



Friends of the Plaza, Inc.

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FRIENDS OF THE PLAZA STATEMENT OF POSITION ON HIGHWOODS' SPECULATIVE OFFICE BUILDING

Kansas City, MO, April 30, 2011. A number of recent developments have occurred that directly impact Highwoods Properties' proposal to build an office tower on the Country Club Plaza. Friends of the Plaza takes this opportunity to restate its position on this important issue in the wake of these developments.

A few weeks ago, Polsinelli/Shughart, the law firm for whom the building was being built, withdrew from the project. At that point, the proposed office building became just another speculative office building and not a new home for 500 Kansas City jobs. Friends of the Plaza had opposed the construction of a 200,000 square foot office building because the size of the building – which was dictated by the size of the law firm that would locate there – was just too big for this site. Now, with the law firm negotiating for space elsewhere on the Plaza, the Highwoods building can be scaled down and made consistent with the Plaza Plan. This would include creating a mixed use building that would enhance residential and retail uses – and could also include some commercial space as Highwoods desires.

On April 29th, departing Mayor Mark Funkhouser vetoed the City Council resolution that would have granted the rezoning needed for the project. Highwoods had moved aggressively in the last days of the Council's term to push their project through. Friends of the Plaza had opposed this unneeded rush to have a lame duck council change long-standing zoning rules to permit the construction of a speculative office building after destroying 100 homes. This veto allows the new council to begin anew on this issue, and to address more thoughtfully the serious problems this proposal creates.

Friends of the Plaza has worked – and continues to work – for a compromise resolution that meets the needs of the Polsinelli firm, the Plaza and the City of Kansas City. With Polsinelli moving to another location on the Plaza and the City Council having been given a fresh start, Friends of the Plaza looks forward to continuing to play a constructive role in this process.

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