



November 14, 2018

Mayor William Peduto
City County Building
414 Grant Street # 512
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Councilwoman Deb Gross
City County Building
414 Grant Street # 510
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Councilman Daniel Lavelle
City County Building
414 Grant Street # 510
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Via email

RE: Registered Community Organizations Ordinance

Dear Mayor Peduto, Councilwoman Gross, and Councilman Lavelle,

I am writing to address the recent passing of the Registered Community Organization (RCO) Ordinance on September 18, 2018. It was both surprising and disappointing to see this legislation passed without consternation, in spite of the strong opposition it received during the community engagement process last year. It was particularly concerning to see additional items added to the legislation that were not vetted through the community engagement process, such as the requirement of a signed letter from the City Council Member(s) that represents the geographic area(s) of an organization. **It is the position of the Hill Community Development Corporation ("Hill CDC") that the legislation, in its current form, does not serve its intended purpose, but, instead, limits the voices of community**

organizations and residents in the City of Pittsburgh. Additionally, the Hill CDC is concerned that the substantial eligibility and registration requirements of the RCO ordinance will disproportionately impact African-American and low-income neighborhoods, such as the Hill District, that have a high concentration of under-resourced community organizations.

The Hill CDC met with other community organizations located within the Hill District on Monday, November 12, 2018 to discuss how this ordinance will impact our community. The Hill District has created an ecosystem of organizations within the community that work collaboratively for the betterment of our neighborhood. That ecosystem is not necessarily defined based on geographic boundaries. It is our concern that discouraging RCOs with overlapping boundaries is disruptive to the collaboration we have worked so hard to achieve.

In addition to the aforementioned concerns, attendees expressed concern about the impact this will have on communities with pre-existing community review processes, such as the Hill District. The Hill District has a structured and formal Community Review process, which is led by the Development Review Panel ("DRP") (www.hilldistrict.org/drp), a collaborative committee comprised of representatives from five community organizations each with one resident appointee. The "Development Activities Meeting" called-for in the Ordinance circumvents our existing community review process and shows undue favor to developers in the community engagement process.

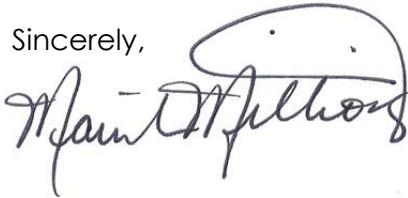
For example, our current process includes two steps: (1) detailed technical review and scoring by resident panel members; and (2) a public meeting for plans that align with the community master plan as determined by panel members. This two-step process protects our community from insufficient opportunity to review new development plans. The process also assures that developers have a smoother path to implementation through the regulatory process if there is alignment with the community master plan, as the Development Review Panel issues a public letter of support only after residents have had a fair opportunity to vet plans in our two-step process. The one public meeting requirement, regardless of whether developers align with community plans, puts communities at a disadvantage because there is a failure of technical review and/or measurable input from residents. Open forum presentations by developers are often focused on talking points that lack depth and a critical analysis of how plans may impact a neighborhood and the residents within. We believe that the current RCO legislation will diminish the incentive of developers to work with existing community review processes to refine and reformulate their projects prior to implementation.

In the immediate term, we urge you to consider pushing back the implementation date of the Registered Community Organization Ordinance to December 1, 2019, and to also make the numerous revisions requested by community organizations during the

engagement process. Many organizations across the city are unaware that this ordinance exists. As such, they are technically left with approximately three weeks to meet eligibility and registration requirements that leverage a heavy administrative burden that not every organization has the capacity to meet.

In order to increase awareness of the RCO Ordinance, the Hill CDC will be hosting a meeting with other community organizations from across the city on **Monday, November 19th** from **6:00 PM – 7:30 PM**. This meeting will be held at the **Arnold's Tea at 502 East Ohio Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212**. We invite you to participate in the conversation and hear directly from city-wide constituents on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marimba Milliones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Marimba Milliones
President & CEO

cc:

Daniel Gilman, Mayor's Office
Councilwoman Darlene Harris, District 1
Councilwoman Theresa Kail-Smith, District 2
Council President Bruce Kraus, District 3
Councilman Anthony Coghill, District 4
Councilman Corey O'Connor, District 5
Councilwoman Erika Strassburger, District 8
Councilman Rev. Ricky Burgess, District 9