



Outlook

[EXTERNAL] Re: Detroit Thermal Application in the Lafayette Park Historic District

From Rob Feder <feder.rob@gmail.com>

Date Tue 7/1/2025 8:31 PM

To Historic District Commission (Staff) <hdc@detroitmi.gov>

Dear City of Detroit Historic District Commissioners,

You have no doubt seen the text below many times by now but I wanted to make this personal. The intended location is directly in my front yard and has already impacted my quality of life for close to a year now. The decision of city planning officials and Detroit Thermal to engage in lobbying the HDC has seriously eroded my faith in city government and the HDC. As someone who has lived here for 20 years and has a history in the neighborhood that pre-dates the Renaissance Center, I am dismayed that a project this obviously damaging and harmful to my community is being pushed through with zero regard for or consultation of said community.

I am a City of Detroit retiree who has dedicated my entire adult life to serving they city and its residents. This process has been insulting and demoralizing and I do not believe that my elected officials are truly concerned with the interests of Detroit residents.

I am a resident of the Lafayette Park Historic District neighborhood. I am writing to state my strong opposition to Detroit Thermal's application for a project in the Lafayette Park Historic District. I oppose the proposed project because it would irrevocably damage my neighborhood's historic landscape, which is a central component of my neighborhood's National Historic Landmark designation.

The proposed project would generate a significant adverse effect on the historic landscape of my neighborhood. Detroit Thermal acknowledges that the project will kill and damage mature trees, shrubs, and planting beds that define our landscape. The project plans to convert the most sensitive and most beloved portion of our historic landscape into a work site. The work area impacts dozens of mature trees, dozens of shrubs, countless flowers and ground-covering plants, and raised beds that makeup our community garden. Detroit Thermal's plans fail to provide adequate tree protection. Detroit Thermal's own plans identify 47 mature trees in the project area and propose removing mature trees, shrubs, and raised beds in our community garden.

The plans submitted for this project by Detroit Thermal demonstrate its lack of understanding and respect for my neighborhood's historic status. This lacking is also demonstrated by Detroit Thermal's work to date in my neighborhood. Despite promising to meet with our neighborhood after the public

hearing on May 14th, Detroit Thermal developed and submitted new plans with no input or engagement from me or my neighborhood. Detroit Thermal has been working in my neighborhood for more than nine months. During that time, it has cut down most of a mature magnolia tree, damaged shrubs and flowers, and damaged an original bench near the playground.

I am also concerned that the project could damage the historic character of our neighborhood in other ways, including by installing new steam vents and conducting deep excavation near the foundations of our historic homes. I have no confidence that the impact on our historic neighborhood was considered in the development of these plans.

I am asking that the Detroit Historic District Commission reject Detroit Thermal's application, which is not historically appropriate, to prevent it from irreparably harming the Lafayette Park Historic District.

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

Robert Federal
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