From:	Marie Benedix
To:	dencc - City Council
Subject:	Anderson House - Councilman Espinoza"s opinion piece
Date:	Wednesday, November 11, 2015 10:12:20 AM

Dear Council members,

I'm writing to you in support of the preservation of the Anderson House.

I thought you might find Councilman Espinoza's opinion piece on the matter a helpful read: http://www.denverrealestatewatch.com/2015/11/08/espinoza-opines-on-historic-designation/ (text also copied below)

This is not a matter of community vs. homeowner, it is a matter of the community's wishes for an important piece of its past to be preserved.

The owner of the property will not be harmed; he will be able to sell his large property (19,000+ sq.ft.), as is his stated wish, for the same amount of money or more **with** the Anderson House designated and preserved. But only if you vote for designation on Monday.

The property is very suitable for dense development, with the Anderson House left intact, and the community is supportive of such development, as it has been in over the years in cases of large new developments in Jefferson Park.

This is an excellent opportunity to help create a win-win-win situation that enhances this neighborhood, for development in an area of stability (the Anderson House is in an area of stability per Blueprint Denver).

The only party who would oppose such a compromise is one third-party developer (not the property's owner, not a Denver resident), who will be unable to maximize his profit. To date, he has been unwilling to entertain any dialogue or compromise and has in fact blocked attempts by the community and Historic Denver to speak with the property owner and develop compromise solutions.

I ask you, humbly, to please stand with the community and voters to enable constructive compromise, by voting to designate the home on Monday.

Thank you for your service,

Marie Benedix
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By Rafael Espinoza

"Only a Hostile Developer is Preventing a Win-Win in the Case of the Landmark-worthy Anderson House"

The landmark designation process is a tool developed to allow Denver to protect valuable linkages to its history.

The Queen Anne-style Victorian home at 2329 Eliot St., known as the "Anderson House" in Jefferson Park, meets all criteria for historic designation eligible for consideration be it architectural, geographic, or historical significance.

If this were simply a matter of those three criteria, this case is open and shut.

However, rightly, the law requires consideration of the concerns of the owner, and the owner has articulated his desire to sell his land – three parcels plus a city-vacated right-of-way – for $1 million.

Despite claims to the contrary, with the landmark designation of the "Anderson House," this 21,000 square feet of densely developable land in Jefferson Park will continue to be worth well in excess of $1 million dollars.

I believe that negotiated outcomes resulting in preservation are a preferred solution to the complete legal processes afforded to qualified properties.

At the time I stepped up on behalf of then-future constituents to resubmit a withdrawn (historic designation) application initiated by others, I did so, cognizant that between the owner's asking price, and the community's desire to see only one of the three existing structures protected, there was, and remains, room for all parties to win.

Following my own unsuccessful attempts trying to contact the owner, I twice asked the developer, Nathan Adams of Adams Development, to arrange such a meeting with the owner in the days following the application (it couldn't happen before,as the developer tried to time the withdrawal of the application to prevent reapplication).

The first request was in public at a neighborhood meeting, and Adams expressed willingness, however at the more private follow-up request, Nathan's response was "I can assure you Jim Sonnleitner has no interest in talking to you."

Since that time, all efforts I am aware of to negotiate or develop backup offers that

would allow the Anderson House to be preserved and secure a $1 million sales price have been impeded.

Instead, the developer, not the owner, has invested capital and resources in staffing public meetings and producing irrelevant research; while unethically manipulating an RNO vote; hiring PR firms to write negative editorials, conduct press outreach and produce videos; paying attorneys for the failed attempt to sue the city; and personally trying to bully myself through the media and one of the other applicant's through their employer, all under the auspices of his concern for the property's owner.

Nathan Adams could have purchased this property and sought non-historic certification without using Jim's name and likeness to embattle thoughtful preservationists acting on behalf of their community in a manner that is sensitive to the financial needs of Jim.

Had a preservation-minded developer been truly allowed the opportunity to purchase, Jim could be retired, resting with his desired $1 million, right now.

Meanwhile his former home, protected with a landmark designation, could be undergoing restoration while a development team moves on plans for the rest of the property. That is the win-win-win that residents believe their community deserves.

Recusing myself from this matter as a member of City Council was not an easy decision for me.

My willingness to stand up against the improper use of power and resources is, in part, why I was elected to represent District 1.

While the ethics committee has ruled that I can decide on this as a member of Council, because I applied as a non-public official, to do so could imperil the decision by Council and prolong the resolution of this matter for the community and for Jim Sonnleitner.

Courageous residents and preservationists have done yeoman's work in running a gauntlet set out by a self-interested developer who makes his own home outside the city's borders.

Instead of seeking compromise, he has consumed substantial resources to squelch community voice. Fortunately for the community this ordinance is in place to protect worthy structures from this type of manipulation, and, based on the facts, the case for designation can clearly be made.

While District 1 deserves direct representation on Council, the Northwest Denver community will represent their solutions on the podium Nov. 16. I hope many of you can join.