

Public Meeting

In Re: Zenith Properties Building Demolition Application

January 31, 2024



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CITY OF DES MOINES

In re: City of Des Moines)
Zenith Properties Building)
Demolition Application) Demolition permit
) No. LUA2019-0032
Public Comments to Draft)
Environmental Impact Statement)

VIDEOCONFERENCE

PUBLIC MEETING

PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION

(All participants appeared via videoconference.)

DATE TAKEN: January 31, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

REPORTED BY: Sierra Zanghi RSR, CCR 22004202

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A P P E A R A N C E S

MODERATED BY:

Kristin Anderson
Stepherson & Associates
2815 2nd Ave. #555
Seattle, WA 98121
206-508-1461

PUBLIC COMMENTS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

Ashley Aller
Debra Alderman
George Pettibone
Jana Wattenberg
Joann Bynum
John Rodezno
Lloyd Lytle, Jr.
Moirra Nadal
Sally Roach
Severina Schulz
Susan White
Suzanne Vargo

* * * * *

1 REMOTE; WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024

2 6:20 P.M.

3 --oOo--

4 MODERATOR: Welcome back. We're now
5 moving into the public comments session. As we begin
6 public comment, we ask that everyone be respectful of
7 this public process, the consulting project team who's
8 a neutral facilitator, and all those who are
9 participating in the meeting this evening. We'll give
10 everyone a moment to read over the ground rules
11 detailed on this slide here.

12 So I have a list of those who would like
13 to provide comment. Remember, if you'd like to provide
14 comment but haven't signed up yet, you still have an
15 opportunity by adding your first and last name to the
16 Q&A box and we'll add you to the queue. We will be
17 accepting one comment per person tonight.

18 When it's your turn to comment, I'll
19 call your name and then call the names of the next two
20 people in line. And when it's your turn to speak, a
21 member of our team will invite you to speak by sending
22 you a notification like the one shown here on the
23 screen that says, "The host would like you to speak."

24 From there, you'll unmute yourself and
25 you'll have three minutes to give your comment. Please

1 start by providing your name and mailing address for
2 the record. There will be a timer on the screen. When
3 the three minutes are up, we'll move on to the next
4 speaker. We'll end the meeting this evening when
5 everyone has had an opportunity to provide a comment
6 once.

7 And as a reminder, a court reporter is
8 here and will be transcribing all your comments, and
9 this meeting is being recorded in accordance with city
10 law and public records practices. Any comments that
11 are made will become public information, and all public
12 disclosure rules and regulations apply.

13 The deadline for providing comments is
14 March 8th. If you provide them online, the deadline is
15 4:30 p.m. If you submit comments by mail, the letter
16 must be postmarked by March 8th.

17 All right. Let's move into the public
18 comments session. Our first speaker is Ashley Aller,
19 our second speaker is Barbara Spaeth, and our third
20 speaker is Beth Burrus.

21 Ashley, if you are unmuted, please start
22 by stating your name and mailing address. Your time
23 will begin now. I'll give you just a minute. We won't
24 start until you start talking.

25

1 ASHLEY ALLER: Thank you. First name,
2 Ashley; last name Aller; mailing address 617 South
3 210th Street, Des Moines, Washington.

4 Thank you for the opportunity to
5 comment. I represent myself as a member of the
6 community. Critical gaps exist within the current
7 environmental impact statement. These include the
8 absence of a purpose and needs statement beyond the
9 objectives for the demolition, and a report detailing
10 the estimated costs of the demolition.

11 The proposed future use of the property
12 in light of current zoning has not been delineated;
13 yet, from review of the current rezoning designation,
14 the expenses for demolition and subsequent re-purposing
15 would appear to be exceptionally high. Other important
16 details of the proposed demolition lack clarity. These
17 include reasoning for the potential application to
18 permit a variance for nighttime construction, as well
19 as estimates of the amount of toxins contained within
20 the existing structures. These toxins include lead,
21 asbestos, silica, and would come to light during
22 demolition. It is important to know the details of
23 potential safeguards in dealing with the environmental
24 issues due to the demolition.

25 I appreciate the fact that the

1 demolition has tremendous effects on the community, and
2 I trust the City to enforce zoning and building
3 regulations as are contained in the city rules and
4 regulations.

5 While recognizing the limitations on
6 developing a property after demolition, it would still
7 be helpful for the current property owners to tell the
8 community what plans they have if, in fact, they are
9 granted demolition. Without all of this information,
10 one cannot reasonably weigh the risks and benefit of
11 the proposed demolition upon the quality of the human
12 environment, as mandated by the National Environment
13 Policy Act of 1969.

14 In light of this, I would recommend
15 denying the permit for demolition at present time.

16 MODERATOR: Thank you. Next up, we have
17 Barbara Spaeth, Beth Burrus, and then Debra Alderman.

18 Barbara, if you're here, please unmute
19 yourself, and once you've started speaking, your
20 three minutes will start. I'll just ask again.

21 Barbara Spaeth, if you're here, look for this
22 notification to unmute. Okay. Thanks. Looks like
23 maybe she's not here.

24 So next up we have Beth Burrus. Please
25 look for the notification on your screen. You can

1 unmute, and once you start talking, your three minutes
2 will start.

3 All right, moving on. I'm going to
4 start, again, to just list the next three people. We
5 have Debra Alderman, Dona Games, and Emily Worthey.
6 Debra, you should look for the unmute notification,
7 unmute yourself, and when you start speaking, your
8 three minutes will start. Again, please start by
9 stating your name and mailing address.

10 DEBRA ALDERMAN: Hello, my name is Debra
11 Alderman. My mailing address is 107 Southwest
12 197th Street, Normandy Park, 98166.

13 And thank you for the opportunity to
14 comment. I'm just speaking on behalf of myself. And I
15 would like to advocate for denying permission for
16 demolition and eventually for the option for historic
17 preservation and potential adaptive reuse and -- that
18 alternative.

19 So I just want to say that I grew up in
20 the area, and as a teenager, I was a member of a
21 Masonic youth movement. We used to visit the Masonic
22 home and visit with the residents. And it was really
23 important to listen to their stories. And it occurs to
24 me that the value, the historic value of these
25 buildings is not just the buildings themselves,

1 although they are important, but the stories that they
2 tell. And part of those stories they tell is the
3 importance of benevolent societies and fraternal
4 organizations to the development of our society.

5 And a lot of people don't realize that
6 before the social safety net programs that were
7 developed during the Great Depression, it was these
8 kind of organizations, they weren't just social clubs,
9 but they really took care of people. And the Masons
10 actually started looking into building a supportive
11 home back in the 1890s. And it took them a long time
12 to develop the massive amount of money to build this
13 beautiful building in Zenith, and it's just shy of a
14 hundred years old.

15 And it really tells the story of how
16 communitarians have really contributed to this country,
17 and I really want to recommend that we not demolish it
18 at this time, but if the Des Moines City Council can
19 find a way to work with the landowner to encourage
20 adaptive reuse and save it for future generations and
21 public benefit. Thank you.

22 MODERATOR: Thank you, Debra.

23 Next up, we Dona Games and then Emily
24 Worthey and Esther Miller. So Dona Games, if you are
25 here and received the unmute notification, unmute

1 yourself. Your three minutes will start when you begin
2 speaking. Please start by giving your name and mailing
3 address.

4 All right. I'm giving a pause -- just
5 so everyone knows, I'm pausing here. We have some
6 people that signed up to give comment but might not be
7 here tonight; so we're just trying to ensure that
8 people have the opportunity to comment if they are
9 here.

10 All right. Moving on, next, Emily
11 Worthey. If you're here, please look for the
12 notification, unmute yourself. Your three minutes will
13 begin when you start speaking. Start by giving your
14 name and mailing address.

15 All right. We're going to move on to
16 the next name, Esther Miller. If you are here and
17 would like to speak, please unmute yourself.

18 All right. We're going to move on to
19 the next set of three names. George Pettibone, then
20 Jana Wattenberg, and then Janet Larson. We'll start
21 with George Pettibone. Again, look for that
22 notification to unmute yourself, start by giving your
23 name and address, and your three minutes will start
24 when you begin speaking.

25 GEORGE PETTIBONE: Hello, my name is

1 George Pettibone. I live in Zenith, Washington. I
2 would like to start off by saying that I would advocate
3 very heavily for the restoration and reuse of this
4 building and requiring that the demolition does not
5 occur.

6 "Zoning" is a funny word. It's got a
7 lot of meaning, a lot of power. It's a historical
8 word. It goes back as much as 2,000 years ago.
9 Buildings were built in cities in Europe for purposes,
10 and they put together zoning concepts, whether they
11 called that such a word or not. Why did zoning get
12 started? Because they needed to keep from having pig
13 farms in Bellevue or pig farms in Normandy Park or
14 Paris.

15 Who built these great cities in Europe,
16 China, Egypt, and England, as well as many other
17 places? Who maintained them for as many as 2,000 years
18 of their buildings, their roads, their waterways, their
19 sewer systems, their ports, their infrastructure?
20 Everything about a City is very vital to other parts of
21 it.

22 You cannot just throw things up
23 somewhere because you want to. The caretakers of the
24 land are all of us. Every one of us has a belief that
25 we own a house, but actually we're caretakers of the

1 house. We take care of the fish, the water, the
2 rivers, the trees, the air we breathe, because another
3 generation's going to come along and replace us. And a
4 building that's a hundred years old, built by the stone
5 masons, are the people that built permanent buildings.
6 They were not put up in a shabby manner. This building
7 is very, very well built and could easily be restored
8 and reused.

9 There are no answers in the current EIS
10 to satisfy me as a semiretired contractor. The EIS is
11 full of potatoes and rice and marshmallows, but there's
12 no meat in there. I can't find the beef. There is
13 nothing in here that would tell me that it's a EIS.
14 It's a historical document and it's 900 pages long, and
15 it doesn't tell us how many building they're going to
16 build for the new institutional zoning. Are they going
17 to build a hospital? Are they going to build a
18 retirement home? Are they going to build a new wing on
19 Highline Community College?

20 There's only five pieces of properties
21 in this city called "IC," institutional zoning --
22 institutional campus. Doesn't mean that you can build
23 anything that you want after you tear down the
24 building.

25 Please look very carefully into this,

1 because they didn't build Rome in a day, and they're
2 not burning down the Colosseum. The Colosseum has no
3 demolition --

4 MODERATOR: Thank you, your time is up.
5 We're going to move on to the next speaker. Thank you
6 very much.

7 Next up, we have Jana Wattenberg, Janet
8 Larson, and then Jennifer Kropack. Jana, please unmute
9 yourself, state your name and address, and your
10 three minutes will start when you begin speaking.

11 JANA WATTENBERG: Hi. Can you hear me
12 okay?

13 MODERATOR: Yes, thanks.

14 JANA WATTENBERG: This is Jana
15 Wattenberg, and I'm on South 240th Place, so the
16 Masonic home is essentially my front yard.

17 And I just want to say I concur entirely
18 with the first speaker, Ashley. She completely nailed
19 it. And especially as, like, a mother in the area. I
20 mean, my first, like, red first-flags were asbestos,
21 lead, with the demolition. But also the elementary
22 school down the street, the heavy traffic that the
23 construction is going to -- the dangers and risks that
24 puts to the community, and specifically the children,
25 and then, you know, the elderly community with the

1 retirement homes nearby -- it's very concerning. And I
2 am in favor of denying the permit and doing more of an
3 adaptive reuse.

4 And just that there's just an overall
5 distrust of the whole process because of the secrecy of
6 what the plans are. Because not only does the
7 construction impact our lives and our health and that
8 of, you know, our sensitive population, but also, going
9 forward, the traffic -- are you going to put homes
10 there? That's going to affect our traffic and our home
11 values. And there's just a complete distrust due to
12 the secrecy of what it's going to be there. And for
13 that reason, we just adamantly encourage to deny the
14 permit.

15 MODERATOR: Thank you for your comment.
16 Next up, we have Janet Larson, Jennifer Kropack, and
17 Joann Bynum.

18 Janet, please unmute yourself using the
19 notification you were sent, state your name and
20 address, and then your three minutes will start when
21 you begin speaking.

22 All right, moving on. Jennifer Kropack,
23 if you're here.

24 Moving on. Joann Bynum. Look for a
25 notification, unmute yourself, state your name and

1 address. When you begin speaking, your three minutes
2 will start.

3 JOANN BYNUM: Hi, my name is Joann
4 Bynum. I live at 22806 Thunderbird Drive, here in
5 Des Moines. I also want to thank you for the
6 opportunity to provide our opinions on the proposed
7 project.

8 I'd like to also echo what Ashley said.
9 Part of my concerns are what the plans for the
10 development after demolition are. During demolition,
11 my concerns, as much as the toxins and whatnot, is also
12 the loss to the tree canopy.

13 And although I know that some of the
14 land is fostered acreage, I don't see a plan to
15 demolish that. There are very large, mature trees
16 close to the buildings, and I think that with
17 industrial development just encroaching all around us,
18 I think it's incredibly important to maintain any trees
19 that we can, especially the large mature ones.

20 I too would prefer to see an adaptive
21 reuse. I don't know if there's a public-private
22 partnership with the developers that could be
23 developed, as we mentioned, since there are no stated
24 plans for what the development would be.

25 And I'd also like to echo what George

1 said. I, like many people here in Des Moines, work for
2 the airlines, and I'm fortunate enough to be able to
3 travel the world. And I so enjoy going to countries,
4 cities, communities that place value on historical
5 buildings and architecture, that created the
6 communities that they became, and they feel that it's
7 important enough to maintain and preserve and be good
8 stewards of that.

9 And I myself would like to live in a
10 community that places a value on that, myself. I thank
11 you for allowing me to speak.

12 MODERATOR: Thank you. Next up, we have
13 John Rodezno, Judy Davies, and Kathryn Ledbetter.

14 John, please go ahead and unmute
15 yourself, state your name and address. Your
16 three minutes will start when you begin speaking.

17 All right. Next up is Judy --

18 JOHN RODEZNO: Hi, this is John.

19 MODERATOR: Oh, John. Okay, good,
20 great.

21 JOHN RODEZNO: Hi. Okay, yes. Hi, my
22 name is John Rodezno. My address is 22238 24th
23 Avenue South, 98198. I am a current resident of the
24 city of Des Moines and am architectural staff at
25 SMR Architects. I'm providing public comments on the

1 draft environmental impact statement for the former
2 Masonic home slash Landmark on the Sound, located at
3 23765 Marine View Drive South.

4 I wholeheartedly urge the Des Moines
5 City Council to do everything in its power to support
6 and facilitate the rehabilitation of the Masonic home.
7 The Masonic Home of Washington is a resource that has
8 been determined eligible for the listing in the
9 National Registry of Historic Places, a condition that
10 should not be taken lightly and would be a first for
11 the City of Des Moines if placed onto the national
12 registry.

13 Rather than pursuing demolition, I fully
14 support Option Three, the historic preservation and
15 potential future adaptive reuse alternative in the
16 draft EIS.

17 The historic preservation and potential
18 future adaptive reuse option must be thoroughly
19 exhausted prior to any further consideration of
20 demolition, especially when no redevelopment plans have
21 been made public. There is no clear way to mitigate
22 the loss of such a significant resource, and so
23 demolition and mitigation should not be pursued. The
24 City of Des Moines should not issue a demolition permit
25 and should pursue Alternative Three, historic

1 preservation and potential future adaptive reuse, as
2 the preferred alternative.

3 This alternative should include an
4 economic feasibility study for rehabilitation of the
5 existing Masonic home, as the location of the site is
6 adjacent to accessible public transit, Route 165 bus
7 stop, breathtaking views of Puget Sound, and as a
8 potential site to be developed into a public and
9 pedestrianized green space or arboretum or even more.

10 The Masonic home is not only a culture
11 and historic treasure that connects Washingtonians and
12 businesses alike to the legacies of our past, but it is
13 also an undeniable opportunity to actualize the
14 proclaimed goals set by the City of Des Moines, its
15 comprehensive plan, and its city's residents. We now
16 have an opportunity to revitalize one of Washington's
17 great historic landmarks. Thank you for your time and
18 support.

19 MODERATOR: Thank you. Before we move
20 on to the next speaker, I thought I would just add that
21 we realize that it's possible that some of you may be
22 attending or sharing a computer, and so your name does
23 not match the name on the Zoom screen. And rest
24 assured that at the end of the comment period, we'll
25 provide an opportunity to make sure that people can let

1 us know if they want to provide comment, even if their
2 name is not showing up in the Zoom list.

3 Right now, we're going to move on to the
4 next three speakers: Judy Davies, Kathryn Ledbetter,
5 and Lloyd Lytle, Jr.

6 So, Judy, look for that unmute
7 notification, please state your name and address, and
8 your three minutes will start when you begin speaking.

9 Let's try Kathryn Ledbetter. Unmute
10 yourself, start by stating your name and address.

11 All right. Next up, Lloyd Lytle, Jr. --
12 or Lytle, Jr. I'm not sure if I pronounced that
13 correctly.

14 LLOYD LYTLE, JR.: Thank you,
15 Ms. Anderson. Yes, Lloyd Lytle, Jr., here. Resident
16 of Des Moines for a couple decades now. I live in the
17 Zenith neighborhood right across from the Masonic home.

18 Yeah, I looked through the -- or at
19 least what I could of the draft EIS so far. And one
20 thing it clearly shows, the building is significant
21 historically and culturally. And looking at the
22 mitigations, they do not appear anywhere near adequate.
23 And for that reason, the permit ought to be denied. It
24 goes against Des Moines's own municipal codes. For
25 instance, quote, it does not "assure the retention of

1 aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings,"
2 Des Moines Municipal Code 16.05.310(4)(a)(ii). Yeah,
3 if you demolished it, you'd not be upholding that code.

4 Another one it goes against would be,
5 quote, "Preserve important historic aspects of our
6 local, state, and national heritage," Des Moines
7 Municipal Code 16.05.310(4)(a)(ii) through (iv),
8 unquote.

9 So there's just -- you can't really
10 replace that building, and it shows that in the draft
11 EIS. Any mitigation is inadequate, so it ought to be
12 denied.

13 I do support adaptive reuse. I'd like
14 to see some type of public-private partnership
15 alternative as part of that, versus its own
16 alternative. I've heard, you know, just through
17 unofficial things the owner of the property has
18 expressed some interest in revitalization but they
19 would want support, and that support is definitely out
20 there. Senator Karen Keiser and Representative Tina
21 Orwall of Washington State have indicated they would
22 definitely look for State financial support there.
23 We've heard it from the County. I'm sure the City -- I
24 know they can't comment much right now, but if a round
25 table came together, a lot of good ideas could happen.

1 I think city hall could move in there.

2 I'd like to see some tribal
3 collaboration options. There was a guy from
4 Muckleshoot who came and spoke at the Historical
5 Des Moines Society meeting, talked about the history of
6 Des Moines before any of the settler people got here,
7 so they have a large history here too. It would be
8 great to collaborate with them on some type of
9 public-private collaboration.

10 Also, I'd lead a public petition with
11 Barbara McMichael. We got 2,300 signatures to support
12 the preservation and revitalization. And people from
13 the Empress Hotel, who redid that -- skilled artisans
14 who do, like, European-style work, they've reached out
15 and said, "Hey, you know, we'd like to help work on
16 this." So I totally believe a really good
17 collaboration could come forth from this.

18 And also I do want to say, I didn't
19 agree with the wildlife low quality. There's
20 documented bald eagles there, big lawns for Canada
21 geese, so it's very high quality, and one of the last
22 tree canopies in Des Moines. So with that, I would say
23 it should be preserved, as well. Thank you very much.

24 MODERATOR: Thank you. Our next three
25 speakers are Mario House, Mary Ehlis, and Moira Nadal.

1 Mario House, please unmute yourself.

2 Start by stating your name and address.

3 Moving on. Mary Ehliis, unmute yourself,
4 start by stating your name and address.

5 Moving on to our next speaker. Moira
6 Nadal, please unmute yourself. Start by stating your
7 name and address.

8 MOIRA NADAL: Good evening. My name is
9 Moira Nadal. 1204 Minor Avenue, Seattle, Washington,
10 98101.

11 I am speaking tonight on behalf of the
12 Washington Trust for Historic Preservation. The
13 Washington Trust is a nonprofit organization dedicated
14 to saving the places that matter in Washington State
15 and to promoting sustainable and economically viable
16 communities through historic prevention.

17 Since 2015, we have listed the
18 Des Moines Masonic Home as one of our state's most
19 endangered places. After review of the draft
20 environment impact statement, we have found it
21 incomplete. Without a proposal for future use and
22 development of the site, it is not possible to
23 adequately understand the potential for environmental
24 impacts.

25 What is made clear in the draft EIS is

1 the signification of this site. The Masonic home site
2 is eligible to be listed as its own historic district,
3 with ten contributing resources, three of which are
4 also individually national register eligible.
5 Large-scale demolition of a site that could be its own
6 historic district with multiple national register
7 eligible buildings is not justified by wanting to avoid
8 graffiti and vandalism.

9 Demolition of this site cannot be
10 undone. These buildings and old-growth woods cannot be
11 recreated and do not deserve to be in a landfill.

12 The mitigation proposed in the draft EIS
13 does not substantively relate to the site, its history,
14 or significance. Aside from what has been proposed,
15 there does not appear to be any mitigation plan
16 sufficient to address the loss of such a clearly
17 significant collection of buildings and structures.

18 The City of Des Moines is empowered
19 under the state Environmental Protection Act to
20 exercise all practical means to preserve important
21 historic, cultural, and natural aspects of local
22 heritage.

23 The Masonic home site is a clear example
24 of a resource significant in all those areas, and not
25 enough information has been presented to explore

1 adaptation and reuse. We urge the City of Des Moines
2 to deny the demolition permit and require the applicant
3 to provide additional information on future development
4 and strategic approaches for adaptive reuse. Thank
5 you.

6 MODERATOR: Thank you. Next up, we have
7 Molly Graeber, Nancy Corr, and Sally Roach.

8 Molly Graeber, please unmute yourself.
9 I'll give you a few seconds, here. Your time will
10 start when you start speaking. Start by stating your
11 name and address.

12 Nancy Corr, if you're here, please
13 unmute yourself. Start by stating your name and
14 address. Your three minutes will start when you begin
15 speaking.

16 Our next speaker is Sally Roach. Please
17 unmute yourself using the unmute notification, state
18 your name and address.

19 SALLY ROACH: I think I got it. Can you
20 hear me?

21 MODERATOR: Yes, we can.

22 SALLY ROACH: Oh, cool. I was the one
23 sending in, saying, "Give them a few more seconds."

24 MODERATOR: Yes, yes, thank you for
25 that. I was trying to pause a little longer. And

1 we'll ask again at the end to make sure everyone has
2 their time.

3 SALLY ROACH: Thank you. My name is
4 Sally Roach, and I live at 1433 South 101st Street,
5 Burien. I'm actually a tiny bit north of Burien.

6 Anyway, I just -- it breaks my heart to
7 think that they would tear this building down. It's
8 art to me -- the old stuff is art. And several people
9 have spoken here and said that, you know, they love to
10 travel. I love to travel. I was in Croatia a few
11 months ago, and there's an old church there that they
12 are restoring, and it's costing them money, but they
13 said, "Once it's gone, it will never be rebuilt again."
14 You know?

15 And that's one of the things, for me --
16 one of the reasons I like to travel is I love the art
17 of the old buildings. And to me, just tearing this
18 down is like, you know, a Picasso is old, let's just
19 trash it. You know, or the Mona Lisa's old, let's just
20 trash it. And it's just -- it's heartbreaking to me
21 that we don't preserve these things.

22 And we're all smart people. I know
23 there are ways to figure out how to preserve this
24 building and the grounds around it and reuse it and
25 make it something that, you know, we can all enjoy.

1 On the East Coast, I've toured some of
2 the old mills that they had, and they've made beautiful
3 condos and offices and museums and all that kind of
4 stuff.

5 And I just -- I don't know why we can't
6 do this here. It seems like, out here, we tend to be
7 more prone to wanting to just get rid of stuff and put
8 up something new, but I'm really hoping that this can
9 be saved and that we can all enjoy it in perpetuity.

10 And thank you so much for having this
11 period of comments, and I'm going to try to find out
12 how to get more involved with this. Thank you.

13 MODERATOR: Thank you. Our next three
14 speakers are Severina Schulz, Shauna Velasquez, and
15 Steve Sparks.

16 Severina, please unmute yourself, start
17 by stating your name and address, and your
18 three minutes will start when you begin speaking.

19 SEVERINA SCHULZ: Hello, my name is
20 Severina. My address is -- I live in South Seattle, so
21 a little bit close to Des Moines, and I can get to
22 Des Moines by the freeway.

23 And the reason why I wanted -- I would
24 like to comment tonight is I am a college student
25 currently. I'm a photography major. And I haven't

1 been able to see this building for the past few years,
2 but I have done some research and learned that it was
3 open to the public, I believe, but I'm not sure; so
4 that is not completely true, to whoever thinks it's
5 true right now.

6 But I think this building has good charm
7 to it. It looks very pretty and I feel like, for me,
8 it would be a very nice opportunity for others to see
9 this building and art and, like, as just a way to
10 preserve it for the future generations or just for the
11 current generation, to see what historical buildings
12 look like.

13 And I feel like it's a shame that this
14 would be demolished for not a very clear reason. And I
15 believe it should just be preserved just so we can
16 understand what past architecture has looked like.

17 And, like, just for a lot of new
18 generations to understand what we are -- what we can --
19 sorry, I'm in the middle of something. But understand
20 what the architecture was and how it could be before
21 and just the way to preserve it. And that's it for me.

22 MODERATOR: Thank you. Our next three
23 speakers are Shauna Velasquez, Steve Sparks, and Susan
24 White.

25 Shauna, please unmute yourself, start by

1 stating your name and address, and your three minutes
2 will start when you begin speaking.

3 All right. Moving on, Steve Sparks,
4 please look for the unmute notification, unmute
5 yourself. Start by stating your name and address, and
6 your three minutes will start when you begin speaking.

7 All right. Our next speaker is Susan
8 White. Please unmute yourself using the unmute
9 notification. Start by stating your name and address.

10 SUSAN WHITE: Hi, good evening. My name
11 is Susan White, and I live at 28742 Redondo Beach Drive
12 South in Des Moines.

13 I totally support historic preservation
14 and potential future adaptive reuse for this beautiful,
15 historic treasure. The Masonic home is not only a
16 culture and historic treasure that connects
17 Washingtonians and visitors alike to the legacies of
18 our past, but it's also an undeniable opportunity to
19 actualize the goals set by the City of Des Moines, its
20 local and regional stakeholders, and community members.

21 Historic preservation and potential
22 future adaptive use options must be thoroughly
23 exhausted prior to any further consideration of
24 demolition, especially when no redevelopment plans have
25 been made public.

1 There's no clear way to mitigate the
2 loss of such a significant resource, and so demolition
3 and mitigation should not be pursued. The City of
4 Des Moines should not issue a demolition permit, and it
5 should pursue Alternative Three, historic preservation
6 and potential future adaptive reuse, as the preferred
7 alternative.

8 I mean, this is just such a magnificent
9 building that can be repurposed. There's 27 acres
10 there. Surely there's got to be a way to include that
11 part of the developer's plans or ideas, that there
12 would be other stakeholders, as mentioned previously,
13 with our legislators, tax credits, all kinds of things
14 that can be done to -- you know, to make that happen.

15 Unfortunately, all this stuff about
16 graffiti -- if the place is fenced off, I keep hearing
17 there's all this damage to that building, it's like so
18 destroyed. Well, I don't know, it's been sitting there
19 for a long time, and I don't know how all this
20 happened, but that clearly would have to be addressed
21 but I don't think it's insurmountable.

22 So anyway, hopefully the city council
23 will make the right decisions and deny this permit to
24 demolish that beautiful building. Thank you very much.

25 MODERATOR: Thank you for your comment.

1 We have one additional name on our list that I'll call
2 out in a minute. And just please note that after that
3 person speaks, we'll also give a moment or an
4 opportunity for others to raise their hand and let us
5 know if they want to speak, because I do understand
6 there were a lot of people that were registered but we
7 are not seeing on our participant list.

8 Before we move to that, I'd like to call
9 Suzanne Vargo to speak. Receive a notification, unmute
10 yourself, start by stating your name and address.

11 SUZANNE VARGO: Hi, thank you so much
12 for allowing me to speak this evening. My name is
13 Suzanne Vargo. I reside at 2522 South 361st Street
14 here in Federal Way. I'm a board member on the
15 Historical Society of Federal Way, as well as the
16 nonprofit group known as "KEEP." I am speaking today
17 as a private citizen.

18 I am in full opposition of any
19 demolition on the property known as the Landmark on the
20 Sound in Des Moines. I ask the City to deny any
21 demolition permits. I am so grateful to the many
22 intelligent and thoughtful comments that have been
23 expressed on this subject. I would like to echo the
24 concerns we have of the developer not providing proper
25 information as to an end plan for this space. The SEPA

1 is held in high regard, and the process in which it is
2 delegated must be adhered to in its entirety.

3 The City of Des Moines has authority
4 regarding the SEPA to assure all people of the state to
5 have a safe, healthful, productive, aesthetic,
6 culturally pleasing surroundings. Upholding the RCWs
7 contained in its own growth management plan must not be
8 interpreted as lip service to the citizens and visitors
9 of Des Moines, but as a dedicated promise to be upheld
10 and carried out.

11 Tree canopy is not only beneficial to
12 mental health, but it is critical for our future
13 society. All cities have pledged to participate in our
14 state's climate change programs. Des Moines has fallen
15 behind in its healthy tree canopy initiative, and any
16 destruction of the mature trees such as the
17 100-year-old Atlas cedar trees should be completely
18 unacceptable.

19 I can very much understand that the task
20 at hand may seem daunting to the average person, but
21 I'm here to tell you firsthand that the safe
22 restoration and reuse can absolutely become a reality.
23 You see, I am with the "KEEP" group. That stands for
24 "Kilworth Educational Environmental Preserve." It was
25 a group of six citizens that took on developers,

1 fiduciaries, naysayers that resulted in the saving of a
2 27-acre wildlife corridor on the high banks of
3 Puget Sound. We were the third attempt over 20 years,
4 and successfully saved an old Boy Scout camp which ran
5 for 82 years. It was made possible by the Washington
6 Trust for Historic Preservation, as we were also the
7 most endangered place in 2018.

8 The encouragement and assistance of the
9 Trust, 4Culture, state, citizen involvement -- the
10 buyers were found in Forterra, and they have leased the
11 land to the Greater YMCA of Seattle. Full restoration
12 of the lodges, the trails, the amphitheater, will all
13 be complete, and schoolchildren in our entire area will
14 once again be able to enjoy the magic scenery and
15 experience this for another year.

16 Regardless if you've seen this fantastic
17 building from the air, land, sea -- all gasp in awe at
18 its magnificence. I highly encourage the City of
19 Des Moines to exhaust every avenue, such as
20 public-private means to secure the historical Masonic
21 home for future use. I am --

22 MODERATOR: Excuse me, your time is now
23 up.

24 So we still have some names on our list
25 of people who signed up to comment, but we aren't

1 seeing you in the names of the list of participants
2 here this evening, here on the Zoom platform, and we
3 want to make sure you have an opportunity to comment.
4 So if you would raise your hand now if you'd like to
5 provide comment. You know, maybe you're participating
6 from a different computer or joined us late. Whatever
7 it is, if you could use the "raise hand" feature at the
8 bottom of your screen to let us know you'd like to
9 provide comment, and we'll send you a message to
10 unmute.

11 So we're just going to pause for a
12 minute in case it takes people a minute to figure out
13 the "raise the hand" feature, and make sure everyone
14 has an opportunity to comment that is interested.

15 I'm just looking at the list. I'm just
16 going to wait another minute or two.

17 All right. We're not seeing that anyone
18 has raised their hand and asked to provide comment, and
19 so that concludes the public comment session of this
20 evening.

21 All right. We're going to restate --
22 before we do that, though, I'm going to restate the
23 names of people that we called out earlier but they
24 didn't speak. Give me just -- we're going to quickly
25 try to go through that list. And if you're here, just

1 please raise your hand using the "raise hand" feature
2 at the bottom of the screen. Barbara Spaeth, Beth
3 Burrus, Dona Games, Emily Worthey, Esther Miller, Janet
4 Larson, Jennifer Kropack, Judy Davies, Kathryn
5 Ledbetter, Mario House, Mary Ehlis, Molly Graeber,
6 Nancy Corr. And again, I'll just pause for a moment --
7 oh, sorry, I missed a couple: Shauna Velasquez, Steve
8 Sparks.

9 Again, use the raise hand feature, even
10 if you're participating from someone else's computer,
11 so the name looks different, you can still -- we can
12 call on you and you can state your name. I'll wait
13 just one more minute.

14 All right. That concludes the public
15 comments session at this evening's meeting. We'd like
16 to thank everyone for participating. And before we end
17 the meeting, we'd like to once again share information
18 about how you can submit your comments in writing
19 online or through regular mail. We'll leave this slide
20 up for another minute if you want to write any
21 information down. Thank you again for being here this
22 evening and participating in the public meeting. Have
23 a good night.

24 (Meeting concluded at 7:08 p.m.)

25 --oOo--

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF WASHINGTON)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SNOHOMISH)

I, Sierra Zanghi, Certified Court Reporter in and for the State of Washington, reported the within and foregoing public meeting on Wednesday, January 31, 2024; that said meeting was taken by me in shorthand and thereafter under my supervision transcribed; and that the same is a full, true and correct record of the proceedings including all testimony and questions, answers, and objections, if any, of counsel.

I further certify that I am not a relative or employee or attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I financially interested in the outcome of the cause.

This transcript and billing has been prepared/submitted for final preparation and delivery in accordance with all Washington State laws, court rules, and regulations.

Rules regulating formatting and equal terms requirements have been adhered to. Alterations, changes, fees, or charges that violate any of these provision are not authorized by me and are not at my direction or with my knowledge.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have set my hand this _____ day of February, 2024.

Sierra Zanghi



SIERRA ZANGHI, RSR,
WA CCR NO. 22004202