

Edwards,Michelle

From: Tommy Kleckner <TKleckner@indianalandmarks.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 07, 2020 11:59 AM
To: Edwards,Michelle
Subject: *Ext!* 5-7-2020 TH City Council meeting - Resolution 3, 2020 - Indiana Landmarks letter of comment
Attachments: TH_City_Council_5-7-2020mtg_-_Resolution3,2020
_-_IndianaLandmarks_comment.dotx.docx

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- Helpdesk

Hi, Michelle –

Attached is my letter of comment for Resolution 3, 2020 which is Item 13(d)(b) on the agenda for this evening's Terre Haute City Council meeting. Thank you for conveying this to the City Council. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best –

Tommy

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Tommy Kleckner
Director

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Indiana Landmarks revitalizes communities, reconnects us to our heritage, and saves meaningful places.

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May 7, 2020

Terre Haute City Council
17 Harding Ave
Terre Haute, IN 47807

RE: Resolution 3, 2020

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Council:

I submit this letter as comment on Resolution 3, 2020 and I respectfully request it be read into the record by President Azar during this evening's Terre Haute City Council meeting.

Indiana Landmarks fully supports Resolution 3, 2020 and the property tax abatement The Commonwealth Companies is requesting for the proposed redevelopment of the historic Terre Haute YMCA Building property.

The significance of this landmark structure to the history and heritage of Terre Haute and Vigo County is well established. Its inclusion on Indiana Landmarks' statewide 10 Most Endangered list and its listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2019 are testament to this. In addition to its historical significance, the YMCA Building commands a presence within downtown Terre Haute making it an important component of the unique historic fabric of the heart of this community.

For a number of years now Indiana Landmarks has advocated for a preservation solution that would see this now long-vacant landmark saved, rehabilitated, reused, and transformed. The proposed redevelopment by Commonwealth will bring about such a preservation solution. Commonwealth has persisted in putting together a redevelopment plan, financial pro forma, and vision for a difficult property. The original configuration and plan of the building along with its evolution as a recreational facility and current condition create challenges for which Commonwealth has developed feasible solutions. This speaks to the company's experience and commitment.

When the YMCA Building was constructed in the late 1930s, Terre Haute and the country were recovering from the worst economic crisis in the nation's history up to that time. The new building was a symbol of the resilience of Terre Haute and Vigo County. Only several months ago it would have been difficult for anyone to fathom an economic crisis rivaling or possibly exceeding the Great Depression. Unfortunately and tragically, the coronavirus pandemic has brought such a fear reality. Commonwealth's proposed redevelopment and the substantial investment it is prepared to make with City assistance hold potential of making the historic

YMCA Building a symbol once again of this community's resilience during a period of economic and social hardship.

The economic crisis that has accompanied this global health crisis may well result in a greater need for quality affordable housing. Commonwealth's redevelopment of the historic YMCA Building will help towards meeting this growing need. Unlike more recent affordable housing projects or those currently underway, the historic YMCA Building is located in the city's downtown so the intended reuse will provide greater equity in the downtown housing market. Commonwealth's inclusion of fully ADA accessible units within the development will further open up quality housing options for people with disabilities. The adaptively reused YMCA Building will also help serve the housing needs of those the United Way defines by its acronym ALICE – asset limited, income constrained, employed individuals and families.

As I've stated in several past city council meetings regarding Commonwealth's proposed redevelopment project, you have local incentive tools available to you that have been used effectively for years to help facilitate millions of dollars of investment in both the rehabilitation of existing structures and the construction of new facilities. I urge you to utilize the incentive of property tax abatement to help bring about the preservation and redevelopment of another of Terre Haute's downtown historic landmarks. I believe the merits of the project, the proposed \$10 million investment, the positive economic impact of construction jobs created, and the affordable housing need the project will help address warrant the requested tax abatement.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration of both my comments and Resolution 3, 2020. It is my sincere hope the council will take favorable action and assume an important role in the redevelopment of the historic Terre Haute YMCA Building.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tommy Kleckner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tommy Kleckner, Director
Western Regional Office