

# East Lawrence Neighborhood Association

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May 5, 2019

To: The Lawrence City Commission

From: The Board of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association

RE: The HUB Project and Downtown Design Guidelines

The East Lawrence Neighborhood Association is pleased to weigh in on the decision that will be made at Tuesday's City Commission Meeting. Should the City Commission override The Historic Resources Commission's decision to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the HUB Project and their conclusion that the HUB Project does not follow Downtown Design Guidelines? We encourage the City Commission to uphold the decision of the Historic Resources Commission. The HRC gave them a fair hearing comparing their proposal with the design guidelines, then worked with the Project Team through their Architectural Review Committee to show them how their proposal could conform to the Guidelines. They then gave them another fair hearing to look at their 2<sup>nd</sup> proposal. The HRC went out of their way trying to find a way that the Project Proposal and the Downtown Design Guidelines could be interpreted to be consistent to each other. In the end, it was a unanimous decision. Even the "scaled down" version of their Proposal did not conform to Downtown Guidelines.

The historic authenticity of our City and our Downtown is one of our City's biggest selling points. The Historic Resources Commission are the experts tasked with interpreting our design guidelines. To disregard the HRC's decision in this manner is a vote of no confidence directed at our HRC and the Design Guidelines and the significant work that is done daily to make our Downtown the vital place that it is. Proceeding in this manner would certainly have an impact on how our Downtown moves forward, and seemingly would erode the very features that make our Downtown such a desirable place to visit. If there are people that believe that the Downtown Guidelines need to be revamped, then let's have that discussion and make them right, not undermine the experts who are tasked with making these tough decisions. Past City Commissioners have determined that the History of our City is important, so important that it is by City Ordinance that the HRC exists and is tasked with making decisions based on specific criteria held within the Design Guidelines. To deny this legacy of our collective City's desire in this individual instance is to diverge from that character and chase the latest trendy development plan, very fashionable in the moment, but with no lasting characteristics to replace that which it is displacing. We need to pursue and encourage development that will enhance our future by following our tried and tested Downtown Design Guidelines, and ignore the shiny baubles that come with thoughts of instant gratification.

To state again, we encourage you to uphold our Historic Resources Commission's decision that this development does not conform to our Downtown Development Guidelines. Our HRC can go

line by line through this proposal and explain how each does not conform to those Guidelines. We need to stand firm and with solidarity with our past Commissions and current Advisory Boards and not undermine the work that they do. Our City is a better place when we do that.

Please vote to uphold the HRC.

Please note that we continue to support the letter that we submitted as the HRC carefully reviewed the Core Spaces project.

Thank you,

The Board of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association,

Phil Collison, President