

SUPPORTERS OF PEAVEY PLAZA CONDEMN PROCESS FOR SITE'S REVITALIZATION

Minneapolis, MN (October 18, 2011) – A statement from supporters of Peavey Plaza:

It is with great disappointment that we supporters of Peavey Plaza issue this statement condemning the public process for determining the future of the Plaza. Peavey, recently determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, is nationally recognized as a pioneering work of modernism by one of the nation's leading landscape architects, M. Paul Friedberg. Sadly, the City and the Minnesota Orchestral Association have subverted the process of planning its revitalization. What was initially portrayed at the project's onset as an open process, and included a public interview of the four finalist consulting teams at the Minneapolis Convention Center chaired by Mayor RT Rybak, is now a closed-door process and guided by factors uninfluenced by public input.

In November 2010, following a very public vetting process, a design team composed of Oslund and Associates, a Minneapolis-based landscape architecture firm, M. Paul Friedberg, and Charles Birnbaum, an expert on post-War landscape architecture, was selected to develop multiple options for the revitalization of Peavey. A Community Engagement Committee (CEC) was also established by the Orchestra to provide input into the design process, although participation on the CEC was by invitation only and the group has no formal power or authority beyond its advisory function. The design team recognized early in the process that some changes would be inevitable, but the Plaza's signature and defining features including the fountain and the recessed pool could and should be retained as part of the revitalization.

Councilwoman Lisa Goodman, a member of the selection committee, indicated in a November 19, 2010, interview with Minnesota Public Radio, "that Oslund is committed to preserving historical aspects of Peavey Plaza, particularly through his decision to include on his design team Paul Friedberg, the original designer of the plaza."

Since then, as the public learned in an October 11, 2011, Minneapolis Star Tribune article, CEC members have been told not to publicly discuss the process and/or any design options they've seen. Moreover, since spring of this year, Friedberg and Birnbaum have effectively been shut out of the process.

On October 12, 2011, CEC members were given a preview of the single option developed for revitalizing Peavey, an option that removes the signature and defining elements. Setting aside the merits of the proposed re-design, which some of our signatories have previewed, we are concerned that the design decision-making process has not been transparent. The public was assured that several design

schemes would be developed, and yet only one is being presented to citizens; meanwhile, the Minneapolis City Council is scheduled to take action to approve the redesign next week. The project has \$2 million in state funding, so the public should be given a greater role in determining the Plaza's future. CEC members were told that rehabilitating the existing plaza would be more than twice as expensive as the proposed new design, and that prospective funders (yet unidentified) are unwilling to support a rehabilitation scheme. However, thorough cost analyses have not been presented for either scheme. How did we get to this point?

We call on the Mayor, the City Council, and the Plaza's principal neighbor, the Minnesota Orchestra, to honor the right of citizens to effectively participate in the design decision-making process. To do otherwise would diminish Peavey Plaza's once and future role as the heart of downtown Minneapolis.



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