a difference. The "Skinny Building" fits the bill for an historic, culturally significant, architecturally different Pittsburgh "wonder." Every effort should be made to preserve it and have it recognized by a local historic society.

Name: Renee Dolney
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please ensure that the skinny building is protected! Do not pass it along to new ownership! If you do not protect Pittsburgh's heritage, who will?

Name: Johnny M Cutlip
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: The "Skinny Building" is a landmark for civil rights as one of the first buildings downtown to house a restaurant run by a Black American to serve black clientele during segregation era America. The building needs to be preserved, not sold off. It should be an official landmark.

Name: Joanne Scoulos
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: I am currently in Athens Greece. I am surrounded by Athens history . I'm surrounded by the beautiful and remarkable buildings that were built by human beings. With this thought in mind I'm horrified at with the lack of interest in the history of Pittsburgh. We should be preserving Pittsburgh history and not bowing down to the dollar sign of developers.

The skinny building in downtown should remain preserved forever. I am proud of Pittsburgh's past, aren't you? I worry about Pittsburgh's future you should be to.

Name: Jenna Chung
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: The skinny building bears great significance to the history of Pittsburgh. By retaining this holding, you place your company in a class that looks beyond the dollars and sees the value of its investments. I urge you to maintain ownership and seek memorialization as a historical landmark to preserve our history, and leave your mark on our community before considering sale. The community stands behind you and we'll help!

Name: Andrew MacLeod
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove this building's fate from the agenda. Allow more time for an interested party to preserve this historical relic instead of bulldozing it for more banking offices

Name: Jamie Spanik
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please save the skinny building to preserve Pittsburgh's cultural history. Now more than ever, we need to preserve historic black businesses. It's our history.

Name: Christine Martinsky
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please save the Skinny Bldg. it's rich with history and needs to be protected and known to people, not sold and done away with.

Name: Perry Dougherty
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: I'm writing in concern of the Skinny Building being considered for sale on the agenda. Please remove this option from the agenda. It would be great to preserve this historical and unique building to keep the history alive and maintain the character of the city for visitors to enjoy.

Name: Karen McNeal
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please preserve history by selling the Skinny Bldg. keep Pittsburgh's history alive not dead buy selling this historic bldg.

Name: Dawn Fels
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: One of the things I loved about Pittsburgh was the preservation and use of older buildings downtown and across the city. Look at other big cities - like St. Louis - and you'll see how wiping those out removes the history and spirit of the place. St. Louis is now dead. Please preserve the Skinny Building to safeguard the city's history and vibrant past.

Name: Rachel Magliochette
Agenda Item: Skinny and Roberts Buildings

Comment: The skinny building attached to the Roberts building must be protected. This is an important piece of Pittsburgh History that must be preserved. Too many buildings have been demolished or refurbished beyond recognition and we are losing our character, beauty and history to development. This skinny building must be a saved and protected piece of architecture.

Name: Lori Allison
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove the Skinny Building from the agenda. This building has historical significance for the city and for the black community. Once a building is gone, nothing can be done to preserve it. Please remove it from the agenda in order to allow more time to thoughtfully decide it's future. Thank you.

Name: Andrew Moore
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove the sale of Downtown's Skinny Building from your agenda until other options can be explored that ensure the preservation of the building's history and the continued preservation of this entire historic city block. Thank you.

Name: Alex Hindman
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove the discussion of the Skinny Building from your board agenda to allow time to consider all the options to preserve it. As our nation seeks racial justice, the ability to preserve this building that remains a critical part of Pittsburgh's architectural and racial history is essential. I would urge URA to do the right thing and make sure this building remains part of the city.

Name: Amy Marie Makin
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove this from the agenda, and look into making it a landmark.

Name: Andy Collins
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Hello, I would like the sale of the downtown Skinny Bldg to be removed from the URA agenda until the proper due diligence has been performed to find a buyer that will rightly preserve this historic building. It's history as the host for the first restaurant in downtown Pittsburgh where African Americans could sit down for a meal is significant, and the fate of the building should not be in the hands of a developer who does not have a proper vision for this site. I ask that the URA hold off on its sale until a preservation conscious developer is found. Thank you!

Name: Victoria Glover
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Remove the zkinny building from the agenda

Name: Matthew Gromala
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: How about you LEAVE historic buildings alone. The Skinny building is a landmark of the Civil Rights Era, and if it is touched by development there WILL be civil and legal consequences to the board and developers, that is a promise.

Name: Chris Weber

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Quirky is a good thing. Please preserve the "Skinny" building downtown for future appreciation and use. Do not let this wonderful example of architectural character to be torn down. Thank you.

Name: Gloria Forouzan

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please keep the possible sale of the Skinny Bldg off of the URA's agenda. I have been researching its history and uncovered its little known role in our City's African American & Jewish history. This building is more than a fascinating piece of architecture- it is an important part of story. Too little is known about its role & impact. We have already lost too much of Pittsburgh's soul to the wrecking ball. Regardless of whether the developer is PNC or xyz, we've too often seen how their promises to preserve our treasured places are completely disregarded before the ok dries on the sales agreement. I can provide an article from the 1920s Pgh Courier that confirms its historic role. Than you.

Name: Lina Insana

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please table this item in the interest of allowing more time for public commentary and debate on the this historically important structure.

Name: Christine R Corbett

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please save this historic building that is an important part of this city's journey toward racial equality.

Name: Albert Kovacic

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: The Skinny Building has a rich history: long ago in civil rights; most recently in public art. Being the skinniest commercial building in the U.S., it should be a historic landmark. I personally applied for a Bloomberg Philanthropy grant to install solar panels and battery storage equipment to illuminate an art installation, renewably, but was not awarded the grant. The building's Forbes Ave facade faces due South and would be an ideal candidate for a demonstration project for a solar powered art gallery [even though the building is so skinny ,... how skinny is it? you ask... less than 6' wide], and the art must be viewed from the street. This fact alone makes the concept very unique.

Please take the pending sale of the property off the agenda until this matter can be thoroughly vetted. The art community has much to offer in this discussion. The sustainability community could also provide input. But the current plans proposed by PNC come up short. PNC is a good company and has made many strides in promoting sustainability. They can do much better in this instance. Thank you for allowing me to submit this feedback.

Name: Summer Arrigo-Nelson

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: I am writing to implore board members to vote against the sale of the Skinny Building Downtown. That building needs to be preserved as a historical treasure and American heritage site. The first restaurant that catered to Black people in the Downtown area AND such an atypical architectural style for the region !?! It is a precious bit of Pittsburgh history that should be invested in. The URA retaining ownership is the only way to guarantee that it is invested in and not demolished. I know it will take a grant campaign to save the building, but we can do it!

Name: Christine Brill

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: To Whom it Concerns,

The Skinny Building is a Pittsburgh treasure that is more than its historic facade. It's a freestanding building and the uniqueness is intrinsically tied to the interior floor plan / layout.

The URA should hit the pause button and issue a Request for Proposals to solicit alternative reuse plans for the skinny building. I'll get back to this below.

I just learned that the skinny building was once one of the only restaurants open to black Pittsburghers. While segregation is horrible, we should retain this building as a public resource that can be used and experienced as part of the contemporary life of Pittsburgh residents. And now I'll segue...

I was fortunate to work with other artists to install an exhibit in the skinny building many years ago. I climbed the narrow stairs, winched buckets filled with plants up the rear alley, and set up posted in the window. We turned the skinny building into a greenhouse for a few weeks. We were some of many "artists" who worked with curator/organizer Al Kovacik to keep a steady stream of content up in the windows above Forbes Avenue and Wood Street.

The skinny building was important in the early 2000's when the Market Square area was being threatened - wholesale - by a wrecking ball. The skinny building was a place where we could make our dissent visible. We argued that there was culture worth preserving in downtown Pittsburgh and that the very structure and architecture of the area should not be replaced by a generic mall with old building facades tacked onto it. The skinny building was and is a 3D, occupy-able billboard that allowed people who loved and valued the historic Wood Street and Market Street district to express themselves and inject something new and unexpected into the daily lives of people walking by.

The URA should NOT sell the skinny building to PNC because they will reduce it to a facade without distinct programming and occupancy. The skinny building should be allowed to continue its existence as a free-standing building, with art or some other creative reuse strategy. Perhaps it should be given to a non-profit organization. In any case, PNC does not view the skinny building as anything more than real estate that it can glom onto the adjacent building. The skinny building deserves more than that.

The URA should issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit reuse plans for the skinny building - ASAP - and the building should NOT be transacted to PNC at this time. Let's give the skinny building a chance continue playing a meaningful role in culture-production in Pittsburgh. Please consider better possible futures for the unique structure!

Sincerely,

Christine Brill

Name: Elizabeth Richards

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: It would be a poor decision to sell the Skinny Building to PNC and further erode Pittsburgh's history and architecture. It deserves to be preserved and recognized for its place in the Civil Rights movement.

Name: Jill Martinsky
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please remove discussion on the Skinny bldg to allow time to review options. It is a important part of the city of Pgh's past.

Name: Sean Wolfgang
Agenda Item: Skinny and Roberts Buildings

Comment: To the esteemed members of the Board,
I write you to express concern for the future of an important historic building, the "Skinny Building" Downtown and the adjacent Roberts Building. I understand that right now both properties are being considered for sale to PNC. Regardless of owner I strongly recommend that any transfer should come with conditions that mandate the buildings retain their architectural character and historic value, inside and outside. The Skinny Building in particular has historical value to it as the site of the Lincoln Restaurant, an important part of our city's history. Additionally the unique architectural design has immense aesthetic value.
Please consider the historical and aesthetic value of this building in deciding whether to sell the property, and if so, what conditions are imposed on the new owner to ensure that these public goods are protected for future generations.
Regards,
Sean Wolfgang

Name: James McFarlane
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: The "Skinny Building" in Pittsburgh does have historical value. I only found out about this a short time ago and am not prepared to reply in writing but can if given time. Plea Thank You

Name: Lindsay Patross
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: This building is incredibly unique, not just in Pittsburgh but it is one of the skinniest buildings in the country. The URA should work with the community to keep this building as part of the landscape of Downtown Pittsburgh. There is an abundance of office space, but a limited number of historic and unique buildings that make Downtown Pittsburgh and exciting place to visit.

Name: Janet Lunde
Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: The Skinny Building is a delight that is part of Pittsburgh's wonderful architectural history.

Name: Melissa DeCecco

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: I strongly encourage you to hold off on the sale of the Skinny Building in Downtown Pittsburgh to a developer. This building holds an important place in the city's Civil Right's Movement and should be honored for that. Too much of downtown's history is being destroyed unless it can be leveraged for profit.

Name: Thomas Provost

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: It would be a travesty if the Skinny Building faced the wrecking ball. While architectural heritage is a central aspect of cultural identity, it is also critical to world-building, dreaming, and speculation about how we each orient ourselves in the world. The Skinny Building offers something no contemporary work could even approach — a proportion in concert with pedestrian comportment, at the scale of the human body, and from a time when sidewalk culture dominated over vehicular culture. There are surely many interested parties who would take care of this small, skinny gem of a building, including myself.

Name: Karen Stark

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please don't get rid of another building that makes Pittsburgh unique. Taking away the unique makes the city just like too many others. Be different. Stand up for history in this city.

Name: Noreen Rachuba

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: Please save the Skinny Building! It is a Pittsburgh treasure!

Name: Krish Pandya

Agenda Item: Woods Village Project – Hazelwood

Comment:

Name: Kristina DiPietro

Agenda Item: Woods Village Project – Hazelwood

Comment: I am a life long resident of the Hazelwood community, 74+years. My husband and I own a home on Gladstone St. I have been an advocate & greater Hazelwood community activist for over 50 years. My home is located in the Hazelwood Greenway.

I have several concerns regarding the proposed Woods Village project. I urge the Board of the URA do not move this proposal forward. It would be devastating to my community.

First and foremost, due to the Covid virus pandemic, in person community meetings have not been able to occur which does not give the greater Hazelwood community at large an opportunity to have intense discussion about the Woods Village proposal. Not everyone in the community has access to Zoom meetings. The Zoom meetings are a way to keep some of us informed however it does not give the greater community, individual residents, an opportunity to be heard. Having as many of the residents as possible to hear, learn and comment on a proposed development which will remove vital green space is imperative.

Secondly, where the current site of the Woods Village Housing project is proposed would destroy & devastate the green space which is the threshold of the invaluable Greenway in our community. Climate change is already here! Removal of mature trees and other oxygen producing green infrastructure sets a precedence for future development. Reflect on the recent rainstorms and the havoc they caused. This past spring & summer we have had many storms and high winds. The natural God given green infrastructure assisted in keeping some areas safe. Where this development is proposed would be a landslide ready to happen for the streets above, Sylvan Avenue (its called Sylvan for a reason), Home Rule and Gladstone St. There are many experts in the field of Urban Agriculture to consult. Follow the science.

Thirdly, Monongahela St where the Woods Village Housing project is proposed is a narrow street. On a recent drive, two cars could not pass each other on the roadway. The steep terrain of Tulleymet does not lend to easy access either. Emergency vehicles would have an extremely difficult time navigating the street. With the Woods House Pub causing additional parking issues already for current residents, adding more housing & commercial space is a lack of respect to those long time residents. During construction, it would be a nightmare.

Fourth, The Woods Village proposal indicates 62 units of mixed bedroom size would create a serve population density problem. Even with 40 units, the number of persons living in the units would cause many issues that go along with multifamily housing, increased parking, increased litter and potential increase in noise. Some have said, "there was multifamily housing there is the past". Yes, there was back in the 50's, 60's & 70's about 10 row houses were on the site with a large set back from the street & as I recall, Chance Way was behind go give space between the row houses and the hillside. Hopefully we are not planning to return to the congested housing of the past.

Lastly, at a recent Zoom community meeting, Mr. Pandya spoke a little about his proposal. He stated he was not going to have government affordable housing units. He clarified he would have affordable units but there would not be any government involvement. I retired from the state agency which provides low income housing tax credits for housing developments. Each LIHTC project has a deed restriction about the term & compliance of the affordable units. How is Mr. Pandya planning on implementing his own affordability to some of the units? It just doesn't sound like a good plan. There is no guarantee for long term affordability or compliance monitoring.

The greater Hazelwood community has much vacant land which could be used for multifamily development that does not have the above issues. The block between Tulleyment & Minden Its along Second Ave maybe an alternative after much vetting for the Woods Village Housing project. Unfortunately, Oak Moss Consulting & Krish Pandya are only interested in city of Pittsburgh and URA parcels in Hazelwood.

I strongly URGE the Board of the URA NOT TO MOVE FORWARD with the Woods Village proposal. This proposal does not meet the standards as indicated in the Greater Hazelwood Community Plan, OUR HANDS-OUR PLAN. Nor the City of Pittsburgh's adopted Climate Action Plan. Let's follow the science and the plan my neighbors and I worked so diligently to produce and get adopted by the City of Pittsburgh.

Please consider all I have presented as you make a decision that will have a great impact on my community of Hazelwood. CONSIDER THE LARGER VILLAGE OF HAZELWOOD.

Thank you.

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: I urge you to take the Skinny Building's fate off the agenda and postpone any sale of it. Not many people realize its niche in the history of civil rights in the city, being the site of one the few restaurants available for black folks to eat at downtown in the 1920's and 30's. It deserves respect and has earned its place in the city.

Name: Bridget Seery

Agenda Item: Skinny Building

Comment: The skinny building is a historic site. Allowing development to alter the building will cause Pittsburgh to lose a piece of black history.

Name: Valerie Morgan

Agenda Item: Woods Village

Comment: I would just like to say that this land should stay forested rather than be developed. It is so much more beneficial to keep our trees and green space. There are plenty of blighted properties that could be refurbished instead.

Name: Cynthia Crabb

Agenda Item: Woods Village

Comment: Development of a wooded area of Hazelwood should not be approved - there are plenty of residential neighborhood spots that are not wooded that would be a better areas for housing investment. Please I prioritize our community, existing neighborhoods, and our wooded areas, rather than the greed of a developer.

Name: Felicity A. Williams, Esq.

Agenda Item: Amani Christian Community Development Corporation and Fifth and Dinwiddie

Comment: I want to thank and acknowledge the URA for not taking action related to these Hill District projects (Fifth and Dinwiddie and Amani Christian Community Development Corporation) until they had completed the Development Review Panel ("DRP"), the Hill District's unified and comprehensive community review process that gives every Hill District resident a voice in the redevelopment of their neighborhood.

The DRP is a partnership with six (6) Hill District Community Based Organizations: Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC), Hill District Education Council (HDEC), Hill District Ministers Alliance (HDMA), Uptown Partners, Hill District Consensus Group (HDCG) and the Center that Cares that streamlines community level review while assuring transparency and sufficient community feedback. The goal is not to stop development, but rather to facilitate development in alignment with the Greater Hill District Master Plan (GHDMP) by establishing a working mutual relationship between developers and the community. This process is designed to enhance a project, add value to it, create partnerships, find solutions, and build community consensus and support.

Thank you for your improved collaboration in this instance.

Name: Richard Vargo

Agenda Item: Woods Village

Comment: The wooded area near Monongahela St that is proposed to be turned into a housing development should NOT happen. This area needs to be added to the Hazelwood Greenway. We don't want Hazelwood to be any farther deforested. People need easy access to green/forested areas for relaxation and recreation. Such spaces are already limited in the city and not everyone in Hazelwood has access to transportation to travel out of the city. There is plenty of open space down near Mill 19. Leave the wooded areas for recreation! Thank you.

Name: Jason Gilmore

Agenda Item: Woods Village

Comment: As a Hazelwood resident, I urge the committee to move forward with formalizing green space protections for existing forests along Monongahela and Chance Way. There are plenty of empty lots that can be developed into housing or retail without removing the forest space that the city has pledged to keep. As we fight climate change, there is no better strategy than forest proliferation. Economically, establishing long term green corridors will make Hazelwood a more attractive place to live and draw people and their money from across the city. Environmentally, these forests fight climate change and provide sustainable habitat for dwindling wildlife populations. Hazelwood is uniquely situated between Pittsburgh's largest parks and greenspace, with Frick Park, Schenley Park and the Hays Woods surrounding our neighborhood. With the green infrastructure of the Hazelwood Green site and the planned development of a riverfront park, this neighborhood will benefit most from its green connections to these outstanding places. Preserving forests such as this, with its important strategic location and connection points, will be essential in this process. With plenty of available space, housing and business development has a big place in our neighborhood - it just shouldn't come at the expense of our forests. Thank you.

Name: Chie Tomgami

Agenda Item: Woods Village

Comment: As a member of the Hazelwood community, I am writing to express my opposition to the sale of publicly-owned property in Hazelwood to Oak Moss Consulting LLC. for the construction of the "Woods Village." I believe first and foremost, that this project will ultimately result in gentrification that will displace current residents. The proposal, as outlined in the meeting minutes, shows that there is little commitment to the creation of affordable housing as most units slated to be built will be "market rate." Additionally, the project will destroy local forests, which is extremely detrimental to the local ecosystem and the welfare of the neighborhood. Instead of selling off public property to wealthy developers, we should cherish and tend this woodland, perhaps creating an educational food forest that would benefit local residents. Forests are invaluable resources, purifying the air, and providing habitat for wild animals. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and are one of our greatest allies in the fight against climate change. And yet, every year Pittsburgh experiences a NET LOSS in tree cover according to the local organization Tree Pittsburgh. Please stand up for both the residents of Hazelwood and the natural world, by voting NO on the proposal to sell this precious land to investors trying to make a quick buck.

Name: Stephanie Vargo

Agenda Item: Woods Village

Comment: As a lifelong Hazelwood resident, I am disappointed and shocked at the extremely short notice given to comment on such an important issue.

The area on Monongahela Street was set aside to be added to a future greenway. Retaining green spaces is vital to city neighborhoods. There is plenty of space marked for housing as part of the Hazelwood Green development right down the hill. The publicly owned land on Monongahela Street should be set aside for the original planned use as part of a greenway.

I am against the sale of this land to a developer for housing. Green spaces in an urban environment are rare and precious. Please protect the few that we have!

Name: Christina Joy Neumann

Agenda Item: Woods Village

Comment: Due to the potential unnecessary interruptions to the wildlife corridor in the Hazelwood Greenway created by the proposed Woods Village Project, as a naturalist, I highly recommend other sites in the neighborhood be considered for this project that are much less disruptive to the urban forest.

Name: Theresa Nagy

Agenda Item: Woods Village

I am writing on behalf of Sylvia and Randy Nagy who live at 205 Tullymet St and will be directly effected by the development. They could not be on the call for live commenting but wanted to make sure their voices were heard.

They are NOT in support of proposed development of Woods Village. They feel that the space should be kept as green for the neighborhood and wildlife to enjoy, we need the trees to help balance pollution from the traffic in the area as well. The noise disruption and added traffic on such a narrow street will be more headaches for the locals. They have enough issues with the pub business on weekends with parking and such. As far as they know there hasn't been any land study done to show if they start digging what type off run off from the hill and issues the surrounding homes are going to have from the land movement. They have taken all their concerns to councilman O'Connor for him to give the political run around and basically ignore them.

They have lived in this house for 40+ yrs and understand that changes are happening in Hazelwood but do not feel this should be one. Thank you.

Name: Tiffany Taulton

Agenda Item: Woods Village

Dear Board,

My name is Tiffany Taulton and I am a resident of Hazelwood. I strongly urge you to deny the request by Oak Moss Consultants to enter into an exclusive agreement for the future sale of the forested area on Monongahela Street so that they may build a mixed-income and mixed-use housing development. While it is true that Hazelwood is in need of some newer housing stock, it would cause irreparable harm to the community to build a housing development in this location.

Firstly, this housing development is planned for a small street that does not actually have space for two cars to pass each other going in both directions. Neighbors on the street are already complaining about drivers speeding down the street to avoid traffic on Second Avenue and the congestion caused when the pub—with its very small parking lot—is opened. The increased parking on the street when the Woods House Pub is open make it difficult for neighboring residents to park in front of their own homes and to back out of their driveways. Adding 60+ units of housing with families that may have more than one car—and will definitely have friends with cars that visit them—will make traffic in the area a nightmare!

Moreover, having that level of density will be dangerous as it will be extremely difficult for fire trucks and ambulances to access the area in the event of an emergency.

Secondly, construction on the hillside is likely to disturb the structure of the hill and make the area more prone to landslides in the future as Pittsburgh experiences more frequent and heavier rainstorms. Considering all the storms we have had recently, one has to ask how the construction on this steep hill will proceed during a rainstorm and how it will impact the houses on the other side of the street—some of which are already experiencing basement flooding?

Thirdly, removing trees on the hill will cause the temperature of the entire area to rise. As climate change leads to hotter and drier summers, this will further burden low-income residents in the community that are already paying a higher percentage of their income to cool their homes. And for those that can't afford the cost of more air conditioning, the increased heat could be lethal.

Finally, this proposed development neither serves the current community nor the future community of Hazelwood. The Woods House Pub is a destination restaurant that people travel to visit. It doesn't need a housing development built around it in order to secure customers. The development would not be affordable to the majority of people currently living in Hazelwood as the income here is largely below 30% of AML. New residents that move to the community, wealthier future residents, are enticed to live here because of our large greenway. They see an opportunity to live near a new Schenley or Frick Park.

Quality parks are great ways to increase tax revenue, diversify a community, and improve climate resilience. Selling this land to the Oak Moss Consultants would endanger the health, beauty, identity and future economy of Hazelwood. Thank you.

Name: Matt Peters

Agenda Item: Woods Village

To the Board of the URA, an open letter for the public record,

My name is Matt Peters, and I am a resident of Hazelwood since 2010 when I bought my small house with a big yard, just what I was looking for! It is a joy to live here, both for the people I've met and befriended and for what initially attracted me, the abundant forests that give our neighborhood such a vital part of its soul and character.

In my time here I have been an active participant in the civic life of my newfound community, joining in the neighborhood Planning process (we published Our Hands, Our Plan and you can find it on file with the city's Planning Commission), bringing my experience and perspective to the Sustainability committees and Green Infrastructure discussions, and learning about city-living issues like transportation, housing, and other considerations of city life from attending the other sessions and listening to my new neighbors.

During these years I have also been active with our neighborhood's Urban Agriculture Team, serving in a volunteer leadership role since its inception and for these last four years employed part-time by the Hazelwood Initiative to manage the community garden interests they own, mainly the former YMCA. My letter is written not with that hat however, but wearing the hat of my other part-time job, Administrative Coordinator for Heartwood, "People helping people protect the places they love".

Heartwood is a network of grassroots forest activists throughout the eastern United States, the eastern hardwood heartland forests that once stretched unbroken from the Atlantic seaboard to the Mississippi River valley. From the Ozarks to the Great Lakes, up into New England and the Canadian shield, a squirrel could roam the continent and never touch the ground, for the canopy forest that supported an assortment of indigenous nations whose population number into the inestimable hundreds of thousands. These ancient forests were consumed within a century or two after the arrival of European colonizers, by the charcoal and tannery industries that built the early Pennsylvania economy. Since about the end of World War II, these forests have been recovering, with national forests expanded and public lands management guided by the ecological sensibilities of the 1970s. Heartwood has focused on public lands management since our founding in 1990, and by virtue of my involvement since I was a student at the University of Pittsburgh in 1992 I have become more than casually familiar with the intimate details of the forest ecology of this Appalachian region.

I am writing today to tell you that further consideration of the Woods Village housing proposal on the site proposed, would be irreparably devastating to our neighborhood's Green Infrastructure and to the City Of Pittsburgh's forest ecology integrity as a whole. This patch of forest is an essential part of a connecting corridor, a bio-highway if you will, that links the habitat core of Schenley Park (such as it is) to the core forests of Hazelwood's officially designated Greenway, the hill at the top of Elizabeth Street on the other side of Hazelwood Avenue (currently receiving attention from teams of Goats and other active forest restoration initiatives!). This connecting corridor consists of the forests

along Sylvan Avenue up to Gladstone Avenue, from behind the Gladstone school all the way to Greenfield Avenue a bit under a mile away as the hiker trods, and these forests have been the subject of much attention over the controversial Mon-Oakland Connector proposal, Phase 2 of which would seek to re-open the decommissioned section from Home Rule Street to Greenfield Avenue for driverless automated shuttles, a privately-owned competitor to our city's public transportation system. I believe there are ways to provide for our neighborhood's need for housing stock in this ecologically sensitive area without losing the broad range of ecological services that these young and recovering forests provide, to Pittsburgh's human as well as nonhuman wildlife residents. The Woods Village proposal as presented is not one of these ways.

The particular patch of forest targeted in the Oak Moss proposal can be generally described as a stand of nearly pure Black Locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia*. This is a native species, common in Pennsylvania's early successional or pioneer stage forests, along with black cherry, red maple, and alas far too many invasive non-native species. Remarkably, this site is relatively clear of canopy invasives like Norway Maple, the common Mulberry, or *Ailanthus*. The understory is a mix that includes Japanese Knotweed and Mugwort on one side, and the half towards Berwick street is a bit more diverse with more native plants present, and some interesting trees recruiting beyond the seedling/sapling level. In short, these forests are in pretty good shape, considering what they've been through.

In our community discussions on this topic I have often heard the counterargument presented, "but it was houses 50 years ago". Attached is a photo of a Pittsburgh hillside from the time when there were houses. This is from the History Center's archives, early 1900s, almost exactly one hundred years ago. We can do better today. We have environmental laws (and forest management guidelines) that say, don't cut trees on steep slopes, because you'll get flooding and landslides. Lightweight, prefabricated modular houses are not suited to a hillside on the move that has been recently denuded of its trees, and looking to soon suffer further such indignation.

We also have the City's recently adopted Climate Action Plan, which states unequivocally the need to "HALT the loss of forest canopy to development" and that is exactly what is happening here. It should be clear by now beyond a doubt, between the wildfires out West and the recent flooding of the New York City subway system, that climate change is here, it's just getting started, it's going to be a lot worse a lot faster than originally anticipated, and it's going to cause a lot of suffering.

It is also clear beyond doubt that forests offer our best mechanism for mitigating and surviving these changes. I refer you to the most recent report issued from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC. Included herein by reference is the full report, not just the summary.

This patch of forest is immediately adjacent to the officially designated Greenway, but on the City's online map the site is marked with an orange polygon that indicates, "Held for Greenway", an intermediate category where it is being considered for inclusion in the greenway system. I suggest to this board that the City's resources may have other priorities in the budget in the 40 years or so since the Greenway system was created, and that not a lot of effort and energy has been spent on making sure that our city's forest inventory matches on paper what we have on the ground. Since the Greenway system was originally established in the 1980s, the gradual decline of Hazelwood in the wake of the departure of the steel industry has afforded this forest resource a chance to invest the time to begin developing a viable structure that cleans the air, holds up the slope, absorbs stormwater, and provides habitat for songbirds. I will spare you the links to the scientific studies and peer-reviewed journal publications that show the link between songbird abundance and real estate housing prices; suffice to say it is amazing what one can find with the online tool Google Scholar.

In this letter I hope I am successful in introducing the complexities and subtleties of the ecological arguments for protecting these young forests and allowing them to mature into part of our city's Green Infrastructure. I would like to briefly acknowledge the housing side of these considerations, and start off by saying that I recognize the need to begin replenishing Hazelwood's housing stock. I say to you, let's start with our truly vacant lots, and save our forests for last! That is the prudent and truly "conservative" thing to do. Housing is happening, we are going to build 62 units and more in the Gladstone building. There are empty lots throughout the neighborhood that need attention, and it is the right and proper role of a functioning government grounded in a sane set of ethics to help a community-minded developer who is doing his best to do things right to overcome the challenges prevented by a dysfunctional housing and real estate market. I hope the URA is able to see beyond the false dilemma cartoonified in the worn-out "jobs vs. the environment" blather and recognize that we can have our forests and our housing, too.

I would also like the URA to understand that this proposal is not consistent with our officially adopted Neighborhood Plan. "Our Hands, Our Plan" states that we want our business district to be focused on main street, and we want our residential areas to be quiet and peaceful. To suggest that a "satellite" strip of rental retail space a mere two blocks away is in any way consistent with the goals of the Plan is not a tenable argument. The goal of the proposal being to draw traffic up to the retail space is directly counter to the goals of creating a quiet residential space. Our Neighborhood

Plan also has a whole chapter on how we want to improve and expand our forests and Green Infrastructure, which is consistent with the goals set forth in the aforementioned Climate Action Plan.

And a final point, although beyond the scope of the discussion before us here, I say that the URA can best support the revitalization of our neighborhood, and the expansion of all the housing we could ever possibly need, affordable and otherwise, by helping uproot the automated vehicle laboratory from our bottomland field. The irony that this stalled acreage of a development touted as "sustainable" would be driving the destruction of forests must be included in the official record before I can conclude this letter in good conscience.

Thank you for including my comments in your deliberations on this matter.

Forever wild,

matt peters

GH-CARED

Greater Hazelwood Coalition Against Racial and Ethnic Disparities

1of2

August 20, 2021

Attn: Mr. Nick Fedorek, Assistant Director of Policy Development, URA

CC: Krish Pandya, Oak Moss Associates and Councilman Corey O'Connor, District 5

Reference: Oak Moss Associates – Woods Village Project – Hazelwood – Letter of Support

Dear Mr. Fedorek,

Grand Rising.

The Coalition Against Racial and Ethnic Disparities Consists of community-based organizations, businesses, churches, and residents located in the Greater Hazelwood community and additional organizations and residents situated in the 15207-zip code area. It was founded by POORLAW (People of Origin Rightfully Loved and Wanted) and Praise Temple Church to create a community, economy, and government for, by, and of the people.

This includes every aspect of our life, including but not limited to housing, workforce development, economic development, and criminal and social justice. Our mission is to invite the community into the conversation, listen, and amplify the voices of Hazelwood residents and those from surrounding communities to create lasting change and influence the decisions that impact our community and our lives. We fight alongside the people of Greater Hazelwood to empower the poor, the working class, and the marginalized to stand up and speak out against racial inequity, economic inequality, and injustice.

The associate members and supporters of our coalition wish to provide **this official letter of input to the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh regarding the proposed development of the Woods Village Project by Oak Moss Associates.**

The Oak Moss development team has made sincere efforts to reach out to the entire community over the past nine months. They have attended no fewer than six public meetings across various community development groups in Greater Hazelwood and have also formed a project steering committee for ongoing community engagement, which is made up of any interested community residents. This committee has met twice – with both meetings well attended - so that members could voice ideas and concerns. They have shared the master site plan for the Woods Village Project, townhouse unit concepts, and all relevant details of the development. They have also listened carefully to community feedback and made changes in the plans and designs to align with community requests.



GH-CARED

Greater Hazelwood Coalition Against Racial and Ethnic Disparities

2of2

Oak Moss is committed to reducing any environmental impact on the immediate and surrounding neighborhood and is taking appropriate actions to address stormwater management and to preserve and enhance the existing green space as part of its design. They have also provided dedicated parking spaces for the development to minimize any impact on the streets.

The addition of small retail spaces as part of the development is much needed to incubate new local businesses within walking distance of the community.

It is the consensus of our group that we support the ongoing development of the Woods Village Project with the understanding that Oak Moss will:

- Work collaboratively with local groups on workforce development initiatives
- Work with the City and environmental planners as the project designs continue to evolve to meet the community's needs
- Stay continually connected to the community, including continuing to meet with the steering committee and have open communication with residents

Given that the developers demonstrated goodwill toward the community and residents of Greater Hazelwood, please consider this a conditional letter of support for the Oak Moss proposal for continued development of the Woods Village Project. In conclusion, all should understand that this letter is supporting Oak Moss Associates' opportunity to move to the next phase in the process. This phase will give them the right for "exclusive negotiations" with the URA regarding the proposed development site. This is the exact right given to the City of Bridges and Community Builders. We believe that there should be no discrimination against developers who show good faith and desire to develop in our community. Furthermore, we believe that the URA should not lean towards any one group in our community when it comes to the right of deciding who can or can't develop in our community. Oak Moss has demonstrated good faith to the community and has met all of the URA process requirements and met the goals outlined in the Greater Hazelwood neighborhood plan.

Thank you and God Bless.

Pastor Lutual M. Love Sr.
Senior Coordinator, GH-CARED

Saundra Cole-McKamey
CEO, POORLAW, and President, GH-CARED



August 20th, 2021
Nick Fedorek
Urban Redevelopment Authority
412 Boulevard of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Reference: The Woods Village Project

Dear Nick,

We are writing to express our support for the continued development of the Woods Village Project on Monongahela Street. The project is aimed at redeveloping abandoned land that used to have homes and was a vibrant well populated neighborhood. Currently the poorly lit vacant parcels have overgrown weeds and unmaintained trees that really provide no net benefit to the general community. The proposed project will bring badly needed family friendly rental housing to Hazelwood, create new job opportunities, build a sustainable, clean, and well-maintained development, all without displacing any residents.

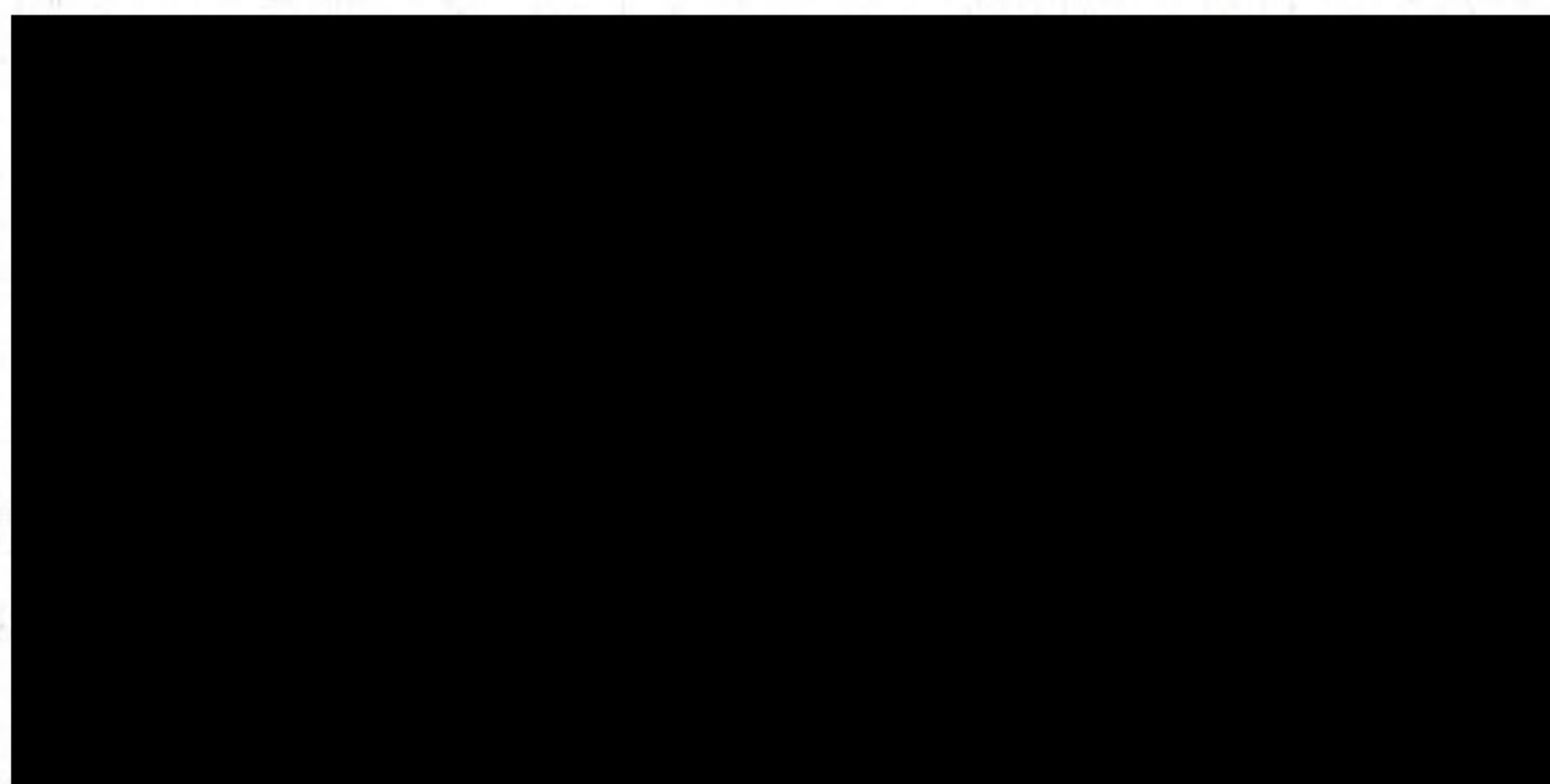
In addition, Oak Moss has demonstrated on the Woods House project their willingness to work with the community through project execution, create jobs, use local contractors, and ensure the MWBE firms are well represented.

We want to express our support for the project and strongly believe this is a good thing for the Hazelwood community. Also, we fully expect that Krish Pandya/Oak Moss will continue to collaborate and work with the community at large to make this a successful addition to the fabric of Hazelwood.

Regards

Wanda Craig

Homer [Signature]



CC via email:
Councilman Corey O'Connor
Krish Pandya, Oak Moss Associates

TO: Krish Pandya

FROM: Brett & Holly Santry

RE: Woods Village Proposal

Hello, Krish,

Please accept this letter as an expression of endorsement regarding your organization's proposal to develop the area referred to in your proposals as the "Woods Village," as presented to the Hazlewood Initiative, etc. As homeowners of adjacent property at the corner of Berwick and Monongahela Streets in Hazelwood, we're acutely aware of the rising interest in the area's real estate and wish to see such developments managed responsibly and with community-based interests at their heart. We sincerely appreciate the requests for input you've made amongst the area residents, the consultations you've made with the Hazelwood Initiative, and your expressed desire to keep this project neighborhood-focused.

The area in question, uphill from Monongahela Street and bordered by Berwick and Tullymet Streets, has suffered from neglect as vacant lots, with ongoing illegal dumping, rampant littering, and overgrowth of unmaintained weeds and invasive vegetation prohibiting access to sidewalks, all of which the sense of the area's abandonment by the larger neighborhood and the city, as well. We would like to see the area have a chance to attract more neighbors, more families committed to the improvement and revitalization of the area, so it may contribute actively to a brighter future for our corner of Hazelwood.

As the "mixed use/commercial" component of your proposal's plan is most immediately adjacent to our home, we are particularly interested in that aspect of Oak Moss' plans. The expressed intention to have local businesses and small, private concerns or workshare spaces as opposed to chain stores or franchises is something we are pleased to hear. A small market with some basic goods available would be most welcome. Hazelwood's status as a "food desert" has certainly improved with the addition of Dylamato's Market on the opposite end of the neighborhood, but as your stated goals include improved walkability of our immediate area, we hope something similar will be a first-tier consideration.

We thank you for working to improve the area, Krish. We're grateful to have you as a neighbor.

Yours,

Brett and Holly Santry

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Saint John the Evangelist Baptist Church

The Praising, Praying and Proclaiming Place of Worship

August 16, 2021

Urban Redevelopment Authority

412 Boulevard of the Allies

Pittsburgh. PA 15219

To whom it may concern:

I have had the privilege of working with Krish Pandya and his team at Oak Moss since April of 2019. As the Pastor of Saint John, I have found Mr. Pandya to be a man of honesty and integrity and I firmly believe that the Woods Village Project will be an asset to Hazelwood as well as the City of Pittsburgh.

The reasons I support this project are many, but of the utmost importance is the project brings new housing into the community without displacing any current residents or demolishing any viable dwellings.

So, there is a net gain in below and rate market housing and the potential for more retail space. These two improvements will contribute to the growth and development of the community. Making it a better place to live, shop and worship.

An additional reason I support the project is the willingness of Mr. Pandya to employ people from the Hazelwood area as well as use local contractors. His track record of hiring minorities and women has been impressive and with this project, he will be able to do more.

As stated previously, I fully support the project and I welcome to speak at length with you about the potential I see in this development.

Yours in Christ,

Shelton R. Colbert

Reverend Shelton R. Colbert, Pastor
Saint John the Evangelist Baptist Church
