Mary Lou Terrien

From: LaToya Morgan <latoyamorgan@cdad-online.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2016 5:16 PM
To: Rep. Lee Chatfield (District 107); Rep. Chris Afendoulis (District 73)
Cc: Mary Lou Terrien
Subject: Letter for the record hearing on HB5232 and SB720

CDAD

February 23, 2016

RE: Support Public Act 169 Local Historic Districts Act of 1970

Dear Representative Afendoulis, Representative Chatfield:

I am writing on behalf of Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD) to urge your support for Public Act 169, the Local Historic Districts Act of 1970 by **rejecting House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720.** CDAD is a membership organization of community development, neighborhood associations, and block clubs across the city of Detroit. Our members work in every neighborhood of the city to build community and improve quality of life for residents. We support historic preservation, and the work of MHPN, because we believe historic preservation laws are important to protecting the integrity, beauty, and value of Detroit neighborhoods and the work of our members.
Michigan relies on current state law, PA 169 of 1970, to protect significant historic resources from inappropriate alterations, incompatible new construction and development pressures that often result in demolition. It does so by enabling local governments to safeguard their historic resources by creating local historic districts.
Proposed amendments House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720 would completely undermine the power of the local historic designation process and administration to effectively protect Michigan's heritage by:

- Requiring that two-thirds of property owners within a proposed district boundary consent to establishing a local historic district AND later require that 2/3 majority of the local legislative body vote in favor of the district. This would create unprecedented barriers to local communities' ability to protect their local landmarks in the future. The current process already incorporates property owner and public input through meetings, workshops and public hearings. Additionally, no 2/3 majority threshold exists to approve and implement zoning or other land use laws.

- Changing the appeals process for an aggrieved property owner within a local historic district from a neutral state board, which has appellate jurisdiction because of its expertise, to a local level where political and development pressures could affect the outcome. Not only is this inefficient, it would be costly to a local government in terms of staff time and community education efforts.

For these reasons, House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720 should be resoundingly rejected. These bills would weaken protections for historic resources and threaten the viability of local historic districts in Michigan. Our historic places and neighborhoods are simply too important to allow this to happen.
Thank you,

LaToya Morgan, MPA

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