October 17, 2003   Contact: Ms. Terry Pastika
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ACCURATE INFORMATION NECESSARY FOR MAKING POLICY DECISIONS

A primary role of the city manager is to serve as the chief advisor to the city council and to carry out policies and legislative directions established by the city council. In essence, the city manager advises and translates policy set by the city council and puts it into action.

Much discussion has ensued over the last few weeks about the city manager and the October 6th Special Committee of the Whole meeting, where Block 300 developer David Strossberg was asked if the bank building would come down if the current proposal was not passed. The question was in reference to a memo from the city manager to the Mayor and aldermen, stating "Morningside would refocus on the project of zoning right should the City not be interested in the terms of the Development Agreement supporting the Planned Development Project request." The developer's response was that inclusion of the above statement was the city manager's idea, not theirs (Morningside) and that they were committed to the plan before the city.

Accuracy of information and accuracy of the source of information received by the city council, which they use to base decisions on, are essential to informed decision making. This is especially true when taking into account the intense community involvement, the countless hours commission members and aldermen have dedicated to evaluating the proposal, and the deeply divided city council. The "refocus on the project of zoning right" statement if the city does not anti-up over a million dollars in city TIF funds clearly influenced all aspects of the committee discussion, and unnecessarily so. Although the city manager's opinion is valuable, the assertion that the bank building will come down is vastly different when taken in the context of coming from the developer. Moreover, it is disconcerting that this discrepancy was revealed only because of a direct question.