



James R. Fouts - Mayor

MEMO

October 21, 2015

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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TO: Warren City Council Members

FROM: Mayor Jim Fouts 

RE: **Used Car Lot Items on October 27, 2015 City Council Agenda**

I am **not** recommending approval of two requests for expansions of used car lots. My reasons are as follows:

- The expansions are into residential neighborhoods (Albany and Syracuse streets).
- The expansions were approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals with **13 variances**, one allowing parking on the two residential streets.
- Another variance allowed the expansion within 700 feet of another used car lot.
- Another variance by the ZBA allowed substitution of a privacy wall for a see-through fence, so neighborhood residents will not have privacy.
- Another variance allowed for hard surface parking up to the property lines preventing any room for landscaping.
- Another variance allowed for vehicles to be stacked like "sardines in a can" which could create a fire hazard situation.

The excessive number of variances on these projects is indicative of action on used car lots by the ZBA which is the reason I directed the

Building Inspections Division and the Planning Department to “freeze” any more requests for used car lots.

I am calling for this “freeze” because of my concern that approval of any more used car lots will result in Warren being called “Used Car Lot City.”

Presently, we have 55 used car lots in Warren while the city of Sterling Heights, a city larger in area, has less than half that number.

Used car lots very often detract from the appearance of our city. Used cars for sale are often parked illegally, and many of them look like junk cars.

All too often, the Zoning Board of Appeals grants variances that allow used car lots near residential neighborhoods violating city ordinances. Variances should be used sparingly and only for “hardship” reasons based on the unusual configuration of land, not financial considerations.

Two other factors should be considered on this proposal:

1. Zoning inspectors had nine property maintenance or compliance issues listed in their inspections of this property.
2. The existing building scheduled to be demolished could have been rehabilitated for uses that would serve the neighborhood.

I urge you to reject these expansions to protect our residential neighborhoods from disruption.