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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **City of Crestwood Responds to Frivolous, Politically-Motivated Lawsuit**

CRESTWOOD, MO April 27, 2022 – The City of Crestwood is disappointed to learn about a lawsuit filed by John Bowman and the St. Louis County NAACP concerning the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to redevelop the former Crestwood Mall site. The City intends to mount a vigorous defense against this politically-motivated lawsuit, and will proceed with redevelopment of this critical site.

“We are concerned that the NAACP is engaging in a politically-motivated stunt to try and halt the much-needed redevelopment of the former Crestwood Mall site,” said Mayor Grant Mabie. “The lawsuit is completely frivolous. We are not deterred from proceeding, and we are confident we will ultimately prevail on the merits.”

Dierbergs, McBride, and the City of Crestwood are resolved to continue with the redevelopment project despite the lawsuit, and the work that has already started on the site will not cease.

In 2016, the City of Crestwood approved the use of TIF to help spur the redevelopment of the former Crestwood Mall site, which had sat vacant for several years. That action led to the demolition of the former mall, and paved the way for redevelopment. After a few years delay, a partnership between Dierbergs and McBride emerged as the most promising redevelopment effort for the site. Ultimately, it was decided that using the already-existing TIF was the best path forward.

“This Redevelopment Project is supported by St. Louis County, Lindbergh Schools, the business community, and the citizens of Crestwood. The only opposition to the project has been from the proponents of ‘Better Together’--the Rex Sinquefield supported Show-Me-Institute, and the St. Louis County NAACP,” Mayor Mabie said. “Tax increment financing was lawfully adopted in 2016 following extensive public engagement, including numerous public meetings and debate. The project Dierbergs and McBride are constructing fulfills the vision of the 2016 TIF and satisfies the City’s overarching strategic goals for redevelopment of the property. This lawsuit is nothing less than the NAACP being used by anti-development, politically-motivated agents to pursue a flawed agenda, much like the disastrous ‘Better Together’ effort from a few years ago that led to the removal of Mr. Bowman’s predecessor as President of the St. Louis County NAACP.”

The NAACP’s petition mentions the existence of food deserts around the county, and that the NAACP feels that tax incentives should be used to help address this issue. The City of Crestwood agrees with the NAACP on this point, and encourages jurisdictions with authority to take such steps. However, Crestwood cannot use TIF to address that issue in areas outside of its boundaries, and the redevelopment of Crestwood’s local mall site has nothing to do with addressing food deserts elsewhere.

The City of Crestwood encourages the NAACP to drop this frivolous and costly lawsuit, and continue to focus on their important work of pursuing equality for minority group citizens and eliminating racial prejudice everywhere. The City fails to see how challenging a lawfully-established TIF district to redevelop a site that has been blighted for a decade is in keeping with that mission.

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