

City of Detroit
Historic District Commission
2 Woodward Ave #808
Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 224-1762

May 11, 2022

Dear Historic District Commission,

As a resident of Indian Village, living one block over from the Detroit Waldorf School, I am writing to you today in regards to outdoor classroom structures on the school's grounds. My name is Andi Mahoney, resident of 2440 Iroquois, parent of two children in the school, and also an employee of the school.

In the summer of 2020, the school's community came together and solved the problem all schools at that time were facing— how to have the students attend in-person school. But Detroit Waldorf didn't just build any outdoor classrooms (many around the country and world have been erected), they built high quality, cedar wood, structures that blend in with the environment.

Waldorf is a school focused on developing children who are deeply connected to the natural world, as such these structures have become central to accomplishing our educational mission. The school takes great care in the maintenance of its exterior landscape, and has slowly transformed the former vacant lots on the east side of Burns into a beautiful enclave called Quietland. Though charming and beloved by our children, this is not a rigidly preserved historic landscape, nor is it either historically or currently a park-like setting, but instead is and will remain an active area for education, growth, and outdoor play.

Building these outdoor classrooms became the subject of attention in the media, both [locally](#) and [nationally](#). But I think what's most important is how did the Indian Village residents react?

Day after day for almost two years, I have witnessed residents taking their morning or evening walk on Burns, past the Detroit Waldorf School, and many times I have been near enough to hear them commenting on how wonderful the outdoor classrooms look. I have had many of my neighbors tell me that they enjoy walking past the idyllic scene that is Detroit Waldorf School's outdoor classrooms and play areas. I have not heard one negative comment from a resident of Indian Village, only many positive ones.

For the school years of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, the shelters have maintained the school's enrollment, and thus broadened its ability to serve the children of Detroit. The shelters have also provided opportunities for community celebration, growth and engagement, through hosting of festivals, plays, day camps, scouting groups, garden tours, art shows, and many other activities that attract Detroiters to the district. In conclusion, the outdoor classroom structures at Detroit Waldorf School are a beautiful addition to a school of historic significance in Detroit.

Thank you for taking the time to review this matter. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Warm Regards,

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