

January 14, 2020

Comments to the Buffalo City Council,

re: the request by Queen City Landing to change zoning to allow their tower/multi-story building

by: Gladys Gifford, chair of the League of Women Voters Buffalo Niagara Waterfront Committee

The League of Women Voters Buffalo Niagara supports plans for the Buffalo waterfront that provide and ensure year-round and unencumbered public access to the waterfront; a coherent master planning process for the waterfront which includes significant public participation; development that makes appropriate use of the waterfront location; and protection and enhancement of the natural features at the water's edge.

In line with our stated position, the League of Women Voters Buffalo Niagara urges you, the elected representatives of the public, to act in the best interest of the public. We urge you to deny this request to change the zoning for the QCL property. We urge you to affirm the zoning designation for the Outer Harbor lands as set in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) so that all of the public can enjoy this serene space for generations to come.

City resources should be concentrated on infrastructure and housing within the existing urban fabric of the city. The proposed waivers to the UDO amount to creating urban sprawl on the Outer Harbor with attendant pressure on infrastructure, such as lines for water and sewage. Such sprawl will obligate the city for infrastructure maintenance, and is inconsistent with the spirit and letter of the UDO.

QCL proposal seeks to create a destination for both residents and entertainment events. A waterfront destination already exists at Canalside and on Ohio Street, where the city is required to provide funding to meet demands for traffic control and infrastructure maintenance and security oversight. Construction of the proposed tower/loft building on the Outer Harbor would create even greater demand for these services. The City would be obligated to provide fire protection and emergency medical services and police protection despite the isolated location of the site on the Outer Harbor.

This proposed development would require financial support from the City to maintain its infrastructure and access, thereby diverting needed financial support from other areas of the urban core. We urge you to affirm the current zoning of the QCL site and to deny this request. In line with the principles of Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan, we urge you to support new development and businesses that seek to do smart growth in Buffalo's neighborhoods that already have essential infrastructure and vacant land.