

John R. Todd
1559 N. Payne Ave.
Wichita, Kansas 67203
(316) 312-7335
July 13, 2020

Dear Members of the Wichita Historic Preservation Board,

I am speaking as a Wichita citizen in support of the nominations of Century II and the former Public Library to be placed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places and the National register of Historic Places. I believe Winston Churchill was correct when he said, ***“A nation that forgets its past has no future.”***

Century II was built by the people of Wichita to celebrate our city’s first 100 year birthday looking forward to our second Century, thus the Century II name was chosen. We love the Frank Lloyd Wright Style of Architecture that Wichita’s iconic Century II landmark represents and we want it preserved, not demolished.

To that end, last week our Save Century II group of citizen volunteers delivered over 17,000 signatures to the Wichita Mayor and Wichita City Clerk demanding a city ordinance that would “Let the VOTERS DECIDE!” the fate of publicly owned landmark buildings, especially buildings like CENTURY II and the former WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY—not special interest developers!

After working closely with the literally dozens of the citizens who signed the Save Century II petition, I can advisedly tell you that the people of Wichita who have been observing the redevelopment of downtown Wichita over the last several years are not happy with what they see. A prime example they mentioned over and over was the city’s

recent handling of the new downtown ballpark sports complex that lacked a public vote for tearing down the old Lawrence Dumont stadium or their approval of the public financing for building the new complex. The deal lacked transparency, and involved the usual “back-room” dealing that typically results in wealth creation for the special interest developers with any and all of the downside risks and potential losses reserved for the Wichita taxpayers.

The people of Wichita are tired of this type of “insider-driven” redevelopment policy and many of them view the Riverfront Legacy Plan as simply a continuation of this type of failed public policy strategy with NO PUBLIC VOTE!

Before you consider the City Manager’s recommendations to delay your actions today, please ask him why he hasn’t issued any nationwide “Requests for Proposals” asking for repurposing proposals for our historically important and iconic buildings like Century II and the former Wichita Public Library? At a minimum, isn’t this the type of policy consideration the citizens of our community deserve?

I believe any efforts to stall the approval of historic recognition for Century II and the former public library does not represent the will of the citizens of Wichita who want to ***remember our past and look to our future.***

Please approve both Historical designations!

Sincerely,

John Todd