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From: eevocal@aol.com
Sent: Friday, July 29, 2016 12:57 PM
To: PRC
Subject: Project #3020114 at 6726 Greenwood Avenue N

July 29, 2016

Mayor Ed Murray and Councillor Mike O'Brien
Seattle City Council,
600 4th Avenue #7
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mayor Murray, Councillor Mike O'Brien and Seattle DCI,
I am writing to you as a concerned citizen and on behalf of my father who is directly impacted by a development project being proposed out his backyard window.

I live on Phinney Ridge at the corner of 68th and Phinney, overlooking Green Lake. I grew up at this address and after college moved away to the east coast, until I returned last summer to look after my aging father. He is the son of Swedish Immigrants who settled in Ballard. One of the Greatest Generation, he served in World War II and after the war became a devoted father to six children. He has owned and lived in this property since 1959. He gave his life and his health to the City of Seattle, as an employee of Seattle City Light, working in the underground and exposing himself to toxins and loud noises. He suffers from respiratory issues (COPD) and hearing loss because of it. He is a beloved member of the neighborhood community and has been the best steward he could be to his home, his surrounding neighborhood, his church, the charity Neighbors In Need and to Seattle, which I know he loves and has loved very deeply. He wishes to live out the remainder of his years in this house.

The development at 6726 Greenwood Ave N, proposed by Johnson and Carr LLC, sits behind our backyard and will be, according to the design, 4 stories on 8,000 square feet. There will be 57 market rate studios, no on site laundry, limited space for bikes, and no parking. We met Monday night, July 25 2016, with the Michael Dorcy and the Department of Planning for a special meeting requested by the neighborhood regarding this project. Next week is the final Design Review before the building permit is granted. Writing this, I know my concerns will be shelved, as I have lived in the city long enough to know now that it is politically correct to call all single family homeowners who have concerns about rampant development NIMBY's at best and racists at worst. That Neighborhood Councils "raise selfishness to an art form" (David Roth, Special to the Times 7/25/2016) and that we are all coddled, blind and deaf to the needs of the homeless and those who struggle to find housing. But I am writing anyway. Most of my adult life, I have struggled to find housing living in Boston. I lived with roommates for many years until I could just afford, barely, a small 1 bedroom. So I do recognize a need. And I think you will find that most homeowners are sympathetic to the housing needs of others. At least I have found the Phinney Ridge neighbors to be. We are not against development in our backyards. We are against stupid development; development that doesn't take into account the unique needs of the community, the residents who have put down roots and time and love here, and the unique environmental aspects and topography of the land and its usage.

The major concern that I have about this development as it affects my father's property directly are a failure of the developer to grant him a 5' setback on the ground level from our garage that he has requested over and over again. They have only given us a 3' ground level setback and a 10' setback on the upper levels. They *have* granted a 5' ground floor setback and a 25' upper floor setback to our neighbor to the south. We requested equal treatment with our neighbor and have not received it.

The garage and house were built in 1915. The garage sits on the property line of a split zone single family parcel. Because the developer just got in under the wire of a zoning law change, they can build right up to the property line. But all the other developers who have built in lots nearby have negotiated in good faith with their neighbors and gave generous setbacks. The Isola Property on 68th and Greenwood, a 20' setback to their neighbors in the east and the Fini Condos on the west side of 68th and Greenwood, a 25' ground floor setback to their neighbors in the west on Palatine Avenue. Johnson and Carr, LLC have broken all precedents with previous development and maintain that it is their right to do so, as well as part of their business plan. We cannot maintain the garage and hedge that borders the west side of the property with such a small setback. Of further concern is the set back on the upper stories; it is 10' from our garage on the northwest property line. The transition between the 4 stories to the single story live/work unit is laughable – a mere 7' of transition and it still towers over the garage. Our privacy in the yard is compromised by the closeness of the 10' setback.

The new neighbors will be able to see everything in the yard and look into our windows. I can clearly see into the windows of the new Isola building being constructed across the street. This proposed development behind us will grant us and the new residents an even closer inspection of each other's habits. At least the 25' upper set back that my neighbor has received has included trees on the second story balconies for privacy, which the 10' set back behind us does not. It is a bare unadorned wall with windows. It will impinge upon the light, air and space and be as gray as a cloudy day. We will no longer be able to see the sky out the back windows. It will cast dark shadows into the yard where there were none before and impact our ability to grow vegetables in our urban garden as well as the flowers and plants needed to attract bees and pollinators.

Those are our personal reasons for opposing this building. The neighborhood concerns: it's massiveness in a small space, it's lack of standard amenities like laundry coupled with no parking on an already overburdened need for parking space, future large developments in the pipeline in our cozy quadrant, an inadequate bus line to fill the needs of current density (the No. 5 bursting its seams well before leaving Greenwood for Fremont), are all things that you have probably heard before, but bear repeating like water on rocks. These issues make living here not so live-able. But more serious environmental issues regarding the prior land use and the topography of our section of Phinney Ridge are also pressing.

A SEPA review was requested and granted, as the current building had been used in the past as a dry cleaning business, a dentist's office and chemical company. This environment testing was a joke. They tested four sites close together on the northern side of the building for chemicals and vapors. They discovered some, but not significant contamination. The discrepancies between the environmental tester's history of the site and the history that the developer gave do not correspond. And to my understanding they tested only for the dry cleaning chemicals, not for chemicals that a dentist in the 30's and 40's might have used, like lead and mercury, or what the chemical company may have dumped. There was no perimeter testing and as we have ground water flowing down the side of the hill, many of these chemicals may have moved around. We have grave concerns about what this might do to our health and especially my father's health if toxins are released during excavation. The ground water is the other pressing issue.

A sink hole opened up July 25th on 68th Street, between Phinney and Dayton. It is significantly deep. There have been problems for a long time of water bubbling up in the street and ruining basements. But neighbors say it has gotten worse with the building of the Isola Property on the north corner of 68th and Greenwood. If this Isola building is putting undo pressure on the groundwater and perhaps the old underground sewage and drainage pipes what will another equally massive building of 57 units across the street do? Studies need to be done about the sewage lines, soil composition and of this ground water before any further development is put up here. Do you seriously want to be the Mayor and Councilman who has to answer to an Oso like problem, if the hillside gives way in an earthquake, or a serious rain event? I really think we need to slow down and consider what the land can tolerate. Research where the land can stand higher density and where it cannot. One size fits all is just plain lazy and potentially dangerous.

I think you pooh-pooh the needs of homeowners who have legitimate concerns about the Grand Bargain at the peril of not only your political career, but in thoughtful and constructive stewardship of the city. You tune out the voices that have valuable experience and lessons to teach in zealot's pursuit of a noble goal. Homelessness is a serious problem and we all want to see everyone have a place to call home, but all I have seen are market rate apartments and luxury condos being built. I have seen no low to middle income housing at all. If homeless is the emergency you say it is, why aren't you building homes for them right now? Why aren't developers being generous with their bottom lines and business plans and building more low income units? Why aren't they building more clean and energy efficient residences? As I see it, the only people who are winning are the developers and those in high tech careers. These small studios behind us will *all* rent at their market value, which is still unaffordable for people making \$15/hour. And if someone with limited means should move in, I find the lack of parking and laundry for those who may be in the gig economy, or in low paying service jobs, who need their cars to earn a living and/or have to schlep their clothes down the hill to Ballard to be laundered, to be insensitive and harsh.

The city could make this a Win-Win (backyard cottages with no residency is a recipe for abuse and greater burden on all of our infrastructure, I am sorry to say) for all, by allowing more input from each community as to how they can accommodate density that is best for them. By researching more about what make each enclave special and any issues about how much land use certain parcels can reasonably take, by assessing historical usage, parking, traffic, safety, sight lines, infrastructure, transportation issues, topography is in my view smart development. But you do not. Instead, your administration labels and abuses what stands in your way and silences diversity of opinion as flippantly as swatting a fly. Your behavior frankly, is reminiscent of Congressional Republicans and it makes me ashamed to be a progressive. You make this a zero sum equation pitting the poor and homeless/the city/ the rich developers against mainly middle class folks who don't have enough resources to fight you. We are not afraid of taking on our fair share of the burden of bringing housing to people, but not if the people at the very top of the food chain are fattened further at our expense and a one size fits all development strategy is foisted upon us where we can make no comment (e.g., no comments allowed on the need for parking during design review meetings) on a proposed design excepting for how it is adorned. Your administration is

undemocratic and demonizes and cheapens the knowledge and experience folks have who have lived here a long time, put down roots, have really cared about quality of life for everyone and love this city. The homeowners who live in this neighborhood have firsthand knowledge of its quirks, its nooks and crannies. We know how tight it can get on a busy Friday, we take public transportation and shop nearby businesses. We walk, bike and drive these ever more crowded streets with our children and elderly. We live on a ridge, Phinney Ridge. We are not in a flat valley. Things bottleneck very quickly on the top of this hill above Ballard and Green Lake. There are significant traffic and safety issues for our children and senior citizens. There are still pressing environmental issues of prior land usage and ground water to be addressed. My neighborhood's and father's health and safety are at stake.

My devoted father is 90, has a fixed income, gave his life to Seattle and is frankly being taken advantage of by these developers. They do not recognize set back precedents, there is no gentle and gracefully designed transition to single family housing and they have exploited the zoning law, which the city allows them to do. These zoning laws, your administration and the city council do not make allowances for the community, the land, the earth we stand on, how it breathes and moves and what lies underneath. Your administration fails this at your peril and unfortunately, at the peril of all.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Johnson