

Historic Gas Plant Redevelopment Resolution Testimony

February 5, 2026

Good morning, President Hanewicz and Members of the Council,

My name is Robin Davidov. I am speaking today both as a concerned resident and on behalf of the 430 members of the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area. We are here today to urge you to vote **YES** on the Resolution.

The administration has repeatedly stated that because there have been "years of planning" regarding the 82-acre Gas Plant property, it is now time to hand the reins over to a private developer. However, our members are deeply concerned by a fundamental gap in this logic.

In the world of urban development, the natural outcome of "years of planning" is a **Plan**. Yet we find ourselves asking: Where is the City Council-approved Master Plan for the Gas Plant District?

This city knows how to plan. We have comprehensive, approved plans for the Grand Central District, for our waterfront, and for the Innovation District. We even have a plan for "vertiports" technology most of us don't even fully understand yet. Why is it that we have formal roadmaps for every major development effort in this city, except for the single largest taxpayer asset in our community?

Finally, we must address the issue of oversight. We cannot, in good faith, ask a developer to write the Master Plan for a project they intend to profit from. While developers bring valuable expertise and market knowledge which should enhance the effort, allowing them to lead the planning process creates an inherent conflict of interest.

The City must lead. The City must own the vision. Developers should be the ones who help us *execute* a plan that the citizens and this Council have already vetted and approved—not the other way around.

Our taxpayer funded gas plant redevelopment must be transformational not transactional.

Thank you.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.