

2-21-1996

## Statement by Ernie Bonner

Ernest Bonner

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2/21/96

**STATEMENT BY ERNIE BONNER**

City Council session, Feb. 21, 1996: UR-95-0074 DZ

I have two problems with the proposed parking garage.

**1. The proposal is clearly inappropriate for the site.** Many here can, and will, speak to this point. I would only say that even a flatlander like me gets a little suspicious of the efficacy of a proposal to put the tallest parking structure in town on one of the smallest blocks in town. The operation of this facility will disrupt every abutting property for the next 50 years. The proposed garage is simply inappropriate for its site.

**2. The process for review of the proposal is illogical.** Why are we reviewing the design of a building which has not yet been approved as to use, density or affect on surrounding uses? The important issues with this proposal are not design issues, but exactly those which are not to be considered (or even mentioned) here. At the same time, future decisions in future hearings as to use, density and off-site effects will quite likely change the design. Do the applicants then go through another design review? The process for review of this proposal is backward, and does not meet Portland's standards for citizen involvement in important planning decisions.

**I respectfully suggest that you table this matter of design review until the proposal is approved in all other respects under the downtown plan and development regulations.**

I further suggest that you charge those who will evaluate this proposal to consider the construction of this garage against the long term vision of reclaiming the park blocks for open space in our downtown. In 1852, 25 blocks of land were set aside as a band of open space across the breadth of downtown. In 1871, seven of those blocks passed into private hands and were built upon--first by the Arlington Club and then by others. Let's rekindle the first Park Block vision. Let's all set ourselves the goal of walking unimpeded throughout the length of the original 25 Park blocks on their 200th birthday celebration, a warm Summer day in 2052.

I can't resist one more suggestion. In my opinion, private parties should not build public garages in the downtown. Why not raise long-term parking fees in the downtown, then use the increment to finance the construction of public parking garages in accordance with the provisions of the downtown plan? In fact, we have already done that with at least some of the garages we now own--except that we have used tax increment funds to finance them rather than parking fees. I like using long-term parking fees, because I feel that we are not doing enough to discourage long-term parking in the downtown.

Thank You.