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Pride & Preservation Committee

Plat 1 - Official Business

Historic District Update

Monday Dec. 22nd 2014

Dear neighbors:

Your Barrett Brae Plat 1 resident-organized Pride & Preservation Committee have been working over the last year to help our community decide if we would like to become a historic district. This resident-driven initiative was prompted in part by the recent addition of Craig Woods to the Historic districts of Kirkwood, which is similar to our neighborhood. In addition, the Pride & Preservation Committee has been considering the opportunities that becoming such a district might present to our residents. Over the last two months, these benefits and opportunities have been shared with residents. As of this letter, **more than 80% of Barrett Brae Plat 1** residents have indicated their written support via door-to-door circulated petition.

Last week we made our first inquiry with the Landmarks Commission of the City of Kirkwood with a goal of having a public hearing on the matter in March 2015.

On Saturday, December 20, 2014, you might have received an anonymously distributed flyer stating concerns and inaccuracies about becoming a Historic District.

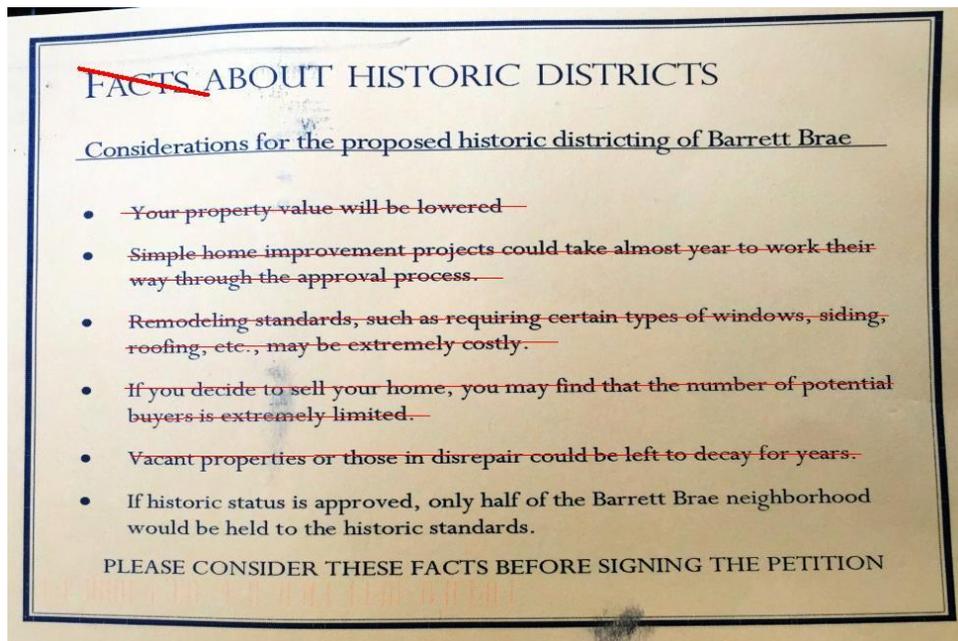
This letter is the **official response** from the resident organized Pride & Preservation Committee clarifying factual inaccuracies and assumptions made in the anonymously distributed flyer. This response is a reflection of residents who have come together in support of this effort and collectively believe becoming a Historic District holds many advantages for our community.

The web address below provides you with clear language from regulations posted by the City of Kirkwood

(<http://www.kirkwoodmo.org/mm/files/CODEofORDINANCES/October%2031%202013/Chapter%2012%205.pdf>) about becoming a historic district. **Please note** the ordinance addresses both Landmark structures and Historic Districts. We are pursuing **Historic District designation**, which allows residents more freedom than when an individual property is declared a Landmark. All Kirkwood ordinances can be found here: <http://www.kirkwoodmo.org/content/City-Departments/2034/code-of-ordinances.aspx>

Below is a point by point review of the inaccuracies stated by the below flyer:

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Item 1: Studies do not support the flyer's statement regarding lowering property values. **In fact, it's been shown to be the opposite.** "As stated by economist Donovan Rypkema, "the results of these studies are remarkably consistent: property values in local historic districts appreciate significantly faster than the market as a whole in the vast majority of case and appreciate at rates equivalent to the market in the worst case. Simply put – historic districts enhance property values." See these links for additional information:

- **Impacts of Historic Property and District Designation:**
<http://www.achp.gov/economic-designation.html>
- **Historic districts in the United States:**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historic_districts_in_the_United_States#cite_note-broad-28
- **Donovan Rypkema: Economic Benefits of Preservation:**
<http://iqc.ou.edu/2013/05/10/donovanrypkema/>

Item 2: As stated in the Kirkwood Historic District Ordinances, simple home improvements are not governed by the Landmarks commission. Paint, siding, even remodeling can be done without any involvement of Landmarks. Landmarks only covers demolitions / new construction.

Item 3: As stated in item 2, Landmarks only covers demolition and new construction, the choice of remodeling windows, siding or roofing are up to the homeowner and must only follow standard building code ordinances for the City of Kirkwood.

Item 4: Studies show historic districts garner additional interest from likeminded individuals. Studies also state those who chose to purchase in a historic district do so in part because the

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district protects their longterm investment. Additionally, mid century modern homes are in short supply in St. Louis and in the U.S. and there is a passionate community looking for this style of home.

Quote from Washington DC historic district article : “Local historic district designation has proven to insulate property values from wild swings in the housing market, including both downturns tied to larger economic trends, and “bubbles” caused by cycles of real estate speculation. This stability is related to investor confidence that, because there are explicit design limits in the zoning code, home investments in historic districts will not be adversely affected by construction of an inappropriate, out-of-scale building next door. It is also due to the fact that neighborhoods with stable values do not offer opportunities for “flipping” (purchase followed by quick resale at a high profit margin). In these ways, local historic district designation reduces the uncertainty facing the buyer regarding the future value of the investment. In short, it may be that historic districts are more likely to experience a certain indemnification from extremely modulating property values, perhaps because of a higher degree of investor confidence in these officially recognized and protected areas (Gale 1991:8).” [*Gale, Dennis E. 1991 The Impacts of Historic District Designation in Washington, D.C. Occasional Paper No. 6. Center for Washington Area Studies, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.*]

Item 5: The Landmarks commission does not prevent demolition of homes in poor repair. As stated in the ordinance, the Landmarks commission has the right to delay a demolition request for a maximum of 270 days, but not indefinitely. The goal of the Historic District is to allow the time to protect those homes that should not be demolished, and if there are demolitions, to ensure that new structures are built in congruence with the overall style of the neighborhood.

Item 6: It is true that Barrett Brae is a split neighborhood. We have different indentures, pay different taxes, and can take advantage of different legislation to protect our neighborhood. We are fortunate to have the option to protect the special qualities of our neighborhood through a Kirkwood Historic District designation.

Please direct any questions or concerns you may have to Pride & Preservation Committee chair Corrina Vratny (corrina.vratny@gmail.com). Additional information available at www.barrettbrae.com or consider attending the Plat 1 neighborhood meeting to be held the last weekend in January 2015.

Sincerely,

The Barrett Brae Resident Pride & Preservation Committee

Corrina Vratny – chair

Ross Bradley, Tony Schmidt, Jessica Worley, Mary Huxhold, Amy Foley*, Tiffany Shell, Andrew Mullins, Paul Reiter – members

* Pride & Preservation committee member, Amy Foley, was misidentified as Amy Lowry in the mailer. Amy Lowry works with the Landmarks Commission and is not affiliated with this letter or the Barrett Brae Pride and Preservation committee.