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PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release**NEW GROUP IN OLD TOWN ADVOCATES FOR BALANCED DEVELOPMENT
AT WELLS AND NORTH AVENUE**

Old Town Friends for Responsible Development announces its formation and outlines non-negotiable items.

Chicago, April 24, 2024 – Today, attorney Jordan Matyas announced the formation of the Old Town Friends for Responsible Development or OTFRD. The group is a grassroots coalition comprising over 1,500 residents of Old Town, the Gold Coast, and Lincoln Park, as well as Condo Boards and Businesses from Armitage to Goethe. The development proposes the construction of a towering 480 ft, 500-unit rental building on the corner of North and Wells (1610 N La Salle Ave). The tower will have 450 parking spaces.

The project will include the rezoning of Piper’s Alley, Moody Church, and its neighboring gas stations. Those properties would not be allowed to have residential units; however, there is no prohibition on Fern Hill or any other developer from changing the PD in the future.

Alderman Hopkins will be hosting the first public meeting since details about this massive tower were made public. The Meeting will occur on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, at 6:00 PM at the Latin School Auditorium. To RSVP, visit www.oldtownfriends.com.

OTFRD supports responsible development; however, as currently proposed, Fern Hill’s plans will overwhelm the community, cause traffic nightmares, and forever change the charm and character of Old Town. Any revised plans must include the following:

- 1) The density of the building and the proposed traffic plan must ensure that there is either no change in traffic or an improvement in traffic flow.
- 2) Five hundred units is unacceptable. This massive tower does not belong in the middle of Old Town. The developer needs to work with and not against the community to develop a structure that will support his business needs while not harming the community.
- 3) The building's height should be consistent with similar new construction in Old Town and no more than 8 or 10 stories tall.
- 4) The developer should work with businesses on a plan to ensure minimal disruption to restaurants and stores during construction.
- 5) The plans must include additional details on the gas stations, as well as restrictions on the use of the land and a timeframe for removing them.

“The developer unveiled his dreams for a massive tower only months ago, and since that date, residents of Old Town and the neighboring community have joined together in opposition to this project,” said Old Town Resident and Attorney **Jordan Matyas**. “The developer’s lack of transparency and refusal to respond to OTFRD’s numerous requests for details and documents continues to undermine the community’s ability to review and analyze this proposal.”



Matyas added, “Alderman Hopkins, who represents a portion of Old Town, must balance the ongoing need for development with the massive concerns expressed by neighbors. The community is relying on the Alderman to take the developer's massive tower, which includes enormous density, and tone it down to a development that will become part of Old Town, and not an eye sore and ongoing problem for the neighbors.”

Business owners near the development property have expressed concerns over the harsh realities of the presence of constant construction. **Kevin Vaughan**, the long-time owner of Corcoran’s Grill & Pub, is concerned about the size and density of this project and its effect on traffic and the character of Old Town.

“This is a huge development right on the corner of Wells and North,” said Vaughan. “A development of this size means there will be years of construction and disruption from dust, noise, construction equipment, and heavy machinery. The ongoing traffic is also a major concern for local businesses. We are lucky to have Alderman Hopkins represent this amazing community; I am confident that the Alderman will have the developer work with businesses to ensure minimal disruption to restaurants and stores during construction.”

For more information on OTFRD or details about the 1610 N La Salle project, please visit www.OLDTOWNFRIENDS.COM or contact info@OLDTOWNFRIENDS.COM.

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