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City of Detroit

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
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Jackie L. Currie
City Clerk

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Deputy City Clerk

RECEIVED
CITY ENGINEERING DEPT
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL

DEPARTMENTAL REFERENCE COMMUNICATION

August 14, 1996

To: The Department or Commission Listed Below

From: The City Clerk

The following petition is herewith referred to you for report and recommendation to the City Council.

In accordance with that body's directive, kindly return the same with your report in duplicate within the usual time limit.

/ POLICE DEPARTMENT / / CITY PLANNING COMMISSION /
/ PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT /
/ CITY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT /

2540 THE WHITTIER, requesting permanent closure of Burns Drive between Jefferson Avenue and the Detroit River due to alleged nuisance conditions.

NOTE: Inasmuch as the Detroit City Council is on recess from Thursday, August 1, 1996 through Tuesday, September 3, 1996, this office requests that you deal directly with the petitioner regarding their request.

AG-F

8-100

Police

ADD/CPC / City Engineering

2540



THE WHITTIER

4:35 PM
-CITY CLERK-

Fold at line over top of envelope to the right of the return address

CERTIFIED

Z 015 850 827

MAIL

City Clerk
Room 200 City County Building
Detroit Michigan 48226
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August 5, 1996

Honorable Members of the City Council:

This letter is a request by the Whittier Towers 415 Burns Avenue, Detroit Michigan 48214 to the Detroit City Council that Burns Drive be closed to vehicles from 10:00 p m t o 7:00 am from Jefferson Avenue to the Burns's Drive termination at the Detroit River.

The Whittier Towers occupies Burns Drive on the West Side from Jefferson Avenue to the Detroit River. Henderson Park occupies Burns Drive on the East Side from Jefferson Avenue to the Detroit River. Burns Drive is lighted with street lights on the Park's side from Jefferson Avenue to the entrance of the Park's parking area at the Detroit River. There are no street lights adjacent to the Park's parking area on Burns Drive or in the parking area itself. This area is completely dark at night. Henderson Park is supposed to be closed from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am. Gates located at the end of the park closest to the Detroit River are locked by the 7th Precinct Police at 10:00 pm. The Whittier Towers security unlock the gates at 7:00 am. Signs put up by the Park Department state that the park closes at 10:00 pm. Signs along both sides of Burns Drive note that there is no parking on either side of the street from 11:00 pm to 6:00 am except for a portion of the street near the Detroit River on the West or Whittier Side of the street (these signs were removed by individuals who did not agree with the postings.)

Therefore other than emergency vehicles or individuals associated with the Whittier Towers, there is no reason for vehicles to be on a dead end street after 10 pm that has a park that closes at 10:00 pm or a street that has no parking from 11:00 pm to 6:00 am. The Whittier Towers has a service drive on its West side of the property which can be used by both individuals associated with the Whittier Towers and emergency vehicles. The Whittier Towers has 24 hour security which can make sure this entrance is accessible.

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Request to the Detroit City Council
From the Whittier Towers
August 5, 1996

Whittier Towers is a hotel that primarily serves seniors by providing an array of services that assists in their remaining independent. The hotel has been part of the Detroit skyline since 1928 and continues to be a privately owned small business that not only pays taxes, numerous permit fees, and uses a large amount of fuel which also is taxed, but offers employment to over 65 individuals, provides in kind accommodations to organizations such as the Greening of Detroit, The Indian Village Historical Society, space for voting on the East Side and space for the Grand Prix volunteer's training, as well as housing to over 165 residents whose average age is 86. These seniors have worked all their lives and now only desire a quiet and safe enjoyment of their apartment and associated living areas. This is not being realized.

I have been the Director of the Whittier for just under two years. I have struggled each summer with the same problem that not only affects the quality of life of residents living at the Whittier, guests coming to special functions, but also becomes a marketing problem for insuring the continued operation of the facility.

After 10:00 pm each night during the summer, Burns Drive takes on a whole different character. When the entrances to the parking area at the Detroit River end of the Park were not controlled, the parking area became a high trafficked all night outdoor party place. With the gates now being closed to the parking area at 10:00 pm, the all night parking area party place has transferred to the end of Burns Drive. Burns Drive (a dead end street) has become a major traffic route with a turn around for those who just enjoy driving and a party area for those who want to stop. The attempts by the police to manage the traffic to Belle Island and on Jefferson Avenue has now diverted even more traffic to Burns Drive.

The end of Burns Drive near the River does not have any lighting which further supports the activity that occurs each night. The Whittier has two 4 globe parking lot outdoor lights that are not being used. The Whittier would be happy to donate them to the City for installation in the Park parking lot. This will help light the area but will not solve the problem.

To further define the problem, the Whittier is nightly subjected to all night automobile traffic, speeding cars running with or without their headlights, cars traveling through the Whittier's enclosed entrance way, loud radios

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with special high wattage audio systems, security alarms being activated, car horns, yelling, bottles being broken, windows being damaged, cars being vandalized, fences being cut, street being used as a public restroom and if it is occupied Whittier property being a back up, and both the park, street, and Whittier property being used as a garbage dump. The latest activity is to cut the chains that close the gates to the Park parking area. Currently, the southern most gate is not able to be closed since the chain and lock were cut and removed two nights ago. Cars are back in the parking lot all night as if the Park is or never was closed. We will obtain another stronger chain and lock and give it to the 7th Precinct. It will be cut and removed and we will go through this same episode over and over again. I started this letter on the 11th of July and am completing it today the 5th of August. Last night the chain was cut. We purchased a much stronger chain and very expensive lock and put them on the south park parking entrance gates. This morning both locks on both gates were full of a super glue which renders them inoperative. The park department came out and put on a new lock on one of the gates. There is no lock on the second gate. The new high strength chain we had purchased has the scars of someone who had been cutting through it with a hacksaw. It is half cut. It will be finished probably tonight. We still only have one key for the new lock. We will need to get a duplicate key for the police and probably another lock. The same people will fill the locks up with glue and this will go on and on. On Saturday night I was working outside security. I saw a van parked against the south park parking lot gate. When I walked down to see what was happening, the individual in the van was trying to get the lock and chain off the gate. This man had to be in his thirties. It was after midnight. We need your help.

Our residents use and greatly enjoy the park and enjoy the area they have chosen in which to live. We do not feel that we are unreasonable in our request about closing the street, and do not feel it would negatively impact the legitimate use of the Park and street. It has already been concluded that the time for the use of the Park and parking on the street have been limited.

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We are not asking the City for any additional outlay of dollars since we would be willing to establish a means to control traffic similar to the method in the Park parking lot. Since the police now close the gates at the Park parking lot entrance, a gate at Burns and Jefferson could be closed as they exit Burns. We would open the Jefferson/Burns gate at 7:00 am as we do now at the Park parking entrance. We further would be happy to ensure that emergency access is guaranteed.

We have greatly appreciated the assistance from both the Park Department and the 7th Police Precinct in working with us as we address the street and park problem. We have tried to minimize any requests for assistance from the City. We have gone as far as patch holes in Burns Drive, pick up trash on Burns Drive, and in the Winter ran our snow plow down Burns Drive to keep it open. We do our part.

In concluding:

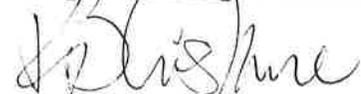
We cannot solve this problem by ourselves. We have tried.

We only need your support of our request. We will work with whoever to gate the street.

We look forward to your assistance. We need it.

We may be reached in care of the address and telephone in the letterhead.

Respectfully Submitted;



Ronald B. Custance
Executive Director
The Whittier Towers

cc 7th Police Precinct
Park Department

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