

June 30, 2025

RE: Opposition to Detroit Thermal June 11, 2025, Detroit Historic District Commission Application

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

As a board member of the Joliet Co-op, I have accepted responsibility to protect the integrity of the National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation of Lafayette Park/Mies Van der Rohe Historic District. It is the combined structures and landscape (now matured) that define this community and give it historic significance. I have reviewed the revised drawings submitted by Giffels Webster on behalf of Detroit Thermal (DT) to Detroit Historic District Commission (DHDC) on June 11, 2025. My concerns pertain to the information contained in these drawings.

Prohibiting the delivery of heat or hot water to the residents of 1300 Lafayette is not the issue. DT, a private utility company, has alternative routes to deliver steam heat to the 1300 Lafayette residents. Alternative routes need to be considered before disrupting private property and a public park. The letters of support for 1300 Lafayette (DT's client) fail to consider other steam route options on public property. Connecting to existing DT steam at the Crisler School certainly would be more efficient than excavating abandoned steam lines within the Lafayette Park NHL.

DT has not provided a complete application for this project to the DHDC as **required**. The DHDC would reject my application outright, if I, as an individual had submitted these plans without a complete DHDC application. DT continues to submit only revised drawings that do not address the inherent disruption, disturbance and destruction of this NHL. As such, I **reject** DT's submittal.

The letter of submittal to DHDC from DT is signed by "General Manager". The identity of the "General Manager" is not identified. This person needs to be identified for the DHDC to respond after the public meeting.

The drawings submitted by Giffels Webster identify an employee as "DR" who has the titles of Executive, Manager and Quality Control for this project. Giffels Webster must have a document review policy that **does not** allow the same person to hold three different and conflicting management review roles on a project. To have one person acting as the project manager, quality assurance officer and project executive is not accepted engineering design review practice.

The DT design drawings reference "Civil Plans". The "Civil Plans" were not included in the submittal. Do the "Civil Plans" provide details for tree protection fencing, excavation methods, work schedule and worker safety protocols? DT needs to include the "Civil Plans" in their revised and complete application. The absence of this critical design document indicates a lack of transparency and communication by DT to the City of Detroit and the affected residents of the Lafayette Park/Mies Van der Rohe Historic District.

In addition to the lack of clarity in the DT design drawings, have BSEED and Department of Public Works staff reviewed the plan drawings and "Civil Plans"? Has DT submitted a Right of Entry permit request to BSEED for access to the Lafayette Park Co-op and Lafayette Plaisance Park properties? Has DT submitted a Right of Way permit request to BSEED for access to the Lafayette Park Co-op and Lafayette Plaisance Park properties? At a minimum, the project should not be allowed to be considered without meeting all City of Detroit permit requirements.

DT has developed revised drawings that now significantly impact the **Lafayette Plaisance Park** as well as the **Joliet and Nicolet co-op** properties. The revised drawings indicate accessing private property by driving heavy earth moving equipment on sidewalks within the Lafayette Plaisance Park. No details for

protecting or repairing the sidewalks are included. The latest set of drawings are technically deficient as there are contradictions in the design. The drawings **do not** provide sufficient details or specifications as identified in the attached table.

Excavation activities occurred in the NHL private property in Fall 2024 without appropriate permits or access agreements. Damage was noted and a Stop Work Order was issued in April 2025. DT needs to address historic restoration of landscape, hardscape and structures to their original design specifications.

The revised DT design drawings do not adequately the original DHDC denial rational in the May draft staff report. Requirements outlined in the May 16, 2025, DHDC confirmation letter were not adequately addressed. Therefore, the June 11, 2025 application should be denied. The DT project, as currently proposed, should not proceed. The proposed work should not be allowed to continue until DT acquires all required BSEED and DPW permits, satisfies the ordinance violations issued in the April Stop Work Order, and pays all fines issued by BSEED and the City of Detroit.

Thank you kindly for serving the residents of Detroit and preserving the city's historic places.

Sincerely,

Rob Ferree
Joliet Co-op Board Member
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