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KANSAS CITY HAS REACHED THE TIF-Fing POINT

Mayoral Candidate Mark Funkhouser will testify before the Kansas City Council's Finance Committee on Wednesday, publicly urging elected officials to place a moratorium on tax breaks for developers.

"The current City Council needs to exercise self-restraint until a new Council and Mayor have adopted a new economic development policy that voters demanded when they approved a new city charter," said Funkhouser, who, as City Auditor, produced numerous exhaustive studies which revealed problems with the Kansas City's tax-incentive program.

Funkhouser stressed that the need for a moratorium is urgent.

"Developers and their allies on the City Council are in a last-minute rush to push their multi-million dollar projects through, and snag taxpayers' money before the new policy required by the City Charter is established," said Funkhouser.

Noting recent news reports revealing that some of these plans are being approved in secret, he added, "It's high-season for insider politics in City Hall."

The occasion for Funkhouser's testimony is the Finance Committee's consideration of a plan to divert 100 percent of future taxes generated by a proposed luxury hotel in Briarcliff – one of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods – back into the developer's pocket. The city's tax incentive plan was designed to assist blighted areas where development would not occur without incentives. The Briarcliff plan would siphon \$15 million away from desperately needed city services, such as street and sidewalk repair.

"The choice for the City Council is clear," Funkhouser said. "They can follow the voters' wishes or they can continue to haphazardly hand out tax breaks to wealthy developers through the kind of political wheeling and dealing that has become standard operating procedure for City Hall."