



Alderman Brian Hopkins
City Hall
121 N. LaSalle St.
Room 200
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: 900 DeWitt

April 29, 2021

Dear Alderman Hopkins,

Thank you for the opportunity to receive a presentation on April 15th from Saratoga Partners for the redevelopment of 900 Dewitt. As you are well aware, SOAR spent over two years meeting with a previous hotel owner and the community to understand the then unlawful operation and the proposed project. To legitimize the hotel operation with a permanent zoning change was of paramount concern to the adjacent neighboring buildings and the Streeterville community. What was feared was the operation of a hotel in a quiet residential neighborhood; the creeping of the commercial core of Michigan Avenue and the possible changing character of the residential neighborhood. During that two-year timeframe, there was significant community outreach including mailings, forums, and meetings with all of the stakeholders. And finally, SOAR was instrumental in negotiating the restrictive covenants for the 900 Dewitt Hotel in 2014.

Since then, the community has had to endure many of the fears and concerns that were expressed back in 2012-14. The short-term rentals, unauthorized guests, alcohol, large group gatherings and uninvited guests disturbing the adjacent residents. All of these situations were without a full hotel operation license.

Now Saratoga Partners is requesting that the covenants be released and introduce all of the 'hotel amenities' that the neighbors and SOAR negotiated to keep out of this residential neighborhood. The presentation outlined a lovely package of a high quality boutique hotel with a well qualified operator at the helm. Their

qualifications are what garnered SOAR's support when we were introduced to them in 2019. SOAR's support was also given because the ownership acknowledged and indicated acceptance of the restrictive covenant. We know that Saratoga Partners is a highly respected hotel operator but there are no guarantees in these difficult days.

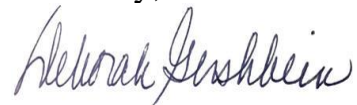
We understand that the pandemic has changed the business model for every sector of our economy but what we hope is that this is temporary and should not impact the neighborhood forever. Once this covenant is lifted any future operator of the hotel will be able to operate a hotel with amenities. In fact, if granted the new designation, more amenities could be introduced, if an operator saw that they were needed to make the operation more profitable.

While SOAR does not have any legal standing in the lifting of the restrictive covenants; SOAR **does not** support lifting of the covenants. We know that the City does have a say in the granting of a liquor license and SOAR **does not** support the granting of a liquor license or a food service license.

SOAR would like to see the development team be a good neighbor and implement security systems both internally and externally due to the history of hotel disturbances in this residential neighborhood as the hotel has had a negative impact on the neighborhood for far too long.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deborah Gershbein".

Deborah Gershbein and the SOAR Board of Directors

CC: Lisa Ryan