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University Heights Collaborative
5 W. Northrup Place
Buffalo, NY 14214
www.ourheights.org

Dash's Markets, Inc.
1770 Hertel Ave
Buffalo, NY 14216

February 18, 2015

RE: Follow-Up to Meeting on February 3, 2015

Dear Mr. Dash,

On Tuesday, February 10th at the Gloria J. Parks Community Center, the University Heights Collaborative (UHC) held a community forum to solicit ideas and perspectives related to the proposed public storage facility at 416 Kenmore Avenue. Residents of University Heights and the Town of Tonawanda shared their thoughts on the project, identified potential neighborhood impacts, and suggested next steps. The UHC Board met to review these comments on February 17. A summary of these comments and suggestions are found below.

Several themes emerged from the community's feedback, including a general perspective that public storage is not a preferred use for this parcel. The UHC Board also notes that the proposed use is not permitted under the existing zoning code, but will be a permitted use under the City of Buffalo's proposed Unified Development Ordinance (Green Code). In a community that values a vibrant and walkable urban environment, our organization is actively working to ensure that these values are reflected in how our neighborhood is zoned, both presently and in the future.

Although we are united in our disappointment in the proposed use of public storage, we recognize that there must be a pragmatic and mutually-beneficial way forward. Other community-generated themes included:

- Potential alternative uses for site (e.g. subdividing the parcel, multi-tenant options, alternative supermarket operators)
- Reasonable mitigation of reduced neighborhood food access (e.g. aquaponics, community gardens, location for the farmers market, limited shuttle service from site, sponsoring Buffalo CarShare hubs)
- Improvements to ongoing investment in North Buffalo Rails-to-Trails project and Kenmore Avenue reconstruction (e.g. benches, bike racks, trash cans, public art, signage, etc).

A community benefits agreement has been identified as one potential method of articulating a response to these themes. Participatory budgeting of the community benefits agreement would ensure that any investments would be community-directed, inclusive, enforceable, and transparent.

To ensure residents are aware of the opportunity to publicly express their individual views, we will actively encourage residents to attend the Common Council Community Development Committee meeting on 2/24/15 at 1pm in the Common Council chambers. If possible, we invite you to respond in advance of this meeting so that your response can be shared with University Heights residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Michael Vertino
President
University Heights Collaborative