

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to express my concern that Century II and the old downtown library have been removed from the plan to redesign the look of the Arkansas River in downtown Wichita and will apparently be replaced with smaller buildings and a large green space designed to connect other businesses to the river. I believe that if this plan is carried out and Century II were destroyed, that it would cost the city and her residents a significant economic structure that will not be easily replaced. I feel that the so called need to grow and revitalize often comes with the destruction of our irreplaceable history. Both Century II and the library are historic buildings that many consider permanent structures in the downtown area. They are both irreplaceable history that will be gone forever!

Many Wichitans have grown up attending events at Century II, everything from concerts, plays, comedy specials and graduations. Century II is iconic with the Wichita skyline. When I hear that a “international consulting group,” with no ties to Wichita, has eliminated Century II from their “Riverfront Legacy Master Plan,” then, I must say, they do not have the right feel for Wichita in mind while trying to carry out this job. Many have, just as fond memories of the library, as well, as do I.

I understand that there are several plans on the table and while I believe that one calls for the destruction of Century II, my hope is that another will lean toward renovating the building. City officials have said it could cost roughly \$272 million to renovate Century II and about \$492 million to raze and rebuild. One factor that is not added into the cost to raze and rebuild and one that cannot be tabulated, is the cost to the heart of Wichita and her residents. Century II is Wichita.

I understand that the creation of the Wichita plan is being funded with \$200,000 from the city and county governments (taxpayer money) and \$500,000 from private and quasi-public groups with an interest in downtown development, (business men who only want to make money). Please do not waste our time and our money padding the pockets of a few private individuals and special interest groups.

I understand that for a city to grow and prosper, changes must take place. Often when this so-called growth happens, it happens at the expense of the very place that is “trying to be saved.” Often these deals are accomplished in back room meetings with secret handshakes, all, out of view from the public. This often leads to financial problems and miscalculations that the residents get left holding the bag for, such as Gander Mountain, Water Walk or the destruction of Mead’s Corner, a favorite destination for many who live in and around Wichita. The citizens of Wichita have a right to a transparent city government that represents all citizens, and not just a few at the top. Please do not shove another special project down our throats, especially one that will destroy one of our most beloved structures and is only wanted by a few people with their own interests in mind. Leave Century II and our beloved library alone!

Thank you,

Alan Brooks

Saturday, February 21, 2021
Gary Deeter, Committee Assistant
House Local Government Committee
c/o Representative Kent Thompson
Kansas Statehouse
Room 187 North
300 SWW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612
Gary.deeter@house.ks.gov

To Whom It May Concern on the House Local Government Committee,

I urge you to pass House Bill No. 2233 which will allow voters to decide the fate of buildings on the National Historic Register, specifically Century II and the former Wichita Main Public Library. For me, a long-standing rule of thumb has been that one written letter speaks for at least 200 persons, and there were 17,265 original petition signers.

Of course we need to save Century III! And why would we not? It was built as a uniquely configured building that would require unique configurations, and it has served all of us very well in its first 50 years. It has proven itself capable of presenting us plays, concerts, annual lawn and garden shows - some of the best in the nation, symphonies, operas, bridal shows, and, oh, so much more, for many years. And it was well maintained during the beginning years. Not only did the building serve the city well inside, but it was, and is, an impressive icon for the city of Wichita itself...until a few years ago.

We've been told that about ten years ago, yearly maintenance money was withheld, and Century II began a decline. And then we're told that new, larger trucks can no longer get down into the basement of the building. Nonsense! The basement ramp can be rebuilt to accommodate those trucks, so the down ramp runs parallel to Douglas Avenue, and directly down into the basement. And they can use their back up skills to leave the building.

And then we were told that large plays could not come to Wichita. Nonsense! If any of you have ever seen a New York City Broadway production, you know that space is limited, and they have coped. Wichita can continue to successfully handle smaller versions of larger shows, just as they have in the past.

As to the former public library, when it first was built, we were led to believe that when there was a projected future need for additional library space, the library could be developed upward. Years later, when that need presented itself, we were informed that the foundation would not support upward growth. Surely, that was a previously known fact...

As one developer for the new buildings stated, a new building will endure for the next 50 years, and implied that it then can be destroyed and another built — again! No! No more money in developers' pockets!

It is time we honor and cherish and maintain the Historic Buildings Wichita has! Just as it has in the past, our unique, iconic Century II can continue to successfully serve its people if it is allowed to do so: **THE TWO BUILDINGS CAN BE REPURPOSED, IF THE PEOPLE DECIDE THEY WANT A NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER.** Let the people vote and decide its future. And may justice prevail.

Please vote yes for House Bill 2233 and let the people themselves of both Wichita and Sedgwick County decide the future of the two buildings. .

Thank you.

Ann Bennett Graham,

Copies to members of the House Local Government Committee

Dear Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau

I am urging you to support the passage of House Bill 2233 in regards to the fate of Century II and the former public library in Wichita Kansas.

The Century II and the former public library future is in question. These were paid for with my tax dollars. I believe that **the voters of Wichita should be allowed to vote** concerning the future of these two iconic buildings and destination venue.

I described the buildings as a “destination venue”. As a young boy I would take the city bus downtown to the public library to study and do my homework. The library was so unique with its architecture and striking windows. It was very conducive to learning and completing my homework. As I started my family I also remember going to the library to check out framed pictures of known art work. This would allow us to “change up” the pictures in our home. The former library is now serving as a site for Covid vaccinations with its increased parking and improved comfort of those seeking the vaccination

Century II was the first place that I attended a rock concert by Black Sabbath. I went to many more at Century II over the next decade. The Tripodal next to Century II was where my friends and I would meet prior to attending many of the Wichita River Festival events. Century II allows the public easy access to the river and bicycle trails. The food court next to Century II was also a great event to go to for lunch and dinner during the week of the River Festivals. I enjoyed many fly overs by the United States Air Force standing next to Century II. One in particular was when the B1 Bomber with its wings swept back flew over at a very low altitude and then climbed in altitude until I could not see it any more. It made me feel proud to be an American in a great city like Wichita. Century II was also the site for many shows such as the Home Shows, Lawn and Garden shows, Women’s Fairs and Rod and Custom shows.

I am afraid that there are groups that want to demolish these two buildings so that plum contracts can be given for private developments with the brunt of these costs payed for by taxpayers like myself. I fear that public access to the river would be reduced. I am also fearful and distrustful of private developers trying to enrich themselves and leaving the city of Wichita taxpayers to holding the bag. There is an empty Gander Mountain and a poorly designed “Water Walk” development to attest to this problem.

I understand that Century II and the former library need to be updated to be more accommodating to handicapped access. I believe that this would be less costly than destroying these iconic Wichita landmarks and building new developments.

Over 17,000 citizens of Wichita have signed a petition that want to have a VOTE on the fate of Century II and the former library. I urge you to support House Bill 2233 to **“Let the VOTERS decide!”**

Sincerely

Carl Weihe
210 N. Holyoke
Wichita Kansas 67208

January 20, 2021



RE: House Bill number 2233

To whom it may concern:

I believe I own every book on Wichita history ever printed. Yes, I am a Wichita buff. One thing that is prevalent throughout my collection of books is how many beautiful period buildings have been destroyed, due to “urban renewal”. Let’s not let this happen to Century II.

Contrary to many structures built in the late sixties and seventies, Century II actually has plenty of character. In my world travels, I have never seen another building that even comes close to its unique design. It is downtown’s statement piece.

What a pity it would be for Century II to disappear among all the other great structures in my history books. That blue dome means “Wichita” as much as the iconic Keeper of the Plains.

Along side the beautiful century-old Proudfoot and Bird-designed building that now houses the Sedgwick County/Wichita Historical Museum, and the ultra-sleek Epic Center, Century II completes our downtown aesthetics in both shape and height. These three buildings represent separate eras of Wichita. It is important to cherish and preserve an exceptional sampling of each era so as not to erase that moment in history.

Do what you must to adapt the building to current needs, but please do not destroy its overall design. In my humble, tax-paying opinion, to do-away with Century II would give downtown Wichita (and the people responsible) a black eye. Don’t let my great-grandchildren learn about Century II from history books. Let it be enjoyed for generations to come.

I, for one, would like the opportunity to vote on the future of Century II (and the former downtown library). Elected officials, voted into office by citizens, have a duty to listen to the concerns and wishes of their constituencies. Hence, this letter.

Many thanks for your consideration,

(Original signed)

Cynthia J. Gentry
340 North Yale Avenue
Wichita, Kansas 67208

House of Local Government Committee
My written Testimony in support of HB 2233

Wichita's Modern Library and Century II

When the “new” library was to be built, the proposal to “make a stronger foundation so, in the future, if a third story is deemed necessary, the structure would have the foundation needed to hold the weight” was decided. So be it.

Summer brought the “Sak-and-Act Players” – elementary through ninth grade students who selected a book/story to develop into a play, rehearse, build the props out of cardboard, and travel to other libraries in Kansas to entertain. They rehearsed in the basement, weekday mornings. I was a director.

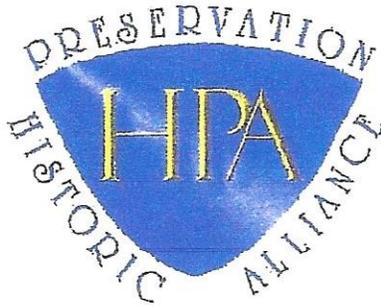
Under that basement was the sub-basement. Our area was carved out of basement storage, additional stacks waiting for future use, and other items. It was dry, easy access from upper floors and an underground ramp, and a small, underground parking lot.

The structure design, with a third floor when needed, could still be developed – including the elevator shaft. The “down side” was that there was not enough parking, even though a very large parking lot was across the street south, and a smaller one, north. Current mindset is that “no one wants to walk – or pay a meter.” (BUT – the current, “newly built” library elicits the same comments!)

The iconic structure, itself, presents a beautiful extreme design, very different, west of the 1800s “Old City Hall”, and to the east of the “hamburger round” Century II. Colors notable are grey, blonde and turquoise.

Where else in the United States of American can one find three – 3 – distinct types of structures in a “straight line”, noticeable not only on the ground, but from the air?

Francene Sarah Davis Sharp, 1820 N. Arkansas Avenue, Wichita, Kansas
67203-2565 316-619-7663



February 22, 2021

Gary Deeter, Committee Assistant
House Local Government Committee
c/o Representative Kent Thompson, Committee Chair
Kansas Statehouse, Room 187-North
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: House Bill No. 2233
Municipal Historic Buildings Act
Written Testimony in Support of Bill

Dear Rep. Kent Thompson, Chair, & House Local Government Committee:

On behalf of the General Membership and the Board of Directors of the Historic Preservation Alliance of Wichita and Sedgwick County, Inc., I want to extend my appreciation for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill No. 2233, the Municipal Historic Buildings Act. This Bill applies to the Century II Performing Arts and Convention Center and the former downtown Central Public Library, located in Wichita, Kansas.

Century II has both historical importance and architectural significance, is a downtown landmark and is the single most iconic structure in the City of Wichita. Historically, the facility opened on January 11, 1969 to commemorate the centennial anniversary of Wichita's incorporation on July 21, 1870. Architecturally, the building was inspired by the style of Frank Lloyd Wright with its low circular construction and shallow domed roof. The sand-colored pillars represent the vast fields of wheat and the pale blue-colored dome represents the limitless sky.

The adjoining downtown Central Public Library, built in 1967, is a prime example, if not the best example, of the "brutalist" architectural style in the State of Kansas. The term is actually an Americanization of the French term "beton brut," which means "raw concrete." Rather than covering up the structure with smooth drywall, the brutalist style highlights the natural texture of poured concrete.

Although 12,554 signatures were required, the Save Century II campaign gathered 17,265 signatures during its petition drive to require a binding VOTE on the fate of Century II and the Public Library. House Bill No. 2233 is written to require a mandatory majority VOTE of Wichita qualified electors before municipally-owned buildings exceeding 80,000 sq. ft. and listed on the National Register of Historic Places can be demolished or otherwise adversely affected. The Kansas Constitution states: "All political power is inherent in the people... The people have the right...to petition the government, or any department thereof, for the redress of grievances." Passage of House Bill No. 2233 will ensure this right.

Thank you for your consideration of House Bill No. 2233.

Very Best Regards,


J. Greg Kite, President
Historic Preservation Alliance of
Wichita & Sedgwick County, Inc.

Please vote YES on House Bill #2233 * 02/24/2021

02/22/2021

From: Jean Ann Cusick

1400 N Woodlawn #9C

Wichita KS, 67208

cell #316-765-3281 email: lctdramamama@gmail.com

Wichita KS:resident/registered voter/taxpayer

To Gary Deeter

I am 81 years young and an avid supporter of all arts forms. (Okay, maybe Rap is not a favorite of mine.) I was born in Wichita and with the exception of 10 years, I have lived in Wichita. Since retiring it has been my privilege to volunteer where I saw the most need and for those who might use my talents.

For years I volunteered for political organizations or candidates and enjoyed seeing the inner workings of campaign offices and of nominees.

However, in 2019 I began reading about the threat to tearing down our iconic Frank Lloyd Wright designed Century2 performing arts and convention center, closing our Brutalist designed Library and bringing in out of state planners to complete our downtown look of unattractive, cold, austere, russian designed steel and glass. IMO

My own backstory is with Century2, and the original (Federal Bank) library, plus planning fundraisers for the Sedg. Cnty. Historical museum bell tower chimes, and the world famous Wurlitzer organ in Century2.

My Uncle Jack of the Prothero brothers lathing company put the roof on Century2 with the last quality metal lathing that was ever used in Wichita. In 1967 I went down to have lunch with him one day and he looked up and said, "see that ceiling? that ceiling will last more than 100 years." Mark that please. 1967.

What is now the Mary Jane Teall Theatre opened Century2. Mary Jane was my mentor and I was her asst. director on that production. I was in attendance when the Theatre was named after her as a living memorial and I helped to plan her funeral held there, within.

My uncle, former mayor John Stevens, worked non partisan with former mayor, Vince Bogart to bring in an overwhelming yes vote BY THE TAXPAYERS, to build Century2. I am very proud that we at SaveCentury2 had volunteers throughout the city who collected 17,000+ signatures. Our mission was non partisan and done for the good of all citizens.

There is nothing more exciting to citizens or of curiosity to visitors, than flying into Wichita. Airlines go down the river from the Wichita Art museum, past the Peacekeeper designed by Wichitan Black Bear Bosin and right over Century2.

Please say yes to House Bill#2233 for any future tear down or remodeling of our National historic preserved Wichita landmarks. 7 city hall people gave a 'slick' answer to the petition of 17,000+ signees. Citizens could have a vote if and when but, city council can override! 6-17000? Who's the FAIR winner? Thank you for your consideration.

Jean Ann Cusick

CC: State Representative Susan Estes, District 87

State Senator Renee Erickson, District 30

Committee Asst. Ks Legislature, Gary Deeter

2/19/2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I want to give my support for Century II and the Downtown Wichita Library and the related House Bill No. 2233 Municipal Historic Building Act. It has a lot of importance in our community and my life personally. I have enjoyed the musicals, my participation in KMEA, and all of what they have had to offer. It would be disappointing for it to no longer be viable and I hope it and the Downtown Library can gain historic status. They are unique and so much of our culture surrounds these buildings. Its central location and wonderful architecture, even the aerial view, are very advantageous for Wichita. Please allow the citizens to vote on their fate. Thanks so much for your strong consideration to not destroy decades of culture, and deny future generations the privilege of wonderful events and opportunities.

Josie Brooks

Judy L. Young

11591-11 E. Agate Lane

Wichita KS, 67226

(316) 213-1464

1943tinker@gmail.com



February 19, 2021

Gary Deeter, Committee Assistant
House Local Government Committee
c/o Representative Kent Thompson
Kansas Statehouse Room 187 North
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Mr. Deeter:

Please share this letter with the each committee member for consideration of HB 2233. It is critical that we the taxpayers of Kansas stop the atrocity of our civic leaders pocketing profits from the sale and destruction of public property. Example: our State Board of Regency allowing the leasing of taxpayer land to private companies at WSU. The university should no longer receive tax dollars in any form.

Century II is one of the premier icons of the United States, not just Kansas and Wichita. It may no longer be suitable for the performing arts, which are critical to our community, but it should never be destroyed. It is sad that we had such poor leadership in both our city and county who allowed Century II to become so rundown. The money needed today for those repairs should come from those individuals.

In the mean time it is necessary for we citizens and your leadership to see that Century II and all other buildings like it are spared. The only alternative we have is to seek a public vote not allowing our greedy leaders to make decisions that directly benefit themselves.

Please ask every member to VOTE in favor of HB 2233.

Thank you,

Judy L. Young

Personal Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 2233 (Municipal Historic Buildings Act)

Born in Wichita, I remained here until after my marriage in 1970, around the time that Century II was completed. My husband and I often visited town, however, and we came to love Century II as the elegant home of outstanding cultural events like the Wichita Symphony and Music Theatre. Its distinctive profile seemed (and arguable remains) the veritable face of downtown Wichita. When seen from the east, its low horizontal sweep leads one's vision to the Arkansas River and the west bank beyond. When viewed from the west, it draws the eyes across its signature expanse and up to Wichita's skyline. When glimpsed from the air, it calls out, "Wichita!"

During my years away, I was fortunate to spend time in some architecturally significant cities. Part of their distinction, I propose, derives from a layering of styles and an artful blending of old and new that visually represents the breadth of their particular histories. Wichita will never attain that constructional depth and richness if we allow developers, sometimes with no connection to our city or its buildings, to continually substitute the merely current for the best of our old. Century II is a twentieth century Wichita landmark, perhaps its most iconic.

Wichita has again become my home. Like many fellow residents, I am concerned about the fate of Century II. Those of us who not only appreciate its storied past but also recognize its continuing potential should at least be given a vote on its future. The same could well be argued for any of our buildings with verifiable historical merit.

Katherine L. Hanscom

1128 N. Woodridge Dr.

Wichita, KS 67206

Dear Representative Tom Sawyer,

I am urging you to support the passage of House Bill 2233 in regards to the fate of Century II and the former public library in Wichita Kansas.

The Century II and the former public library future is in question. These were paid for with my tax dollars. I believe that **the voters of Wichita should be allowed to vote** concerning the future of these two iconic buildings and destination venue.

I described the buildings as a “destination venue”. As a young girl I would go to the public library to study and do my homework. The library was so unique with its architecture and striking windows. It was very conducive to learning and completing my homework. The former library is now serving as a site for Covid vaccinations with its increased parking and improved comfort of those seeking the vaccination.

Century II was the first place that I attended a rock concert by Cheap Trick. I went to many more at Century II over the next decade. The Tripodal next to Century II was where my friends and I would meet prior to attending many of the Wichita River Festival events. Century II allows the public easy access to the river and bicycle trails. The food court next to Century II was also a great event to go to for lunch and dinner during the week of the River Festivals. I enjoyed many fly overs by the United States Air Force standing next to Century II. One in particular was when the B1 Bomber with its wings swept back flew over at a very low altitude and then climbed in altitude until I could not see it any more. It made me feel proud to be an American in a great city like Wichita. Century II was also the site for many shows such as the Home Shows, Lawn and Garden shows, Women’s Fairs and Rod and Custom shows.

I am afraid that there are groups that want to demolish these two buildings so that plum contracts can be given for private developments with the brunt of these costs payed for by taxpayers like myself. I fear that public access to the river would be reduced. I am also fearful and distrustful of private developers trying to enrich themselves and leaving the city of Wichita taxpayers to holding the bag. There is an empty Gander Mountain and a poorly designed “Water Walk” development to attest to this problem.

I understand that Century II and the former library needs to be refurbished to be more accommodating to handicapped access. I believe that this would be less costly than destroying these iconic Wichita landmarks and building new developments.

Over 17,000 citizens of Wichita have signed a petition that want to have a VOTE on the fate of Century II and the former library. I urge you to support House Bill 2233 to **“Let the VOTERS decide!”**

Sincerely,

Lisa Quade
330 S. St. Paul
Wichita Kansas 67213

Gary Deeter, Committee Assistant
House Local Government Committee
c/o Representative Kent Thompson
Kansas Statehouse, Room 187 North
300 SW 10th St., Topeka, KS 66612
gary.deeter@house.ks.gov

Feb. 19, 2021

RE: Support House Bill No. 2233

Please support House Bill No. 2233 Municipal Historic Buildings Act, which I believe will save the most iconic building in Wichita, Kansas — Century II — from the wrecking ball.

An architectural wonder that was designed by students of Frank Lloyd Wright, Century II is unique to Wichita and worth saving. Professionals have determined that with the deferred maintenance and repairs completed and some modernization this building could continue to serve as a venue for performances and conventions or be repurposed for other uses. The building needs to be saved from ending up in a landfill. The landfill needs to be saved from having all this material dumped in it.

Moreover, Century II is part of Wichita's identity as a city. Look at any Wichita cityscape, and many informational or promotional materials in print or online feature this unique round building. Century II serves as an icon for the city. It is one of our most outstanding features.

The building exhibits Frank Lloyd Wright, Native American and Kansas influences with its blue, domed roof, representing the Kansas sky, the wheat-colored columns, representing fields of wheat and the horizontal lines representing the horizon where the land meets the sky. People love this building. I love this building. I saw Bob Dylan in Century II on Halloween in 1990. That is one of many memories that makes the building dear to my heart.

I also know that whatever developers have in mind to replace it, will never hold a candle to its architectural uniqueness. The world does not need another nondescript building of smoked glass and neither does Wichita.

Our taxes built Century II in the 1960s. It is only 60 years old, young by buildings' standards. Please, prevent it from being demolished without a vote by supporting House Bill No. 2233 Municipal Historic Buildings Act. Thank you.

Kind regards,
Madeline McCullough
810 Shadyway
Wichita, KS 67203

cc: Mary.Ware@senate.ks.gov
john.carmichael@house.ks.gov

Paul H. Tyson
420 S. Elizabeth
Wichita, KS 67213
February 18, 2021

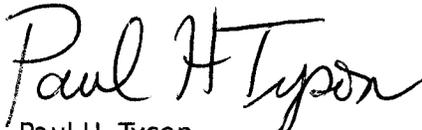
Gary Deeter, Committee Assistant
House Local Government Committee
c/o Representative Kent Thompson
Kansas Statehouse
Room 187 North
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

To whom it may concern,

I write in support of House Bill No. 2233. This bill will prevent the reckless destruction of historic buildings without due consideration and consent of the municipal citizenry. In the last few years, here in Wichita, I have seen how special interests and profit-minded developers can conspire to destroy cherished buildings in the name of "progress". I am not against progress, and I understand the responsibility of city governments to maintain and improve their urban areas to meet changing requirements. I am against progress-for-profit on public land, which aims to maximize returns per square foot without regard for the aesthetics, character, and soul of urban spaces. HB 2233 will provide the necessary balance between development and preservationist interests by requiring majority agreement on drastic revisions to the cityscape.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Paul H. Tyson

Suellen T. Petrillo
303 South Poplar
Wichita, Kansas 67211
(316) 734-1230

February 22, 2021

Mr. Gary Deeter, Committee Assistant
House Local Government Committee
c/o Representative Kent Thompson
Kansas Statehouse, Room 187 North
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Re: Century II and House Bill 2233

Dear Mr. Deeter:

I am one of the 17,265 Wichita residents who signed the petition to allow voters to decide the fate of Wichita historical structures.

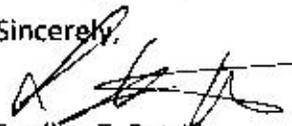
Century II and the former public library building are not simply structures to be bulldozed down at the whim of a handful of public officials wishing to duplicate what they saw in tours of other cities. Why can we not intertwine new structures with the old allowing the personality of this city to remain? Century II is pictured in nearly every lead-in to local news programs and in printed articles relating to the city in general. It is my understanding that students of Frank Lloyd Wright designed Century II and another very similar round multipurpose building. When the city, in which the other building still stands, found it no longer suited the original purpose, they repurposed the building rather than bulldozing it to the ground. If in fact Century II is no longer suited for its original purpose, undoubtedly largely as a result of the city's failure to update and make necessary repairs through the years, the same could be done with Century II. There are countless uses for the former library building making its demolition senseless.

There are considerations in addition to the historical value of these buildings. No monetary value can be assessed to the importance these buildings play in the memories of residents. I personally have many fond memories of attending musicals, operas, concerts by big named performers and concerts by our own symphony orchestra. I have attended conventions, car shows, flea markets, River Festival functions, Christmas markets with local merchants that were magical and Christmas concerts in Century II. To our amazement, with my family, I also watched my nephew receive his high school diploma in that facility. My wedding was held in the park along the river behind the building. For the record, I do not hold Century II responsible for the ensuing debacle. The ceremony was lovely.

I could add many more personal memories, and go into greater detail, but I am just one person in a city full of people with fond memories of activities, attended with family and friends, in these structures. I do not see what could be accomplished, benefitting the majority of the citizens of Wichita, by the destruction of these buildings. I certainly believe the citizens concerned should be allowed to have a say.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Suellen T. Petrillo

Pancho Bustos & Susan McFarren
1310 W. 34th St. North
Wichita, Kansas 67204

February 19, 2021

Support House Bill No. 2233:

My husband and I collected over 2,000 signatures for the petition that would create a Wichita ordinance to require a public vote on the fate of Century II and the Public Library.

Many residents weren't home or were afraid to open the door to strangers or were protecting themselves from the coronavirus. Overwhelmingly, when a homeowner answered the door and was registered to vote, they signed the petition. Whether for or against saving the buildings, the people wanted to bring the issue to a vote. Overwhelmingly!

We estimate that we knocked on more than 4,000 doors. Some days, we walked from door to door in 100 degree weather. We met people from all walks of life and had extended conversations with many. We heard the same thing over and over again. "We want to vote!"

I'm not sure whether our elected officials have ever had the chance to go door to door, talking with so many citizens. We think our experience qualifies us to have a feel for what the people want. Especially with Century II, we heard comments such as "it's iconic", "we have so many memories", "what would the skyline be without it", "who wants a city that looks like every other city", "it costs too much", "we have smart people, we can figure out how to repurpose the building".

From a grassroots perspective, the citizens feel the city government purports to want our input, only to learn decisions have already been made. In this case, we were duped into believing a ballot question would be presented to the citizens if we collected about 12,500 legitimate signatures. We exceeded that number with over 17,000 signatures and we want to vote!

Please support House Bill No. 2233.

Sincerely,

Susan McFarren

Senate District 29
House District 92

2/19/2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to express my concern about preserving Century II and the Downtown Wichita Library and the related House Bill No. 2233 Municipal Historic Building Act. On a personal level, it has been a very important part of my life as well as for my family. This also can be said for all Wichitans/Kansans and for everyone who have ever taken part in its very versatile activities and events that have been held there in its 50 + year history.

I am about the same age of both of these buildings, and some of my most precious memories from childhood and life stem from events and times spent in both of these buildings. My mother, who passed away in 1999, was a very involved Wichita citizen, and instilled in me the importance and fun of what a rich and unique event space and resource buildings can bring to your life. I know if she were alive, she would be forefront in the community bringing this effort to light. The architecture of both structures are legendary and you often hear those from afar talking about the “spaceship” building. How fun is that to bring attention to our community in a special fashion! We need to stand out as a community, and we can only do that by expressing ourselves in unique ways and not just the “new world” architecture. If you were able to poll our ancestors, I am sure they would be in support of maintaining these buildings. It makes me sad to think they might be torn down. There is already a lot of anxiety in the world and why add to it by making so many changes. I am a health care professional and see multiple patients a day for the complaint of anxiety. Giving the right to everyone to have a say would be the right thing to do and allow our citizens to feel important again by having a say of what outcomes should look like for the future.

To name a few of the events that have meant so much to me over the years at Century II include multiple concerts including Norah Jones, John Mellencamp, comedy act Jerry Seinfeld, too countless to mention all of the Music Theatre of Wichita productions that you could always count on, craft and fine art shows, Riverfest of Wichita venue space for activities, children’s activities, receptions, high school graduations for both myself and my husband, and the list goes on and on. My daughter is involved in KMEA and it is thrilling to watch the youth of the community perform and excel at their craft, as this is also a Century II tradition. It has been a place you could always see people you knew around the community and meet more like-minded, cultural people. I am hoping/planning on attending and utilizing Century II for many more decades, as long as my life allows 😊 Tearing these buildings down would destroy our culture, and that is the last thing we need right now!

My husband and I have frequented the Downtown Library so many years for a quiet solace to read, research, find wonderful books, music, etc... We have attended community programs. He has taught fine art lessons in that space. We even attended an adoption seminar there. The versatility of both of these structures explains itself, and they truly need the upmost attention in gaining historic status.

I would like to applaud Celeste Racette, John Todd, and Karl Perterjohn, Gary Deeter and all of those who have made efforts to protect our rights in trying to allow citizens the right to vote on

what happens to both of these buildings. Being a democracy, it only seems right to give this privilege to everyone in such a time of turmoil. Why even have voting if we don't utilize it. It is so crucial to make steadfast some precious memories and allow wonderful things to remain in our lives. I would be upfront and center along with these representatives (along with my mother if she were alive), but unfortunately the pandemic has had other plans and hectic schedules for health care workers. I would be willing to help with fundraising if needed.

Thank you so much in advance for your grand attention to this issue that could truly preserve happiness in our community, as we all know that is the prescription we all need right now!!!

Thanks and many blessings,

Tanya Brooks

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Concerned citizen