

CITY OF FOUNTAINS
HEART OF THE NATION



KANSAS CITY
MISSOURI

QUINTON D. LUCAS
City Council
Third District At-Large

January 17, 2017

Leslie Caplan
President
Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 17641
Kansas City, Missouri 64124

Re: General Obligation Bond

Dear Ms. Caplan:

I received your letter concerning the City Council's upcoming vote about placing a general obligation bond before the voters of Kansas City this April. In particular, you wrote about preserving funding to support renovation efforts at Kansas City Museum and concern that a plan I presented to my colleagues on January 12 removes funding for public buildings from the proposed tax increase. Thank you for writing me.

Like many Kansas Citians, I have been visiting the museum since my childhood and appreciate the work of you, your neighbors, and leadership at the museum and the Department of Parks and Recreation in ensuring a strong future for the Kansas City Museum and its surrounding neighborhood. Regardless of what occurs with the bond, I support ongoing renovation of the Kansas City Museum within the City's annual budget given its importance to the neighborhood, the Historic Northeast, and our City overall.

Indeed, if proposed public facilities expenditures under the bond were limited to the Kansas City Museum and replacement of the City's inhumane animal shelter I would not have the same level of discomfort I currently hold with the bond. Unfortunately, however, Resolution 160951 (the companion legislation to the GO bond) lists not only those two facilities, it includes renovation of a number of other public facilities such as the Line Creek Community Center Ice Arena, a replacement building for a parks facility maintenance division, substantial renovation of a multistory city-owned office building in my home Third District, exterior improvements at City Hall, and prioritization of ADA improvements at a number of already well- (or partially outside-) funded city-owned assets such as Starlight Theater, the Music Hall, and the same Museums at 18th & Vine referenced in your letter. I have no doubt that each item listed is an important one, but I question whether they all need to be addressed with this proposed tax increase. Further, I imagine supporters of other meritorious projects also may ask if, for example, an ice skating rink

repair is essential, then why not any number of other worthy projects such as a new pool and community center in the Northland and a shelter for homeless persons in the urban core—both items that I have been asked to support in connection with this same bond.

My view of the bond is that we are asking voters to fund emergency needs of the City that cannot be supported through taxpayers' already significant tax payments each year. When we list a plethora of building projects with no real connection to each other then I fear we stand subject to fair accusations that we lack a responsible and specific plan for how the tax increase will address and cure emergency needs that challenge the quality of life in Kansas City. I do not feel comfortable asking you and your neighbors to pay us more each year just so that we can address a backlog. I think you expect us to ask for a tax increase so that we can fix problems that have no other funding source, help rebuild communities and not just update offices, and help us avoid significant future expenses to the taxpayers.

That being said, I appreciate what you have to share about Kansas City Museum and personally will take under advisement the impact bond proceeds could have on the museum's future and the future of the Historic Northeast. I am honored each day to have an opportunity to represent the community as it continues to be a model for historic preservation, strong neighborhoods, and diversity in East Kansas City.

Finally, I want to address the 18th and Vine point made in your letter. You noted my and the entire City Council's strong support of funding for museum, housing, and commercial upgrades in the 18th and Vine Jazz District. The reason you heard much of my advocacy was because Council debated for over eight months—rather than the three months for the \$800 million GO bond—the amount to provide the project, reducing the City's initial budget outlay from roughly \$28 million to \$7 million and focusing on renovation of historic structures in the district, including several at immediate risk of collapse. As part of that funding package, councilmembers from the Third District were asked to provide substantial in-district public improvement (PIAC) funds to support the project. While we saw it to be an important citywide asset, we also agreed that the community in which the project sits would provide that significant support. At the time, many of my colleagues asked us a number of questions about long-term plans for the Jazz District, sought assurances that the project was fiscally responsible, inquired about district leadership and how the project affected nearby communities. After much work and collaboration, we produced a result that answered the questions and concerns of many on the Council. I hope in connection with the broad plans for public facilities under the GO bond we are able to protect taxpayers in the same way.

I welcome your email or call anytime and hope we can be in touch again soon.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Q. Lucas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Quinton D. Lucas

