March 9, 2016

Dear Ohio City Stakeholder:

Ohio City was one of three neighborhoods in the City of Cleveland that grew between 2000 and 2010. Additionally, research has shown a demand for over 1,800 units of housing in Ohio City right now, while we have seen nearly 100 new businesses open since 2010. As such, part of the Ohio City Incorporated (OCI) 2014-2016 strategic plan concentrated on facilitating smart, family-friendly growth as the neighborhood moves forward. In our strategic plan we state:

“Ohio City Incorporated will partner with neighborhood stakeholders and city officials to address neighborhood needs and growth trends by revisiting zoning code throughout the neighborhood. Preserving the single-family nature and historic character of the neighborhood interior, promoting continued presence of affordable homes, and priming appropriate corridors/parcels to accommodate dense development within historic context.”

To this end, OCI began working with the Cleveland City Planning Commission (CPC) in late 2015 to facilitate a process around rezoning the neighborhood in a way that makes sense for both existing property owners and the future. Additionally, we want to ensure that the built environment that exists today that makes Ohio City so special, is replicated as we move forward. Currently zoning prohibits building the types of structures, both residential and commercial, that we know and love throughout the neighborhood.

To date we have held conversations with each of Ohio City’s seven block clubs and hosted a community-wide meeting to discuss the purpose and need for rezoning to move forward. Looking ahead we will host two open houses where anyone can ask questions, give feedback and offer suggestions. These open houses will take place on March 29th from 2:30pm-4:30pm and 6:00-8:00pm at Urban Community School, 4909 Lorain Avenue. Both of these sessions will be open to all. After the open houses are completed, we will work with CPC to create a proposal that we feel will be beneficial for the entire neighborhood. That proposal will be released at a public meeting on May 4th at 6:00pm also at Urban Community School, for the entire community to review. Copies of the proposal will be released to block club leaders, neighborhood stakeholders, and will be posted on OCI’s website in advance of that meeting to allow for an informed and thoughtful discussion.

At the end of this process, the proposal will move on to the official City of Cleveland public process which will need approvals from the CPC as well as City Council before it can become law. All of these meetings will be open to the public to express their opinions. Official notice will be sent to all affected property owners by the City of Cleveland and OCI will assist by notifying stakeholders through our traditional channels.

This is an opportunity to weigh in on the future of the built environment of one of Cleveland’s most storied neighborhoods, and we sincerely hope you will engage and be a part of the process. If you have any questions please contact Ben Trimble at btrimble@ohiocity.org or 216.781.3222 x105.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. McNair
Executive Director

Erika McLaughlin
President