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February 10, 2010

Myron Lowery
Memphis City Council
125 North Main, Rm 700
Memphis TN 38103

Dear Myron:

I am writing you on behalf of the South Main Association to express our support for the Center City Commission's Panhandler Ordinance and the Single Beer Ordinance being brought before the City Council on February 23rd. It is our belief that these two ordinances are vital in preventing crime and promoting downtown as a safe, livable community. As someone who lives and works downtown, I have personally seen the results of aggressive panhandling and know that much of our membership could share experiences with it as well. Our board has seen the statistics being shown by the Center City Commission and understands that much of the aggressive panhandling, littering, public intoxication and violence downtown are directly related to the single beer sales that currently take place.

As an organization, we are charged with the task of promoting and encouraging the growth of the South Main Historic Arts District. Given that task, we work with our residents and businesses to make our neighborhood a thriving, enjoyable place for people to live, work and play. Our residents want peace of mind that their community is safe and clean. Our businesses want the ability to attract tourists, residents and other local visitors unhampered by the fear of aggressive panhandling.

We are not calloused towards the homeless. We actively support the services of the Memphis Union Mission, the Hospitality Hub and other downtown organizations that are providing real, tangible ways to combat homelessness. Our organization is simply concerned with the few who have chosen to aggressively pursue a life of panhandling and crime. The City of Memphis, downtown residents and the commercial sector have all invested millions of dollars into the revitalization of our neighborhoods. Please help us to enjoy the fruits of that revitalization by voting to pass both the Panhandler Ordinance and the Single Beer Ordinance. We appreciate your continued support of this district and thank you for keeping an open-door policy to your office. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions about our position on this matter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brandon Herrington
Immediate Past President