



November 24, 2015

To: Mayor John Cranley; Members of Cincinnati City Council; and Mr Harry Black, City Manager

RE: The pocket park located at 518-520 East 12th Street

During the Over-the-Rhine Community Council's regularly scheduled monthly meeting on November 23 2015, council members deliberated and approved the following resolution composed of two parts:

- 1) The park which is owned by Cincinnati Recreation shall remain a public park.
- 2) Members of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council are opposed to the sale of this public park.

For good and valid reasons, members strongly oppose the plan to sell the pocket park on East 12th Street to be used as a parking lot. Equally if not more importantly, members strongly urge the Cincinnati Recreation Commission to maintain this small public park as a park for residents.

Further, members of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council were made aware that the Pendleton Neighborhood Council had previously issued a letter of support for the sale of this public park for a private parking lot based on a total vote count of 11 to 1 (PNC meeting: October 2015). By contrast, approximately 50-60 members of the Over-the-Rhine Community Council approved the above resolution in favor of keeping the park as a public park and opposed to its sale.

Most Over-the-Rhine residents, but especially those who live on the 500 block of East 12th Street, do not have front yards or back yards. Residents in our neighborhood typically organize, design and plan improvements to our pocket parks when the need arises. When a pocket park is ready for a makeover, residents strongly prefer organizing, creating a plan, implementing improvements, and then sustaining the park for everyone's enjoyment. This approach builds and strengthens all parts of our community.

Because a pocket park's location typically provides both opportunities and constraints, some parks are better suited for shade gardens thus they are planted for tree canopy and shade-loving perennials. Other parks are sunny thus suitable for residents to grow vegetables and flowers. Some small parks are particularly appropriate for use as small-child playgrounds, thus those parks are designed for the comfort of children but also their family members.

To allow the sale of this pocket park to go forward despite Over-the-Rhine residents' expectations and aspirations for self-determination would set a dangerous precedent, permitting developers to deprive residents of precious public parks for their private, personal gain.

Although the developer is expected to urge immediate action, claiming their project would be jeopardized without private off-street parking -- developers always make those claims -- this matter is simply too important for residents to be waived away. On behalf of residents and all others who have voiced their support for their park but also their opposition to its sale, I would like to urge all official decision-makers to support our community council's resolution.

Should you wish to have additional information about this matter, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan L. Messer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "M".

Ryan L. Messer

President, Over-the-Rhine Community Council

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