

From: [Claire G.](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Cc: [Seth Saeugling](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Lafayette Park Historic District Application from Detroit Thermal
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 12:22:11 PM

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

My name is Claire Goebel, and I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District. I know that my husband, Seth Saeugling, and I have already written to you once about this and I wanted to circle back, as new information has come to our attention about the Detroit Thermal project. I recently moved into 1404 Nicollet with my family, relocating from North Carolina with our six-month-old son. We were drawn to the Nicolet co-op community by the rare and beautiful combination of urban living alongside lush, mature landscapes and wildlife — a feature that is central to the neighborhood's National Historic Landmark designation.

Since moving here, we have fallen in love with this community. In just a short time, we've found a sense of place, made friendships, and experienced firsthand how neighbors look out for one another. Our shared green spaces feel like a communal front yard — a place where we envisioned our son growing up, playing, and building lifelong connections. The magnificent trees and thoughtfully designed landscape were not just a selling point for us; they were a promise of the kind of life we wanted to give our family.

It is heartbreaking to now face the threat posed by Detroit Thermal's proposed project. I am writing to state my strong opposition to their application. The project would cause irreversible damage to the historic landscape that defines this community. It would destroy mature trees, shrubs, and planting beds — including the most sensitive and beloved portions of our shared outdoor spaces. The project plans themselves acknowledge the widespread "disturbance," promising only "restoration in-kind," which is impossible. The integrity of a 60-year-old living landscape cannot be replaced overnight or replicated by new plantings.

Beyond the physical damage to our environment, the process Detroit Thermal has followed to date has deeply concerned me. There has been refused engagement with my neighbor residents who are reaching out for conversation, no transparency, and no demonstration of respect for the historic significance of our neighborhood. Their prior work has already damaged plant life, and they have declined opportunities to meet with residents or address concerns.

We are also deeply worried about potential risks to the structural integrity of our historic homes due to deep excavation work and the installation of steam vents. As new homeowners with young children, we made a major life decision to settle here — based on the promise of both the shared/communal spaces (it is, after all, a co-op) and the stability of this community. Nothing about this level of disruption was disclosed to us during the homebuying process. Like many of our neighbors, we now feel blindsided and extremely uneasy about the future.

We do not feel buyer's remorse about choosing Lafayette Park — it has already given us so much. But this looming threat has caused real unease as we envision raising our family here. Losing these shared spaces would be a loss for every resident, young and old, and would permanently erode a core part of our home.

I respectfully urge the Historic District Commission to reject Detroit Thermal's application and protect the irreplaceable historic landscape of Lafayette Park for current and future

generations.

Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to preserving Detroit's historic neighborhoods.

Claire Goebel

1404 Nicolet Place, Detroit, MI, 48207