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Acknowledging and celebrating the fact that every blessing each of us receives emanates from the benevolence of God, our Father, I bring you news of our evolving City

A lot of excitement and anxiety is being generated by the De Monet proposal involving the 1900 block of University Avenue. Let me provide you with some updated information. On March 16, 1987, the Redevelopment Agency proposed, and the City Council subsequently agreed, to grant to De Monet an "exclusive negotiation" contract for a period of 18 months relative to the 11 acre parcel. This means that the City will forego talking to any other developer during this period; as consideration for "lost opportunities," the the City will receive four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) from De Monet.

This **exclusive negotiation** agreement is not a development agreement! A large development such as this one proposed by De Monet has some very positive aspects and some very negative ones. It signals the possibility of boosting our local economy and generating new tax revenues. Conversely, it could mean gentrification - the very real possibility that people who now reside in the City will be gone in the next decade or two; it could mean local residents again being passed over when jobs are given out; also, it could mean loss of current businesses and their employees.

In order to progress to the "development" stage, the City must be vigorous about the following: involvement of the community in all stages of the process; negotiating a **First Source** agreement to ensure the employment of local residents (I didn't use the adjective "qualified" when writing about the employment of local residents because that should be a foregone conclusion, the same as when we're talking about the employment of people external to the City); careful selection of highly qualified public finance and redevelopment consultants; and an adequate plan in place to resolve the gentrification and/or displacement of people and businesses.

Over the years since first becoming involved in civic activities, I've rarely responded publicly to rumors. (Rumors are as numerous as germs and can be just as deadly.) However, a very perverse and pervasive one has recently surfaced that necessitates a response. The Big Sage Corporation, of which I am a limited partner, recently purchased two apartment buildings in the City; the allegation that the down payment on the property was made with "drug money" is a blatant **LIE**; the rumormongers circulating this dastardly lie are doing so with malicious intent because they well know that it is false; they have even contacted the local media and a Times Tribune staffer is digging hard to find some 'dirt'.

The Council recently voted (5-0) to rezone the north side of Clarke Avenue from Bay Road westward approximately 400 feet to resolve a problem involving traffic safety. (Shopkeepers objected to imposing a no parking zone on the south side of the street.) These same rumormongers are attempting to raise a conflict-of-interest charge because I voted on the item; they really do not understand what constitutes a conflict-of-interest; it comes about when economic benefit accrues to a person participating in making the decision or to some one related to that person - a relative, a partner, an agency or business which employees that person, a colleague or an associate. There is absolutely no economic benefit accruing from this action. 'Nuff said!