

To: Naperville Historic Preservation Commission

From: The East Central Homeowners Organization (ECHO) Board of Directors

The purpose of the East Central Homeowners Organization (ECHO) is to preserve the residential community atmosphere and character of our neighborhood while promoting the interests of homeowners. Our mission is in alignment with the City of Naperville's stated historic preservation objectives and the work of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The reconstruction at 223 Center Street, which brings a Modern Farmhouse within the boundaries of Naperville's Historic District, shows that current rules and penalties are ineffective and weak. Judges ignore the interests of the Naperville Historic Commission, the City of Naperville, and the Historic District when they assess insignificant penalties that do not deter flouting current rules.

When developers can exploit weak enforcement and build trivial penalties into their sale price to realize significant real estate gains, it will only encourage this practice and we will continue to see the loss of historic homes and the character of the neighborhood.

We ask for the Commission and if necessary, the City Council, to make changes that are necessary to preserve the Historic District from the wrecking ball, including stronger enforcement of current architectural and design rules, a review of current guidelines to consider whether changes are needed to protect the character of the neighborhood, and a significant increase in penalties including financial and withholding of certificates of occupancy.

Since penalties are set at the judicial level, we are seeking a multi-level fine structure to force the judicial to properly align fees with their impact on the Historic District and home sellers who are damaged by for-profit ordinance breaking.

We further request any fine collected is used to improve the historic district since this is where the damage is felt.