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Gaudenzia Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center Refiles Zoning Application Despite Resident & Elected Official Opposition



“At every turn, Gaudenzia has refused to partner with the Hill District community. They have ignored input from public officials and residents, and they’ve demonstrated gross disregard for the Hill District’s future. We cannot in good conscious support their methods, or their attempt to put a new drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility in the heart of our Centre of Culture and business district.” – Marimba Milliones, President & CEO

Despite the Zoning Board denying their application, **60** letters of opposition from residents, business owners, and developers in the Hill District; **114** petition signatures, and a letter from **Councilman Lavelle** expressing no support, **Gaudenzia** has filed a **new zoning application** to move forward with their plans to construct a new **3-story residential drug & alcohol treatment facility** in the heart of the Hill District’s “Centre of Culture,” and business corridor.

In January of 2017, Gaudenzia submitted their plans to the Development Review Panel (DRP), the committee of residents that reviews proposed development in the Hill District. The DRP gave the proposal a **failing score**. As part of the discussion afterward on how to bring

Gaudenzia's development in alignment with the Greater Hill District Master Plan, Gaudenzia was **offered four alternate locations and a land-swap** from the City. Gaudenzia rejected all four alternate sites, sought community support elsewhere, and filed a zoning application seeking setback variances, a special use exception for a community home, and some parking variances unbeknownst to the DRP.

On July 13, 2017, The Hill Community Development Corporation (Hill CDC) and residents attended their public zoning hearing to oppose the proposed development and request time for the community to become informed of the project. The community was granted a hold on the record, which gave 10 days from the date of the hearing to hold a community meeting, and 3 weeks from the date of the hearing to submit additional evidence.

On July 17, 2017, the Hill CDC hosted an **emergency meeting** to inform the community. Over **65** people attended including Hill District residents and stakeholders, representatives from Gaudenzia, representatives from the development consulting firm hired by Gaudenzia, an attorney representing Gaudenzia, and current clients of Gaudenzia.

Hill District residents expressed concern with the process by which Gaudenzia sought to develop a new residential drug and alcohol treatment facility, as well as the location of the facility at 420 Grove Street facing Centre Avenue. In addition, there was frustration that **Gaudenzia does not service Hill District residents, and instead treats a clientele from the suburbs**. Still, Gaudenzia did not re-engage the DRP or any elected officials.

On July 25, 2017, the Hill CDC sent a **Letter of Re-engagement** to the President & CEO of Gaudenzia, Michael Harle, on behalf of the DRP asking that they re-engage the Hill District community review process.

The Hill CDC **received no response** and therefore submitted **256** pages to the City of Pittsburgh Zoning Board in opposition to the project.

On September 7, 2017, Gaudenzia hosted their own community meeting in which they again met strong community opposition.

On October 12th the **Zoning Board denied** Gaudenzia's special use exception request due to their plan not complying with the community home requirement of one unrelated person per bedroom. After being denied at the Zoning Board, Gaudenzia once again did not contact Councilman Lavelle's office, the DRP, or the Hill CDC to find an equitable solution and a relocation site.

On November 2, 2017, Gaudenzia **filed a new zoning application**. The **public hearing** for their new zoning application is **Thursday, November 30th at 9:40 AM**. The Hill CDC has put out a call

to action for residents to attend. **The Hill CDC is also requesting the intervention of Allegheny County and federal public officials who are integrally involved in the funding of a new drug and alcohol treatment facility.**

“It is broadly understood that the opioid crisis requires a heightened level of supportive services. We must be equitable, however, in how we go about solving the problems that grow out of this country's addiction crisis. **Disadvantaged communities, like the Hill District, should not be forced into deeper despair by being the recipient of new treatment facilities that do not even serve the people of our community.**” – Marimba Milliones