NEWS RELEASE

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FRIENDS OF THE PLAZA BEGINS REFERENDUM PROCESS

Kansas City, MO, May 5th, 2011. Friends of the Plaza today announced it had collected the necessary signatures to start the process that would subject the speculative office tower proposed for the Country Club Plaza to a vote of the people of Kansas City. The group said it had collected the signatures of registered voters required to begin the referendum process in a matter of hours.

“We decided Tuesday night that the time had come to get the process started,” said Michael Koon, a member of the Friends executive committee. “By mid-afternoon Wednesday, we had the necessary signatures and dozens more.” Mary Steeb, who is also part of the Friends group, agreed. “People are angry about this,” she said. “Kansas Citians understand that this office building is a very bad idea for the Plaza and for the City.”

Highwoods Properties, the proponent of the tower, decided to push the project through the City Council even after the original tenant for whom the building was intended withdrew. Dan Cofran, attorney for the Friends of the Plaza, noted that “once the Polsinelli/Shughart firm left to find another Plaza location, this project was no longer about jobs; it was about whether the City needed another speculative office building at a time when more than a million square feet of high quality office space is already vacant.”

Vicki Noteis, an architect and former director of planning for Kansas City who is a consultant to the group, agreed. “What this is about now is permanently changing the zoning for a sensitive site for no good reason. The project has only gotten worse since the Planning Commission rejected it a few weeks ago.”

Friends of the Plaza is a coalition of individuals, business owners and advocacy groups seeking to protect the Country Club Plaza. For more information go to www.friends-of-the-plaza.org.

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