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April 11, 2019

**HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RE:** Request of the petitioner City Growth Partners LLC to amend Article XVII, District Map 4, of the 1984 Detroit City Code Chapter 61, Zoning, and the provisions of the existing PD-H (Planned Development District-Historic) zoning classification on properties commonly known as 3124-3136 Brush Street, 420-430 Erskine Street, 3101, 3119, 3129, and 3137 Beaubien Street and 427-437 Watson Street generally bounded by Erskine Street on the north, Beaubien Street on the east, Watson Street on the south, and Brush Street on the west to establish the mixed-use development known as Brush House.

**NATURE OF REQUEST**

The City Planning Commission (CPC) presents to your Honorable Body the request of City Growth Partners, LLC to modify the provisions of an existing PD (Planned Development District) zoning classification in an Historic District for properties located at the northwest corner of Brush Street and Watson Street. These properties are more commonly known as 3124-3136 Brush Street, 420-430 Erskine Street, 3101, 3119, 3129, and 3137 Beaubien Street and 427-437 Watson Street and are generally bounded by Erskine Street on the north, Beaubien Street on the east, Watson Street on the south, and Brush Street on the west. This request is being made in order to establish the mixed-use development known as Brush House.

**PROPOSAL**

The subject site is located within the Brush Park Historic District. It is nearly one (1) acre occupying almost an entire city block, excluding a few parcels that the developer does not control.

The project consists of two (2) buildings (A and B) to be situated on a parcel approximately 47, 275 square feet in area. The gross square footage for the residential portion of this project totals approximately 188,869 sf. The commercial area totals approximately 14,383 sf. The project has a combined floor area of 203, 252 sf.



Rendering of Brush House

The space is inclusive of 168 studio, one and two bedroom apartments. Studio apartments total approximately 75 units, 1-bedrooms total 68 units, and 2-bedrooms total 25 units. Both of the buildings are proposed at five (5) stories with a height of 54'. Amenities planned for the development include community area, a roof terrace and courtyard.

The project includes 122 tot. The below-grade parking will include 122 spaces. Of that 104 space are to be contained in an underground parking deck, while the remaining 18 spaces will be at surface level.

The developer expects the project to create 300 temporary jobs and 30 permanent.



Aerial view

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ANALYSIS**

### ***Surrounding Zoning and Land Use***

The zoning classification and land uses surrounding the subject area are as follows:

**North:** is zoned PD; Hospice of Michigan

**East:** is zoned PD; Brewster Homes

**South:** is zoned PD; Underutilized parcels

**West:** is zoned PD; Underutilized parcels

### ***Master Plan of Policies***

The subject site is located within the Lower Woodward area of Neighborhood Cluster 4 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies (MP). The Future Land Use map for this area shows High Density Residential for the subject property. CPC considers this proposal to be consistent with the MP and is awaiting an interpretation from the Planning and Development Department (PDD) which has already reviewed the proposal and is in support.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS**

The petitioner has presented to the community on at least three (3) occasions and has also spoken to the most immediate neighbors in an effort to acquire the additional dormant properties. The Brush

Park CDC submitted a letter of support. During the CPC public hearing for this request, two members of the public spoke expressing neither, support or opposition.

### **APPROVAL CRITERIA**

The development is generally consistent with the approval criteria outlined in Sec. 61-3-96 of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff specifically points to the following findings in review.

*(a) **Master Plan** The proposed development should reflect applicable policies stated in the Detroit Master Plan.*

The development is consistent with the Master Plan of Policies. “The High-Density Residential designation allows for an overall density that’s greater than 24 dwelling units per net residential acre. Such areas are often characterized by large-scale multi-unit apartment buildings with a common entrance and shared parking.”

*b) **Scale, form, massing, and density.** Scale, form, massing and density should be appropriate to the nature of the project and relate well to surrounding development.*

The scale of the building is appropriate in that the proposed site is located in a high-density designated area by the Master Plan. The scale will be in sync with the recently approved Brush and Watson development to the south, just across the street. In terms of form and massing, the development tries to create breaks in the massing to avoid dull facades, and to create some variation.

*(c) **Compatibility.** The proposed development should be compatible with surrounding development in terms of land use, general appearance and function, and should not adversely affect the value of properties in the immediate vicinity.*

The subject block is largely undeveloped outside of the two (2) dilapidated structures that currently abut the site.

*e) **Parking and loading.** Where appropriate, adequate vehicular off-street parking and loading should be provided. The City Planning Commission will be guided by standards delineated in this zoning ordinance with adjustments appropriate to each specific situation.*

This development provides parking underground which, when possible, is desirable as it hides the parking from the street view. This serves to relieve the impact of cars that would typically be housed in off-street surface parking creating gaps in the built environment. The impact of large housing of off-street parking is that it creates “seas of parking” which are injurious to many elements of a walkable community. So developers are always encouraged to find creative ways to provide parking within the interior of developments.

Below-grade parking can be cost prohibitive, so it is commendable when a development can accomplish this means of housing vehicles and work it into pro forma. It should be noted that development will have 168 units, however will only provide 122 parking spaces (not including commercial/retail requirement) which is not the typically required number of spaces. The developer feels that this will accommodate the demand that the project will have.

*(k) **Orientation.** Careful consideration should be given to orientation both for solar access to the proposed project and for shadow impact upon surrounding development.*

The building is designed to orient towards and address the streets that it faces. The ground-floor spaces are oriented to the streets in order to build street-level appeal and encourage pedestrian activity. The orientation of the proposed buildings are appropriate and desired from a urban planning

perspective.

**p) Urban design.** *Urban design elements of form and character, especially in intensely developed areas, should be carefully considered. Such elements include, but are not limited to: richness and interest of public areas through the provision of storefronts, window displays, landscaping, and artwork; color, texture and quality of structural materials; enclosure of public spaces; variations in scale; squares, plazas and/or "vest pocket parks" where appropriate; continuity of experience, visual activity and interest; articulation and highlighting of important visual features; and preservation and enhancement of important views and vistas.*

The development as planned will be a generator of activity along Brush Street in a part of Brush Park that needs the pedestrian activity. The buildings will complement the other coming development along this thoroughfare. The use of large store front displays for the large amount of retail/commercial space the buildings will provide, should be appealing to the population that currently exists and also those who are expected to move into the community in the coming years.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

At the regular CPC meeting December 6, 2018 the City Planning Commission voted to approve this proposal of City Growth Partners LLC with the following conditions:

1. That the developer work with the immediately adjacent community to minimize disruption to the neighborhood during construction and address impacts that may arise; and
2. That CPC staff may review and approve an appropriate opaque fence for rear yard and also an appropriate parking configuration prior to final approval to submit for applicable permits.
3. That final site plans, elevations, lighting, landscape and signage plans be submitted by the developer to the staff of the City Planning Commission for review and approval prior to submitting applications for applicable permits.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcell R. Todd, Jr., Director  
Kimani Jeffrey, City Planner

Cc: Maurice Cox, Director, PDD  
Donald Rencher, HRD  
David Bell, Director, BSEED  
Laurence T García, Corp. Counsel  
Detroit Housing Commission

Attachments:  
Drawings



November 28, 2018

Moddie Turray  
City Growth Partners  
[moddie@citygrowthpartners.com](mailto:moddie@citygrowthpartners.com)

**Re: Brush House Development**

The Brush Park Community Development Corporation (the "CDC") forwards this letter to indicate our support for the proposed "Brush House" development for the property located at Brush Street and Erskine Street (the "Project").

The Project plan for the proposed new construction of two apartment buildings was presented before the CDC and the Brush Park community at a public meeting held on November 13, 2018. Community members attending the meeting were generally receptive of the Project.

By a vote of 7 in favor, 0 objections, and 0 abstentions, the Board voted to support the Project. Attachment A contains the opinions offered by the Board during the voting process for your consideration; please note, the opinions have no bearing on the Board's vote and are included for reference only.

We thank you again for your commitment to Brush Park and making a positive impact in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karissa Holmes".

Karissa Holmes, Secretary

Cc: City of Detroit Planning & Development

#### Attachment A: Poll Comments for "Brush House"

Below are the opinions submitted by CDC Board Members during the voting process for reference and consideration. Please note, the opinions have no bearing on the Board's final vote and are included for reference only.

##### Comment 1

*In general, I support this project. Related to the facade materials, the developer mentioned they are still deciding whether the two buildings would have the same or different facade design/materials. My preference would be for different facade treatment between the two buildings to offer more variety in the architecture of this block and the neighborhood overall, and to prevent it from looking like one large building or one "development".*

##### Comment 2

*In general, I support this project. However, the massing feels overpowering for the block. It's basically two very large buildings. And to [Comment 1], if it's all the same materials and design, it's going to feel like one massive building. Thoughts?*

##### Comment 3

*In general I support this project, but agree that the massing is overpowering and that the design is too monotone. I would like to see the developer take cues from the building across the street on Erskine and incorporate at least one other building material or color. Using a lighter color in some places could also make the project feel less heavy and overpowering.*