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John White · 335 W 1st St · Reno, NV 89503

Brooklyn Oswald, PLA, MRED
Associate Planner, Development Services
CITY OF RENO
1 E. FIRST ST.
RENO, NV 89505
oswaldb@Reno.Gov

Reno, Nevada, September 5, 2023

Proposed abandonment of Stevenson St.

Dear Mr. Oswald:

I bought the Twentieth Century Building, 335 W 1st St., almost 40 years ago. I was attracted to its design and history. This historic building was already on both the Nevada State and National Historic sites registers when I bought it and I have preserved it exactly as it was then¹. As this area is building up, parking is getting more and more scarce.

I now understand that adjacent developers have asked the City to abandon Stevenson street, between First and Second Streets, their plan being to convert it into a one-way street with seventy parking spaces. As I understand it they plan to leave twelve of these spaces open to the public with the rest being private parking for their developments.

I am strongly opposed to the proposed abandonment. It is completely unnecessary and likely illegal. The city should simply keep Stevenson St a public street and, when the ever-increasing parking problem in this area gets too bad, do the same thing the developers are proposing, except keeping all 70 spaces open for public parking². I fear for this neighborhood and the Twentieth Century Building if this abandonment is approved.

We have recently witnessed the destruction of the historic Sinai Mansion. To also lose the historic Twentieth Century Building would be a terrible loss to the residents of this city and its precious culture. The developers should do like other developers have to do and devote enough of

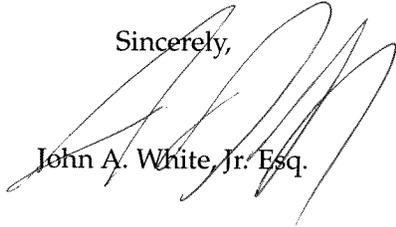
¹BTW, several of the paintings which have decorated the walls of this building for the past 30+ years are being featured in this month's Smithsonian magazine

²I defer to Mr. Hall here, though when I was acting Reno city attorney back in the 1970s, city streets could be made one-way with angled parking.

their own property to parking so that their residents will not need to park on the street. Street parking is necessary for Wingfield park and the surrounding properties in this part of town, including the Twentieth Century Building.

I am attaching some comments from existing tenants of the Twentieth Century Building.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John A. White, Jr.', written over the typed name.

John A. White, Jr. Esq.

cc: Karl S. Hall, Esq. hallk@reno.gov

cc: Alicia Barber <alicia@storiesinplace.com>

cc: Existing Tenants, 20th Century Building

encl: Letters from Barbara Wardwell, CPA; Retired Judge Charles McGee; Linda Mason, building receptionist .

CHARLES M. MCGEE

SENIOR JUDGE/MEDIATOR
335 WEST FIRST STREET
RENO, NV 89503

(T) 775-823-9975

(F) 775-823-9973

(CELL) 224-1397

September 5, 2023

Dear Mr. Oswald,

This letter is offered in support of John White's position on the proposal by two developers to enhance the value of their holdings, converting a public street into a mostly private parking lot.

John White, as you can tell by his letter, is not only an owner of a law office but a docent for its historic preservation.

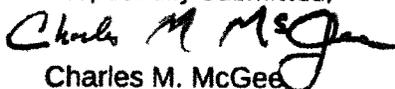
I was 14 when I first went to a Cotillion dance in that building and for the first time ever asked a pretty girl to dance with me. Stevenson Street is part of a **public treasure**. When and if it is converted, it should be done consistent with that vision and the master plan for the River Walk and the Riverside Experience.

For whom is that serene experience designed?

It is designed for patrons of local offices and merchants, i.e. **local members of the public**. It is designed for **public parkgoers** who like to feed ducks, to feel the pulse of the life force of the river, to picnic, to ride kayaks, to listen to concerts, to fish or rest in the shade. It is designed for members of the **traveling public** who need a bite to eat or a respite from the bustle of the town immediately surrounding it on all sides.

What is not part of the mosaic, I submit, are proposals by unidentified principals to fatten their wallets **at public expense** .

Respectfully Submitted,



Charles M. McGee
335 W. First Street
Reno, NV 89503
(775) 823-9975

Re: Stevenson Street Abandonment



From: blwardwell@aol.com
To: admin@whitelawchartered.com
Date: 8/30/23 5:08 PM

I don't mind them making it a one way street and putting in diagonal parking but I don't believe the city should abandon the property to the owners of the Mod buildings. The city has consistently taken away our parking by making the parking out front into parallel parking instead of diagonal parking. They widened the sidewalk on the south side of first street which narrowed first street in front of our building and put in parking meters on the north side even further limiting our parking options. The former owners of the hotel which is now the Mod Apartment building allowed us to park in the back on the north side of the 20th Century building but the current owners that are now requesting an accommodation actually restricted our access to that lot by putting in a gated parking lot behind the building and even blocked any access we had to the 20th Century building through the rear of the building. Why should they be given an accommodation when they have done nothing but block us and we were here first? I don't know if their fence around the parking lot is even legal. They may have encroached on the property that is part of the 20th Century Building lot. The city also began ticketing us in the alley effectively leaving us with no parking at all except at 2 hour meters which is not very workable when meetings often extend beyond that time. Then the people in charge of planning for parking had the audacity to say we should ride bikes instead of using vehicles when John brought it to their attention. That's an unworkable solution for many reasons.

There is no upside to giving the Mod owners control over Stevenson Street. If past behavior is any indication of future behavior they will likely close the street once they have control of it and make it into whatever they originally planned for. The city can keep and maintain the one block long street and leave their options open for whatever the future holds for downtown Reno. Don't forfeit the city's rights in favor of private entities. Those entities should plan for sufficient parking on the property they have already acquired. If anyone should be accommodated, it should be the inhabitants of the 20th Century Building and the Catholic church since we have both inhabited this block far longer than the Mod owners and well before the city restricted the parking so far as to make it almost intolerable. Our parking needs should take precedence instead of ignoring these needs as this plan proposes. Barbara

Stevenson Street



From: "admin@whitelawchartered.com" <admin@whitelawchartered.com> (White Law Chartered)
To: john@whitelawchartered.com
Date: 9/5/23 12:52 PM
Spam Status: Bogofilter

My thought is: from the look of the vacant lot owned by one of interested parties, I wonder how the street would be maintained. Who would sweep it and gather trash? I prefer it be the city, even if there has to be a 4 hour time limit on parking. The city should promote diversity on the streets like small shops on the first floor of the apartment buildings. Make it a neighborhood, a place to visit and live in. What a waste of the river and Wingfield park area to just have a bedroom community.

Linda Mason--
Admin
White Law Chartered
335 W. First Street
Reno, NV 89503
775.322.8000

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BIGGEST LITTLE GIFT SHOP
11 North Sierra Street
Reno, NV 89501

07/31/2024

The Mod Riverwalk 2
344 W.2nd Street
Reno, NV

Dear Managers of The Mod Riverwalk 2,

I am reaching out to voice my support for the planned abandonment and redesign of Stevenson Street close to my business, Biggest Little Gift Shop.

The plan to convert Stevenson Street into one-way and the installation of clearly marked public parking will boost foot traffic in the neighborhood. The added landscaping will also elevate the visual charm of our neighborhood and makes it more attractive for people visiting the area.

I am pleased to endorse these proposed modifications to our community.

Signed by:
Warm regards,

Pia Laine - Langley
8/1/2024

Owner – Biggest Little Gift Shop

HUB COFFEE ROASTERS
727 Riverside Dr.
Reno, NV 89503
mark@hubcoffeeroasters.com

The Mod Riverwalk 2
344 W.2nd Street
Reno, NV

August 1st, 2024

To the Managers of The Mod Riverwalk 2,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed abandonment and reconfiguration of Stevenson Street near my place of business, Hub Coffee Roasters Riverside. I believe this will bring several benefits to the Riverwalk neighborhood.

First, the proposed change to one-way traffic will improve the safety of the Stevenson Street and 1st Street intersection to both pedestrians and drivers. Also, the reconfiguration of Stevenson Street with added trees and landscaping will significantly beautify the Riverwalk neighborhood. And finally, the proposed public parking areas will promote more pedestrian traffic in the area, which I anticipate will help my local business.

I believe the abandonment and reconfiguration of Stevenson Street will have a positive impact on our neighborhood, improving safety and enhancing our neighborhood's aesthetic and functional appeal.

I am happy to support these proposed changes.

Sincerely,

Mark Trujillo

Owner – Hub Coffee Roasters

Leah Piccotti

From: John White <john@whitelawchartered.com>
Sent: Friday, August 9, 2024 2:40 PM
To: Leah Piccotti
Cc: Todd Landry; jamie@jamiehenrylaw.com; andrea@jamiehenrylaw.com; paralegal@whitelawchartered.com; blwardwell@aol.com; judgemcgee@msn.com; tsherer@sherergroup.com; Mike Railey; Shayeszorn@nevadaculture.org; renohistorical@gmail.com; Alicia Barber; Brooklyn Oswald
Subject: Re: Stevenson St abandonment-Effect on Twentieth Century Building.

Leah Piccotti and Todd Landry,
Reno Development Services
1 E 1st St.,
Reno, NV 89505

Dear Todd and Leah,

Thank you so much for your call Wednesday. For some reason I had not calendared or miscalendared the Zoom meeting.

Concerning the Twentieth Century Building, 335 W 1st St., it was built in 1925 by Twentieth Century club, a still popular local woman's service club, and is on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places. I have been interested in registering it in the Reno Historic Register, with a facade easement, but am concerned that such might make the building unsaleable if I decide to sell it.

I certainly don't want to sell it. It has been the home of my law firm since 1986 and is an excellent place to practice a profession. I have promised to sell it at a discount to one of the existing long-time tenants when I retire. We have lawyers and an accountant who have been in this building since I bought it almost 40 years ago.

The problem of which I write has to do with parking. Many years ago there was ample unmetered parking on First St., directly in front of the building. Due to changes made to W. First St. 10 or 20 years ago parking became more difficult, being that we were left with only parking spaces in the alley, along the East side of the building, plus the 5 to 10 spaces we rented from the abutting motel for approximately \$30 per month. Even now those alley spaces are occasionally ticketed by the city parking police even though there is plenty of room for fire and other emergency vehicles to get past.

Several years ago Vesa Kaunismaki took over the motel immediately to our left (now called the Mod). Not long after Vesa took over, the Mod fenced in the parking area and we no longer have access. This is causing great discomfort to our tenants as we now only have the above-referenced three alley spaces. Recently Vesa told us that he is thinking about our parking plight and that he will talk it over with his partners.

If the city wants this historic building to survive, the tenants must have adequate un-metered parking. Again, the tenants in this building must have a place to park. They cannot go out and feed a meter every two hours. Unless we are assured of receiving some perpetual easement allowing us to reasonably rent 5

spaces in the modified Stevenson St. parking area, we have no choice but to oppose the abandonment. On the other hand, if we do get assurances of adequate parking I will agree to keep the building facade once I learn how to do that.

The other tenants in this building support this email. And I believe the Reno Historic Preservation Society and/or the Nevada Historical Society, as well as the Twentieth Century Club may take an interest in this matter if we cannot be assured of at least 5 or 10 spaces on Stevenson St.

John White, Esq.
335 W 1st St
Reno, NV 89503
775-322-8000

On Thursday, August 8, 2024 11:12:32 AM PDT Leah Piccotti wrote:

> Here's a link to the meeting:

> https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19:meeting_NzQ1YzBlNmQtODVkJi00ZT

> FmLWE4ODUtYTQ2MjVmY2MyOTgy@thread.v2/0?context=%7B%22Tid%22:%22c03159c6-d56c

> -490c-a793-69f98a7266e6%22,%22Oid%22:%2261ac63da-1131-4831-b54f-d006a8e36b3f

> %22%7D

>

>

>

>

Leah Piccotti

From: Father Chuck Durante <fr.chuck@stacathedral.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 2:09 PM
To: Leah Piccotti; Thanh-Thuy N Tran
Subject: Re: Stevenson Street Reconfiguration

That is helpful to understand. Do those conditions then stay with the property even if sold? Also, would any request for a deviation from the City Council be required to be noticed to neighbors like the request for this reconfiguration?

From: Leah Piccotti <PiccottiL@reno.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 12:36 PM
To: Father Chuck Durante <fr.chuck@stacathedral.com>; Thanh-Thuy N Tran <t@emergingcities.io>
Subject: RE: Stevenson Street Reconfiguration

Once the street is formally abandoned by the City it will be reconfigured by the applicants, as described in your email. The City will place conditions of approval on the abandonment that will require it to be developed as proposed. The applicants cannot deviate from that proposal without the City Council's approval.



Leah Piccotti
(She/Her/Hers)
Associate Planner
Development Services
775-334-2178 (o) 775-870-5531 (c)
PiccottiL@Reno.Gov
1 E. First St., Reno, NV 89505

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From: Father Chuck Durante <fr.chuck@stacathedral.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 12:19 PM
To: Leah Piccotti <PiccottiL@reno.gov>; Thanh-Thuy N Tran <t@emergingcities.io>
Subject: Re: Stevenson Street Reconfiguration

Thanks very much for your reply, Leah. I am copying T on my reply because I am somewhat confused.

My understanding from T is that the developers are NOT seeking an abandonment but a reconfiguration more or less in line with what I described in my email. She said that she is being forced to call it an abandonment because there is "no other way" to make this a one-way street and reserve some parking spaces for the apartments. Is that the case? If so, would it be possible to make this a partial abandonment so that they could get 15-20 spaces for their use? My concern is that if the City no longer controls this street, there is nothing to prevent closure or taking away the parking spaces. It would be in the sole discretion of the owners.

Thanks for your help on this.

Fr. Chuck

From: Leah Piccotti <Piccottil@reno.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 5:22 PM
To: Father Chuck Durante <fr.chuck@stacathedral.com>
Subject: RE: Stevenson Street Reconfiguration

Good Afternoon,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter. It will be included in the public comment section of the Staff Report. For clarification, the applicant is seeking an abandonment of Stevenson Street. This would mean that the City would no longer own or control Stevenson Street. However, the plan is for the street to remain open to one-way traffic and twenty-two public parking spaces would be free to the public with the rest being private for the tenants of the MOD.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Leah

Leah Piccotti
(She/Her/Hers)
Associate Planner
Development Services
775-334-2178 (o) 775-870-5531 (c)
Piccottil@Reno.Gov
1 E. First St., Reno, NV 89505

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-----Original Message-----

From: Father Chuck Durante <fr.chuck@stacathedral.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:10 PM
To: Leah Piccotti <Piccottil@reno.gov>
Cc: Thanh-Thuy N Tran <t@emergingcities.io>
Subject: Stevenson Street Reconfiguration

Dear Ms. Piccotti:

I am the rector/pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Cathedral, downtown on 2nd and Arlington. Ms. Thanh-Thuy Tran, developer on the MOD, met with me and some of my staff about the proposal by her and another developer to reconfigure Stevenson Street, which would give them extra parking on that street by changing the parallel parking to perpendicular parking. They also would like to add some trees to beautify

that street. Further, they are asking to make it a one-way street, heading north. Ms. Tran asked that I reach out to you to explain where we, at the Cathedral, would stand on this project.

My understanding is that the only way offered to them to make this happen thus far is by an abandonment of this street by the City of Reno, effectively transferring ownership of this property from the city to the developers. My parish community would not be in favor of that and so would have to oppose an abandonment. However, a reconfiguration, as planned by the developers, might be acceptable. I note further concerns below.

Access to a through street at Stevenson is important to avoid the alleyway between the Cathedral and the MOD apartment buildings from becoming a busier thoroughfare. A charter school and a law office also uses that alleyway. Closing it would not be good, but I think we could live with a one-way street change at the Stevenson location.

Further, since the city sold the public parking lot on 2nd Street, parking is all the more needed in this part of downtown. Ms. Tran has said that 22 parking spaces would remain totally open parking under their proposal. That is good, although I just counted and there are 30 parallel parking spaces now on the street. Still, in order to be good neighbors, we would not oppose designating spaces specifically for the new apartment tenants (for which I presume they would compensate the city) so long as at least 22 spaces remain public. In exchange, we certainly would favor some of the beautification proposed in the street changes, with the addition of trees and shrubs.

In short, I can see the reconfiguration proposed to us by Ms. Tran as workable but an outright and forever abandonment would not be acceptable and I don't believe it is just. There have been many changes to this part of town, losing parking and some other streets or alleyways lost. I don't think taking the Stevenson Street area away from the public is in the best interests of all our people. However, a partnership could indeed be workable.

I have very much appreciated the dialogue with Ms. Tran and look forward to more discussions to make this an equitable and just solution for all. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of further help in this matter.

Sincerely yours,
Fr. Chuck Durante
Rector
St. Thomas Aquinas Cathedral
775-329-2571

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