July 31, 2015

RE: 1801 W. Grace Rezoning Request

Dear Neighbor,

After hosting two community meetings, a smaller format meeting with the development team and the Northcenter Neighborhood Association Zoning Committee, and considering the feedback received by the 47th Ward Office, I am supporting the request for a planned development at 1801 W. Grace Street for 62 rental units with 66 parking spaces and a community green space/dog run.

The North Center Community has been losing rental housing units over the past decade due to the conversion of two and three flat buildings to single-family homes. This loss in rental units threatens the economic diversity of the neighborhood, and hurts the health of the small business economy on Lincoln Avenue. The long-term financial health and viability of our city is dependent on growing our population, and to do that we must provide a diverse housing stock. This building will create 7 new affordable housing units on-site, support more economic activity on Lincoln Avenue, and provide increased revenue on our property tax rolls.

After reviewing the traffic study and observing current conditions on Grace Street, I am confident that parking and traffic will not be adversely impacted by this development. There are ample on-site parking spaces provided as part of this plan for the new residents. If compared with the similar amount of parking accessed right across the street, I do not anticipate that it will add a large amount of cars onto Grace Street at any given time. I will monitor Grace Street traffic closely, and if there is a need to add 'no parking' to a single side of the street we will consider that. However, given the projections and experience with this kind of building I do not believe it is necessary to alter any of the conditions there, especially because any change would bring drawbacks to the neighborhood.

This former lumberyard is currently vacant and not generating positive activity. The developer’s alternative plan under their current zoning would be to build a large storage and truck rental facility. This type of use would be less attractive, and would generate little benefit to the neighborhood as a whole. Additionally, the creation of additional truck traffic...
on Grace Street is not desirable given the traffic constraints that have been identified through the community process.

We must continue to find ways to replace lost rental housing to grow our population in the 47th Ward, and across Chicago. Developments like this are an important part of ensuring that we remain a community that is economically diverse and thriving. I look forward to this project coming online and benefitting our community.

Sincerely,

Ameya Pawar
Alderman, 47th Ward