

## Stadium Hearing

January 21, 2014

Mayor Benjamin and members of council, I am Howard Duvall and I live at 4103 Macgregor Drive in Columbia.

The development of the Bull Street property is a once in a generation opportunity for the City of Columbia. It is important for the future of this city that you, as our elected officials, get this right. In my opinion, you are about to compound the mistake you made by signing a development agreement against the advice of your lawyers by moving forward with another contract before the project has been properly vetted. It is time to slow down and do your due diligence.

A quick Google search on city owned baseball stadiums will produce many questions that need to be answered before this council makes a decision on a publicly funded stadium. Also, the issue of the type of development appropriate for the Bull Street Project has not been answered. Will a stadium move the Bull Street Project from a mixed use development to another entertainment district?

I would urge the council to let your staff fully explore the questions surrounding the Bull Street Project and a possible stadium. After a thorough review, the city finance staff can put more accurate cost estimates before the council. When council agrees on a proposed course of action and the associated cost, the matter should be sent to a referendum to approve the general obligation bonds. By having voter approval of the cost, the bonds will not count against the 8% GO debt limit.

With careful planning, the Bull Street project can be the crown jewel of the City. Take your time and let's get this one right!