



Office of the Common Council

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To: Members of the Urban Design Commission

From: Sara Eskrich, District 13 Alder

RE: HotelRED

Date: August 1, 2017

Thank you for your attention to the request for a conditional use at 1501 Monroe Street. As you saw in the staff memo, this application has both support and opposition from neighbors. We held public neighborhood meetings, with mailed postcard and electronic invitations to residents, on November 9 and June 15 to discuss this application and I have been in contact with neighbors via email and listserv conversation over almost a year.

There are a few key issues you should consider when reviewing this application:

- *Good Neighbor:* I believe much of the support for this application is due to the general support for HotelRED as a neighbor. This building was highly controversial when first developed, and the management has worked tirelessly to be a positively contributing neighborhood asset. They are well-achieving that mission. We regularly hold neighborhood and wider community meetings and events in their space, where they are incredibly accommodating. HotelRED has become a neighborhood gathering place and an economic driver for the wider area by sending guests up Monroe or down Regent to support our local businesses.
- *Zoning:* The concerns raised focus on height. This proposed 7-story building is much taller than the approved zoning for this site. The lack of conformity to this zoning policy is concerning.
- *Adopted Plans:* The plans do not support the 7-story proposal.
- *Unique Site:* Though this site is within the Monroe Street Corridor plan, it does relate to Regent Street and the large intersection with the UW Field House most directly. Proposed redevelopments surrounding this parcel, at The Regent, 1605 Monroe, and the proposed placemaking work at Crazylegs Triangle, will further define this space as different from the rest of Monroe Street. Therefore I am sympathetic to the argument that additional height at this building will not be precedent setting for Monroe Street.

Out of the Plan Commission decision to place the original plans on file without prejudice, we have seen revised plans and discussed them in a neighborhood meeting. The plans, in my opinion, do significantly work to address the concerns raised by residents. This is done by concentrating the height and density away from the abutting single family homes. I would like to be able to support this project at the Plan Commission. Your review at the Urban Design Commission would be helpful to help further mitigate the aesthetic impact of the height and “finish” the building. I look forward to hearing your constructive thoughts on this project and seeing how the architect is able to incorporate them in advance of the Plan Commission. Thank you for your attention and thorough review.