

# Brian Hopkins

2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Alderman

## CITY COUNCIL TESTIMONY

North Branch Modernization Framework Plan

Wednesday, May 8, 2017

(1:34:35) Alderman Hopkins --

Thank you, Mr. president; I agree slightly with the statement that we'll be watching. The North Side will not only be watching, the North Side will be involved, the North Side will be a participant, the North Side will stand as partner!

Ladies and gentlemen, this is an opportunity for redevelopment in this city on a scale unseen before probably since the great Chicago fire. I'm excited and privileged to be the alderman of the area to bring new jobs to the area, spark economic growth and totally transform not just the North Side, but all of Chicago, because what we are embarking upon right now will *keep* jobs in the City of Chicago.

It's retention; we are not losing the jobs. Just moving them to the part of the city that need jobs, and for the companies that want to stay. One company you all know, Finkl Steel, is still Chicago-based and still producing parts for the airline companies as they once did in my ward. What's there right now? A vacant parcel of land.

I've previously discussed the notion that the current PMD is representative of a blank canvas. We don't know yet what is going to be on that parcel of land. There are a lot of ideas around there. But I do know this; it will generate more property tax revenue than the \$300,000 it previously did. That is nothing compared to the economic potential of this entire corridor once it's redeveloped to its best and highest use.

What does that exactly mean? People ask that question? I don't know. But we are going to find out together. I know what it doesn't mean; it doesn't mean some vague rendering that was leaked to the media. That's not the way this process is going to go. In fact, let me put the development community on notice, if the first time that I see your idea is in the newspaper, I'm just going to flat out say 'No' to whatever it is. I don't care what it is. If that's the way you are going to go about

the process, I'm against it. That's not how I roll and how my neighborhood is going to roll.

We are developing an advisory board to draft a community benefit agreement that will be part of every redevelopment proposal that we look at seriously. When I say seriously, I mean it's a formal process. We are not jumping at rumors and shadows and ideas of what may or may not happen. We are going to be looking at specific, detailed proposals in the form of a planned development amendment. We've been doing that in this town for a long time. There is a well-established process for aldermanic prerogative where we control what we put in our wards through this process.

Today is the beginning, not an ending. We are going to pass this framework. I know the votes are there. But what led us to this vote is just a pregame warm up. The real work isn't done. I have some ideas and we'll talk about it. A park. I think we can do better than 10 acres but at least we have the 10 acres to start with, in addition to the 50 acres of open space that was already included in that plan.

We have a commitment to retain 70% of the developer impact fees. I actually tried to get 90% - I will take what I can get. That's part of being open to a process where nobody gets 100% of what they want. That's just a reality of what we have to deal with. But we can use that 70%, to fill those things that we need to make the economic development inviting to the area.

Mr. Mayor, it bears repeating, for the last five years the city of Chicago has led the country in corporate relocation. That's why I am delighted to stand here today and say I welcome those jobs, I welcome that new development.

We are standing here today, right now, to endorse the future. That's what this vote is about. We invite the community to tell us what they want as they have done. We have had more than 25 community hearings and we collected all of their comments and feedback. That process will continue. That process will inform the decisions that I make as the Alderman of the 2nd Ward going forward.

But the vision is bold, the vision is exciting, and the goal of this is to get it right. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

I urge an aye vote for this.

Thank you.