

**November 11, 2021**

**To: Council President Lisa Bender and Members of the Minneapolis City Council**

**Re: 2301 California Street NE**

**Dear Council President and Council Members:**

**In 2001 and 2002 I led an effort with City staff, northeast residents and artists which culminated in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Action Plan. The plan was presented to the City Council which resulted in a number of actions by the City Council including the official designation of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District as the City's first officially recognized arts district. As you know we are very proud of the district's designation as the #1 arts district in the United States by USA today several years ago. I remember well our celebration of that achievement which was attended by Council Member and now Mayor Frey and Council Member Kevin Reich.**

**Among the recommendations of the Arts Action Plan was Strategy 6.2 which called for the creation of an Arts Overlay District in the heart of the arts district. The terminology "Industrial Living Overlay District" was the terminology recommended by planning staff not because the intent was high density housing but rather because it was believed that the primary use would remain in a technical sense "industrial" with flexibility in the area to facilitate the goals of the arts district. Section 551.330 states that the purpose of the ILOD was "to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of existing industrial structures and to provide for limited residential and retail uses in the I1 and I2 industrial districts where such uses are compatible with other uses in the area."**

**The proposed rezoning of this property is a dangerous precedent. Essentially the City Council would be opening the door to further erosion of the ILOD's protection of the essential character of the district. Given the magnitude of the project, approval of the rezoning will inevitably lead other developers to seek other lucrative possibilities for high density residential development. Over time the essential character of the arts district will be eroded.**

**Justification of this project as adding "affordable artists housing" is simplistic and misguided. The project changes the essential character of the area and most particularly the adjacent land use. The California Building is one of the most treasured assets of the arts district.**

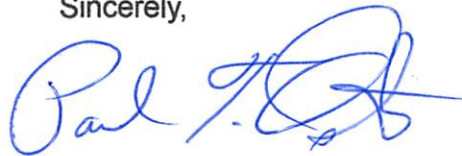
**Finally I am disappointed that the staff reports and discussion of this issue fail to place this proposal into the proper context of the arts district**

and its history. There seems to be little if any institutional memory as to the impetus for this ILOD or the arts district. I am hoping that my former colleague Lisa Goodman's sharp memory can also remind you of this history.

At a minimum I ask you to delay the approval of this application in order to facilitate a complete review of the ramifications to the arts district to key stakeholders in our community.

I hope a mayoral veto is not required but I would implore Mayor Frey to show his continued support of the district by vetoing any approval of this item.

Sincerely,



Paul T. Ostrow  
2239 Arthur Street NE  
Minneapolis,  
Minnesota  
55418

cc: Mayor Jacob Frey