

6-26-07

Eminent Domain Mural

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Citizens Review Board of the St. Louis Development Corp
12th fl conference room, 1015 Locust
St. Louis, Mo. 63101

Dear People,

John Randall, our attorney, will describe the fine points of law which we believe allow us to keep our mural with the message, "End Eminent Domain Abuse".

I also appeal to your sense of fairness and justice. In June 2005 the U.S. Supreme Court in *Kelo vs New London, Conn.* ruled 5/4 that property could be taken from one private owner and given to another if government believed such would have some public benefit such as jobs, tax revenue, blight removal, etc. In dissent, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote: "Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private party, but the fallout from this decision will not be random. The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firms." "Nothing is to prevent the state from replacing any Motel 6 with a Ritz-Carlton, any home with a shopping mall".

Before the city's notice in 1-07 that it wanted to acquire 1806 S. 13th St., Neighborhood Enterprises and Sanctuary In The Ordinary had lost 24 buildings (60 apt. homes) to eminent domain taking. We were offered about 30% and ended up with 60% of what it would cost us to replace those homes. Our decent, lower cost, homes were replaced with quarter million dollar homes. Our intense efforts from 1999 through 2004 could not stop the taking.

In 2005 I and others formed MEDAC, Missouri Eminent Domain Abuse Coalition. We raised about \$10,000 to support its efforts. Per St. Louis Business Journal, 2-10-06, the Missouri Growth Association's top priority in 2006 was "retaining the use of condemnation for economic development." and they were well on their way to "raising \$500,000 to fund their efforts." Those who want to take our properties had a 50 to 1 fund raising edge over us.

Our mural helps level the playing field. Meladee Jones, the leasing consultant for Souland Market Apts which has a three story high sign visible from I-55 & Souland Market, told me "Signs are so powerful....90% of our people come in because of the signs". We need our mural to have our voice heard.

Sincerely,


Jim Roos, Pres of Neighborhood Enterprises and coordinator for MEDAC

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