



2235 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue North St. Petersburg, FL 33713

February 12, 2024

Kenneth T. Welch, Mayor  
City of St. Petersburg  
P.O. Box 2842  
St. Petersburg, FL 33731

Dear Mayor Welch,

As our company begins its 42<sup>nd</sup> year in business in St. Petersburg, we want to inform you of our strong support for the Historic Gas Plant District Redevelopment Project. For 20 years, starting in 1987, our business was located at 1101 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, directly across the street from the vacant land that was once a vibrant neighborhood.

We remember seeing the empty streets and sidewalks with concrete steps leading up to empty foundations to homes that were no longer there. We remember watching Katz's Grocery store operate in the vast emptiness in those last days until it finally closed.

We always wondered if the promises that were made to the families that were uprooted and moved in the name of "progress and improvement" were kept. We know, of course, that many were not kept even after the stadium was built. As designed and presented, we believe that The Historic Gas Plant District Redevelopment Project will help to right some of those wrongs.

We also enthusiastically support a new Tampa Bay Rays Baseball stadium facility as a key element in that redevelopment. Finally, after years of wrangling, posturing, failed designs in unworkable locations we will have a new stadium exactly where it belongs...in St. Petersburg.

Yes, the Rays have been a major client of my company for 27 years, and we're starting #28 right now. The economic impact they have provided to us and scores of other local businesses has helped many survive and thrive in spite of several economic recessions and even a pandemic. Having the new stadium as a keystone to the development will ensure that will continue to be the case for many, many years to come.

We strongly support the Historic Gas Plant District Redevelopment Project!

Sincerely,

Al Karnavicius, President

Nancy Karnavicius, Vice President