TO: Mayor David Kaptain

Elgin City Council Members

City Manager Rick Kozal

 **℅ NENA**

RE: Preserve the Historic DC Cook Building

DATE: October 2019

Dear City Leaders,

Another important piece of Elgin’s history is facing the wrecking ball. Like Old Main, the DC Cook Building symbolizes Elgin’s rich heritage and importance as a thriving industrial city. This building is worthy of massive City efforts to prevent its demolition--currently set to occur in January. Landmarks Illinois has deemed the DC Cook Building eligible for listing in the National Register of Historical Places and included the building in its watchlist of endangered buildings in 2008-09.

The recent renovation of the Tower Building is an example of the City valuing its unique and valuable historic building stock. The renewed Tower Building has brought hundreds of new (and mostly young) residents to downtown Elgin--helping to spur revitalization on many fronts. Adaptive reuse of the DC Cook Building would serve many of Elgin’s interests:

1. Maintain the integrity and history of the surrounding historic district, wider neighborhood and City. This is the longest active business in Elgin--having started its business in Elgin in 1882. Famous architect David Postle designed this building in 1901. Once in Elgin, DC Cook continued to massively influence and shape this city and its surrounding neighborhood for the next 50+ years, including but not limited to building many workers’ homes and employing thousands of people.
2. Bring interest and excitement to Elgin. The building lends itself to several adaptive reuse possibilities, each of which could bring new interest and people to Elgin. As loft apartments or condos, this property could be exceptional given its location near the river, the bike path, downtown, and that its surrounded by stable and attractive homes. As an arts/museum/craft/retail/dining center, its unique and beautiful site could gain exceptional renown and bring visitors to Elgin. As an educational institution, such as a trades school, the site could attract students, teachers, and visitors.
3. Protect surrounding natural areas and park spaces. To its north, DC Cook is adjacent to the Slade Avenue Park. The back (eastside) of the property is adjacent to the bike trail, which is adjacent to a Kane County natural area, which is along the Fox River. The property is approximately 400 **feet** from the Fox River. The City and its citizens have an interest in seeing that this property does not negatively impact its surrounding park and natural spaces, including the vital Fox River. Demolition is not an ecologically or economically sound choice.

Like Old Main and the Tower Building--which have come to symbolize our City--the DC Cook Building is worth saving. These three buildings, taken together, provide an immeasurable sense of place for Elgin.

We support

* the continuation of collaborative efforts by the City and NENA to work with DC Cook executives to reach an agreement to retain the historic building;
* the City acquiring the property to protect it until a viable use can be found; and/or
* the adaptive reuse of the property that would enhance the neighborhood and the City.

We request that the City of Elgin pursue all possible avenues to prevent the demolition of this building.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Signed: