

From: **Michael Charest**

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Subject: Pleasant Street Project

To: <clovett.ccc@gmail.com>, <jcontois.ccc@gmail.com>, <nkoloski.ccc@gmail.com>, <adamren.ccc@gmail.com>, <jstone.ccc@gmail.com>, <dmatteau.ccc@gmail.com>, <aohearne.ccc@gmail.com>, <akier.ccc@gmail.com>, <esweetser.ccc@gmail.com>

Michael Charest, Ward 2

I am writing to each of you with several points concerning the project before you over the course of the next few weeks; The Pleasant Street project being called (Rethink Pleasant Street) This project has already been pointed out to be very doable, is clearly part of the Master Plan that was worked on and involved a large segment of residence participation at various levels and could happen next year when Pleasant Street must have its infrastructure. water, sewer lines replaced and lead pipes removed. With a bit more effort Claremont could be brought into the 21st century from 50 years ago. The residents were clear during the Master Planning segments last 2 years that improving and making Claremont a more attractive and up to date location, a destination and uniquely attractive for a younger age group. Bringing a younger homeowner here is really a must for Claremont as the tax burden would clearly then fall on senior tax payers.

It may be important to mention here that I am also a merchant on Pleasant Street and am very aware of what rerouting truck traffic, improving parking, widening sidewalks and doing a little landscaping would do for us as a restaurant located on arguably is the premier corner in Claremont. My wife Christine and I bought a struggling restaurant, mainly to offer a destination and draw to Claremont from outside the area. We invested heavily in Taverne on the Square. I retired in 2016 and bought the restaurant with our own cash Working as an Investment Advisor in Manchester and Boston commuting each day home to Claremont, I did invite and some instances dragged colleagues, clients, friends and acquaintances back here; virtually all commenting on how nice Claremont was and not at all what they were led to believe.

It is obvious Pleasant Street is going to be torn up and will only cost.03 cents per 1000.00 of tax. According to local realtors, buyers are flocking to purchase homes and move to more rural locations like Claremont to escape the hustle and bustle of big city life.

Let's invest in ourselves for a change. Let's make Claremont more attractive to residents and visitors. Let's make our downtown the centerpiece of the city with liveliness. There is a certain appeal to being able to experience culture and vibrancy in a beautiful section of town and still be within walking distance of your quiet neighborhood.

As Christine and I have tried desperately to do, lead by example and put our money where our mouth is over the last 5 years, with the concert series at Arrow Head, Christmas lighting for 3 of the last 5 years Christmas decorations, and then we bought and donated thousands of plants, shrubs and flowers, Christine and Mayor Charlene Lovett with volunteers planting them everywhere from the Amtrak Station, City, Parks, the High School, the bullpen, in the Planters throughout the city. Lastly, buying and improving a struggling restaurant hoping to make it an attractive destination for out of towners and residents alike our restaurant downtown.

We all collectively need to think forward and take this step to make the investment in ourselves with your leading the way. Decades of talk about this with no action have lead us to where we are today; we all need to collectively work for the betterment of our community. Thank you all for your time and leadership. I thank you for voting in favor of the "Rethink Pleasant Street" project as proposed.

Sincerely and Respectfully

Michael Charest