

From: [Lauren Thompson](#)
To: [Public Testimony](#)
Subject: NPD Public Testimony Ordinances 210673, 210689, 210690
Date: Wednesday, August 18, 2021 12:39:01 AM
Attachments: [913 W 29th Deed.pdf](#)
[CALEB BULAND NICOLE BULAND LAND BANK APPLICATION SUBMITTED FOR 913 W. 29TH STREET.pdf](#)

Dear City Clerk,

Please include the below message and attachments in the public testimony for Ordinances 210673, 210689, 210690 when they are heard by Neighborhood Planning and Development on August 18:

Dear Councilmembers,

I'm writing today to express my concerns with the proposed project at 29th and Belleview (Ordinances 210673, 210689, 210690). My two primary concerns relate to the public engagement process with the neighborhood and that this property was acquired from the Land Bank and promises made by the developer in the Deed of Trust were not fulfilled.

Many developers have used Zoom to conduct public engagement and it is often done in a manner that substantively engages with the community. Unfortunately, this was not the case in this instance. **These Zoom meetings were conducted in a way that limited interaction with the developers and between neighbors.** Neighbors were unable to see who was in attendance. They were unable to see who was asking questions. Questions were submitted by participants to the developers and the developers chose which questions they were going to answer. I would be shocked if the manner in which these meetings were conducted would be tolerated, let alone attempted, in other neighborhoods in Kansas City.

The convenience that online meetings provide is valuable and I do not anticipate seeing that go away when this pandemic comes to an end. Therefore, I would **recommend that the Council revisit the public engagement ordinance** and provide clear standards for conducting the public engagement requirements for online meetings so that the quality of those meetings matches what is provided in an in person setting.

My biggest concern with this project is that this **land was purchased from the Kansas City Land Bank and many promises that were made in that acquisition have not been fulfilled.** I have attached the original application submitted to the Land Bank as well as the Deed of Trust. The first thing I'd like to point out is that this parcel was sold in November 2015.

There are other items listed in the Deed of Trust that the developer agreed to that I would like to highlight:

- Trash, debris, and vegetation overgrowth would be removed within 60 days
- They would build within three years of obtaining the title
- They would obtain any necessary authorization from CPD within one year of obtaining the title
- “Will meet and confer with the Westside Neighborhood Association on the design for such infill“
- Will keep the property free of nuisance and property maintenance violations

I would also like to draw your attention to the **original application from the developer to the Land Bank. In the application, the developer states that he will “fit in with current zoning” to construct 6-9 single-family homes.**

Having well surpassed the agreed-upon timeline in the Deed of Trust, this developer rushed and botched the requirements for neighborhood engagement when they had all this time to go about that process properly.

The developer has failed to meet any of these requirements, including meeting with the Westside Neighborhood Association, in the Deed of Trust. After not meeting any of these requirements, the developer is now seeking rezoning to UR.

Developers should not be rewarded for failing to follow through with agreements. The City gave this developer a fantastic deal on this land and they failed to fulfill the requirements of that transaction. Now they are back asking for additional changes. **Without an explanation for these failures, measures taken to remedy such failures, and additional assurances going forward, it is bad public policy to grant additional requests for this project.**

The Westside welcomes developments that would bring affordable homes. But we need developers that will work with our neighborhood association and that we can guarantee will live up to their agreements. We have worked with too many developers that have verbally promised one thing, but ultimately failed to deliver on those promises. Anything that is not in writing is not a guarantee from a developer in the Westside. In this case, even an agreement with the city through the Land Bank has not been fulfilled.

Please address these public policy concerns regarding public engagement and Land Bank properties for the benefit of the entire city. For this project, the Westside needs the Council to ensure that it is done in a manner that is respectful of the neighborhood, guarantees affordable housing for people who actually need it, and that any benefits from property tax abatement go to the homeowners and not the developer.

Instead of relying on verbal promises, please make sure we have a written

guarantee, like deed restricted properties, to ensure the neighborhood actually gets affordable housing.

Thank you,
Lauren Thompson
Vice President Westside Neighborhood Association