

**TLNA Steering Committee Meeting Notes for
RPG Proposal for 200 block N. Blount 700 block E. Johnson Streets
5 May 2016, Constellation Community Room, 10 N. Livingston**

Attendees:

City: Alder Ledell Zellers

Development Team: Michael Matty (Renaissance Property Group), Chris Oddo (Insite Consulting Architects)

Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association: Patrick Heck, Bob Klebba, Mark Bennett

Neighbors/Interested Parties: Don Jones, David Waugh, Josh Day

Chris Oddo presented RPG's revised proposal (see online slides). They have abandoned plans for the courtyard building with 39 units on N. Blount. After listening to the steering committee's input and the issues from the recent TLNA Council letter reiterating support of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan for these blocks, they will retain the character of Blount. They now propose moving the 2nd house on Johnson (711/713) to the gap between two houses on Blount. The driveway that is between the empty lot and the 3rd house is likely a shared drive and will remain, allowing access to the parking lot behind the houses as now.

The micro-unit building with commercial on the first floor would replace the two Johnson Street houses, similar to the previous proposal. The rear property line of the 2nd Johnson St. parcel steps back towards the current parking area behind the Blount St. houses, so the proposed building's green space area exceeds the useable open space requirement in the zoning for NMU (Neighborhood Mixed Use) by about 700 square feet. NMU is the current zoning for the Laundromat/Caribou parcel and they are seeking an extension of that to cover the 2 parcels on E. Johnson.

There would be 1 micro-unit in the rear on the first floor that would be ADA accessible, so a bit larger than the other units. The 2nd and 3rd floors would have 10 micro-units each, for a total of 21 apartments. The 1st floor commercial space fronting E. Johnson would be 2950 sq ft. They are now producing computer renderings so know the square footage more accurately. The other micro-units would all be 10' x 28.5'. Access to the 1st floor ADA unit would be through its back patio door and from the east side stairwell. They have decided not to have a building manager office in the building and have instead used that area to expand the commercial square footage.

Ledell asked about the proposed density of the micro-unit building. Chris said that it is 0.2285 acres, so density is 92 units/acre. He added that their building would have only 21 beds, so we need to look beyond just unit count. For the sake of argument, they could combine units into multi-bedroom apartments and have only 11 or even 9 units, which would result in much lower density than the TLNA Neighborhood Plan requirements for that block. The TLNA Neighborhood Plan calls for medium-density residential with 16-25 units per acre. David Waugh asked if they know what the square footage of the existing 2 houses on Johnson are now, so we can judge how much is there vs. what is replacing it. Michael Matty said they don't know that number, but the City will look at each micro-unit as a unit, so density calculations will appear higher than usual. He added that micro-units are a different concept, so the density numbers will look different. He has seen a 400 sq ft condo in Minneapolis and thinks that style are coming to Madison.

The basement level will have at least 25 bike parking spots, maybe more, exceeding the City's requirements. They will have 6 outside parking stalls on the side between the Caribou and the proposed building. Chris then showed how the new building fits on the 2 parcels and showed where

the 2nd house on Johnson would be moved on N. Blount. The new building (35 feet tall from grade to upper parapet) can meet all the NMX setback requirements in the shown placement, but they do not meet one NMX stepback requirement that applies when a building is adjacent to a residential structure. That stepback requires that above 25 vertical feet from the ground, the building must not cross a 45° line drawn from 25' up to the top edge of the building. However, in order to meet that requirement they could shift the building about 6' closer to the Caribou building. They would still meet all setback requirements and then also the vertical stepback requirement on the eastern side. They do not prefer this solution though, because the access drive for garbage/recycling and the western stairwell would have to be moved to the eastern side of the building. That means the noise and activity associated with the commercial tenant's garbage, recycling and possibly deliveries would impact the adjacent house rather than being between the Caribou and the proposed building. There is an allowable conditional use in NMX zoning that would permit the building to cross the required 45° line, so they would rather request that CU and keep the noise and activity between two commercial entities. If they move the building closer to the Caribou, there would be 15'9" from the western edge of the building to the property line near the adjacent house. If they keep it as proposed, there would be 10' there. If they place the building as proposed, there would be 13'6" between the proposed building and the Caribou and about 6' less if they don't obtain the CU. David Waugh asked who owns how much of that 13'6"? Michael Matty said that RPG owns all of it – the Caribou building actually encroaches about one-half inch onto his property. Michael added that even though there is a curb cut on Johnson there, the City says that a driveway is not possible on there. For that reason, the area between the buildings would be access, but garbage would likely be rolled out to Johnson for pickup - that is TBD though. They might have the micro-unit tenants put their garbage behind the Blount Street houses and serviced on/via Blount, also TBD, but that would mean only the commercial tenant(s) would need garbage service/access on Johnson. David Waugh said that larger between-building area would be good for outdoor smoking area and/or a terrace for dining. Michael said that they plan to put their terrace on Johnson since the sidewalks have been widened and reconstructed.

There is no proposed parking specific to this proposed building, but they are looking into having a Zip Car parked in the outdoor spot next to the first house south of the Caribou (213 N. Blount) – next to the Caribou/Laundromat's parking area. He has contacted Zip Car and recently heard back from them, but has no details yet. Currently, there are 12 to 14 outdoor parking stalls behind the Blount St. houses. They will retain those and tenants in both the Blount St. houses and the micro-unit building would have first rights to rent them. They are about \$65/month. They don't advertise parking to non-tenants until about 1 month after a lease is signed, so tenants have some time to decide if they want a spot. Ledell said that having a Zip Car would be really good. In some other developments the requirement for a car share spot has been made a condition of approval – it is really significant help for those who want to go car-free. Patrick Heck added that as a neighbor, he would consider selling his car and using a Zip Car that was that close.

David asked if the City will allow a building to go up with no parking at all. Is that a Conditional Use? Ledell said it could be a CU, but Michael Matty added that Matt Tucker (city zoning administrator) said that it might not necessarily require a CUP in NMX. A restaurant or similar commercial tenant, however, would likely need their own CUP.

Bob Klebba asked for clarification that they are assuming a rezone to NMX. Yes, that is their plan – it would be an extension of the zoning of the Caribou/Laundromat NMX to include these 2 parcels.

First, it was asked what the distance would be between the adjacent house and their building if the building is sited as proposed. There would be a 10' setback on that side from the building to the property line and there is maybe 10 to 13 feet of space on the adjacent property where their drive is.

Bob added that he agreed that keeping the commercial noise away from residential was a good idea. David Waugh agreed. There would be no commercial entrance/exit between the Caribou building and the proposed building, but there would be a door for commercial staff and for the micro-unit tenants if they use that stairwell. Ledell said that given that parking demands in this area are relatively high, a restaurant/coffee shop adds additional parking pressure and the 21 micro-unit tenants may or may not have cars - it will be tight. Mark Bennett asked if they have interested commercial tenants. Michael answered yes. Mark asked if the possible tenants are worried about the lack of parking. Michael said that it is a local business, have looked at the plan, and they think all of their customers will walk from the E. Washington buildings and the neighborhood. It was mentioned that in the zoning text there are a number of ways to offset commercial parking requirements, e.g., if you are next to public transit.

Ledell said that there is a neighborhood committee looking at a variety of things with respect to street parking, so the situation won't necessarily remain static. She does think that the density of people who could walk there is good. David is concerned about parking for micro-unit tenants; will they not be allowed permits? Ledell said no, but they can still park on the street if they so desire, they just have to follow the permit rules. David added that it could put pressure on the evening parking situation on the surrounding blocks, which already have a lot of parking pressure. In the not-so-distant past, he always fought for new developments to use a 1:1 parking spot to unit ratio, which was then less than what the City often wanted, but this is 0:1. Eventually, somebody in the neighborhood is going to scream "no parking, what"?

It was mentioned that in the Monroe St. area, there is a new building with 27 units that has no parking. There are street spots behind that building in the neighborhood. Michael said that he thinks of the units currently rented in his Blount St. houses, about 5 or 6 people have cars and 7 don't. Chris said that micro-units are a market target – the trend is to not have a car for those who they will appeal to. Josh Day added that the new grocery also makes needing a car less likely. Patrick added that the good public transit in the neighborhood adds to that.

Chris presented "inspirational images" and 3-d renderings of elevations and first look at design – they want feedback. He mentions that they may have to go do Urban Design Commission if there is a zoning change. Ledell said a zoning change typically goes to Plan Commission and Common Council.

The inspirational images were pictures of some Madison buildings and some from elsewhere. They were mostly brick on the first floors with large expanses of windows and window awnings. Ledell asked if they were considering utility brick – no, it would be standard brick size. Someone said they did not like the striped awnings in one image. Chris said one possibility was corrugated metal awnings with frames. They also want to include grates in front of the lower half of the sliding doors to keep privacy. Those were shown in the renderings. Ledell asked about the HVAC plan – would they be using wall packs? Chris said yes, but the wall packs are designed into the façade. Michael said that he wants a high efficiency boiler for the entire building, but the need for a/c would remain, so they are proposing these wall packs instead. Ledell said that the wall packs usually look awful. Someone said that they can look like Motel 6.

Chris showed renderings of the streetscape and exterior. The 1st floor would be red brick with mortar that is something warmer than white. Currently, they have a stretched cloth awning over the main commercial entrance and corrugated awnings to the side. There would be 6' tall by 8'4" wide windows on each side of the main entrance (and smaller windows too). The large windows would fold out (see renderings).

The orange-color on the 2nd and 3rd floors is a metal horizontal panel system – Chris would tweak the colors darker – they want individual panels of metal or fiber cement that will add texture. It will reference the many surrounding residences that have texture in their siding. The 1st floor brick would go around the sides, but decrease to only 2 feet from the basement as you get to the rear. There would be also be small window awnings on all floors in the rear. They are not sure where a kitchen would be if there is a restaurant – Michael said they will white box it and will likely be one or two tenants. Bob asked if the chases would go to roof - yes, unless the Fire Dept. says otherwise.

A discussion of the micro-unit fronts ensued. The privacy of the proposed sliding glass door grates was discussed – you have to be close to facing the window to see in, giving privacy. They would be mounted about 3” off the building. The HVAC wall packs would be under the small awnings. It was asked if you would see the wall packs as you walk down sidewalk – yes, but it would be a flush grate, so not very apparent. Ledell asked about the HVAC proposed for the ground floor. Chris said that would be on the roof. They also could make small wells on the basement for HVAC, not sure. Ledell added that the noise of wall packs is a problem too, not just the look. Would restaurant terrace patrons hear the wall packs above them? Bob said if there are 12 units on the front of the building, it would sound like 12 a/c units running. He added that the solid awnings above the wall packs would reflect noise down too, so could be even louder on the terrace. Bob does like that they are somewhat hidden, but wonders if the awnings could effect efficiency? Ledell said that wall packs are always an issue, as is any heating/cooling noise, so that will need to be looked at. If there are other affordable options so you don’t have to use wall packs, it is worth exploring. Ledell added that at least there will be no parking garage fan noise. Bob said that there are low noise HVAC options, but the cost for them can be 2 to 3 times higher. Michael said that they would have the compressors on the roof, so these wall packs are only air-handlers. There will be no compressor noise. Is the heating then electric – yes. Michael said they might be able to gang the rooftop compressors, but that is TBD. Ledell asked if they had talked to staff about HVAC – not yet.

A discussion began about the inside of the micro-units. In The Hub on State Street, some micro-units are even smaller, some are bigger. Chris and Michael said they like having the kitchen open to the living area and at the front of the units there is all natural light that comes from large windows. There is room for a full-sized, i.e., double bed, that will be permanent – it won’t be a Murphy bed. Having a twin bed to save space will be an option. There will be storage possible under the bed and they are considering storage above also. They are planning 9’ from floor to ceiling for the micro-units and 14’ on the first floor – they want tall ceilings to give a sense of openness. David Waugh said that the front windows with a clear view is good - huge windows will make it livable. He doesn’t like the grate concept; he prefers an open feeling, even some windows that can open. Bob agrees – he likes windows to open. Chris says that there is a code requirement for a 36” high railing – that is how tall the grates are. Mark said his apartment is 400 sq ft and he likes his large and clear window, but he does wish he had a sliding door to open, particularly when cooking. He thinks the grate would be trapping. Could they instead have a deck railing - Mark thinks the grates don’t make a welcoming feeling – it is hyper-industrial. The thin wires that are used on the Galaxie, for instance, are generally preferred by most. Code says you need a top rail and vertical supports with a maximum 3” gap between the wires. Josh asked if the top of the windows could open, but not the bottom, so they don’t need a grate or railing/wire system. Mark asked about the height of the proposed 1st floor – is it like across the street? Michael says across the street is probably 14’ – Mark thinks 12’ is better scaled. He questions the staying value of the building design - will the 2nd and 3rd floor materials and corrugated canopies have staying power?

Michael says he wants something that will last with classic colors and lines. Chris mentions that the building on University that contains Vom Fass has been there for more than 10 years and doesn't look dated (it has corrugated metal awnings). They can use a metal panel or fiber cement panel

system for the 2nd or 3rd floor - the cement is a bit more neutral and has a residential feel. Mark said that 80 years from now, an all brick building could be okay, but he thinks they can take a risk to do something different. He added that houses have a lot of breaks in the vertical, so they could try to break up the 2nd and 3rd floor more. Michael says he wants the base to be strong, maybe brick higher up on the sides. Ledell said we shouldn't focus just on the 1st floor being strong – the building will be seen from many places, heights and angles – we shouldn't diminish the 2nd and 3rd floors. Bob says that from Forequarter you will see the whole building. David doesn't like the canopies on the 2nd and 3rd floor – he thinks they look tacked on – they detract the eye and are not ornamental in his opinion. Chris says they might be functional in the summer when the sun is shining in and canopies add flavor to a space.

The conversation then focused on the zoning change. Bob said that zoning changes are technicalities– density is his real concern and this proposal is way beyond what is called for, plus he is concerned about the demolitions of 2 buildings (one will be moved, one will be demolished). It will change the character of the streetscape. Feedback from City Planning has been that density and demolitions are important. Michael said that the house that they propose moving to Blount (711/713 E. Johnson) has been moved before. Bob says it has been there for about 30 years. David referred to Chris' earlier mention of combining units to make multi-bedroom units – that would help with the density. Is changing the configuration on the table? Michael said no. David said that the original question about what is being removed (square footage) is important. He thinks that all similar houses are at risk. By allowing this, we are changing the Neighborhood Plan on a spot by spot basis. He is also concerned about micro-units; what happens if in 20 years they aren't desirable? What if the tenants don't stay and everyone is moving every year? It will degrade faster if the micro-unit concept becomes dated or less desirable. Execution of the building should be high quality to prevent this. Who does it appeal too? Tenants who will stay? Bob says that it is very similar to 1234 E. Mifflin, but with commercial space. 1234 E. Mifflin (Fireside) has 28 small units and is not very attractive. He mentions the TLNA Council letter that came out recently supporting the Neighborhood Plan. Michael said that they proposed 2 buildings, yet listened to the neighborhood and removed the courtyard building from the proposal. He still thinks both were attractive. He's lived for 30 years in a downtown neighborhood and he respects what the Council said, but he is moving a house, and guaranteeing that all the Blount St. homes will remain. He will commit to fixing up the one that he moves to Blount St. He is also following the Plan by having commercial on that block of Johnson. It gives a commercial node to that part of the block. He will bring in longer-term renters. Micro-units are coming at us quickly and he doesn't think he will have transient tenants – they will be Epic programmers, hospital workers, and startup workers who want a clean place, yet don't want a lot of stuff. David said he appreciates that, but would like to see a combination of micro-units and much bigger units. Michaels says that is not what they are proposing – they can't change the unit mix because he can't afford to build that. David says that he thinks it is better to mix people/tenants of different types. Michael says that is what they are keeping on Blount St. David agrees, saying a mix is good.

Mark says that he appreciates that the neighborhood has established density limits - it prevents overly massive units – but he doesn't think this building is overly massive. Micro-units are okay in his mind. The density limit is a little out of whack with a micro-unit concept. Josh Day says that the Neighborhood Association has a principled stand about density, but it means that nothing can change. He thinks it is not realistic for the future because things do change. Isn't this proposal exactly what the neighborhood wants - small scale, relatively bold, a local developer and the kind of development that neighbors want? It is not like T. Wall's development for the Reynolds crane lot. This concept is realistic – we need to accept the idea that it will be more dense and more urban and if not, the Neighborhood Association runs the risk of being ignored in the future. The Neighborhood Plan is not what we really believe the city will be in 20 years. David said that in San Francisco they

preserve their houses and they are invaluable based on the historic character of the houses. If we don't care about the historic nature of our houses, the flavor and character of the neighborhood will diminish. We should invest in what is there. He is not saying that this proposal couldn't happen, but new buildings in San Francisco are not as big and ours shouldn't be either. We preserve character by investing in what is there. Josh said that the high property values in San Francisco aren't what we want. David agreed. Bob said that the Neighborhood Plan is accepted and we work with the neighbors. If we make exceptions for development A, then do we have to then make exceptions for developer B? Where do you start and stop? It was accepted many years ago that new and larger buildings would be between E. Washington and E. Mifflin. Josh says that he was not part of the neighborhood plan process and that you can't have that kind of control if you stay only with the principled stand - you run the risk of being ignored. If every project is shut down, then there is no reason to compromise, no reason to even consult the Neighborhood Association. If there is an okay project and a developer is responsive, then it seems an opportunity for the neighborhood. Patrick asked if there have been any development projects that were rejected by the neighborhood, because since he's been involved he can't think of any. The original Madison Dairy proposal was brought up.

Ledell said that T. Wall's proposal went way over the Plan density and the neighborhood modified the Plan to allow it. City Row was similar, but not a Plan amendment. David reiterated that he isn't even saying this proposal shouldn't happen, but they need to create list of pluses for the neighborhood – reasons why this development is worth changing the zoning and upping the density. We are guiding you towards the plus signs with our input. That's why knowing the square footage being replaced could be important – if it is only 10k more square feet, then maybe that is a plus, but we need to hear those things.

Chris says that the Neighborhood Plan does acknowledge mixed use and commercial on this block of E. Johnson. Ledell reads a portion the Plan's Design Standards for this area:

“The neighborhood does not seek to eliminate all ground floor residential from these blocks. New structures may be 100% commercial or 100% residential, in addition to mixed-use. Adaptive re-use of existing residential structures to business uses (such as galleries or cafes) is also supported.”

Mark agrees with Chris that the Plan can be interpreted to a mixed use development such as this.

Bob says that restaurants have a lot of deliveries, putting even more pressure on Johnson – there could be traffic and obstruction with deliveries. Michael says that they could have a delivery-only parking area, but that requires removing parking spaces, so would further increase parking pressure. It was mentioned that Forequarter has no delivery spot and that the Caribou gets their deliveries in the rear. Michael says that spots in front of the house next to the Caribou (709) is officially a bus stop; it is overflow bus parking for when there is more than one bus stopping in front of the Caribou – bus stacking that almost never happens. Mark asked if the back parking area behind the Blount St. houses could be used for loading purposes. Michael said no, access to the lot is off a residential street (Blount) so he wouldn't want to try that. It was mentioned that the Johnson St. bike lane is on the opposite side, which would decrease interference of deliveries if they are done via Johnson. Michael pointed out that there is very little traffic on E. Johnson in the morning when deliveries would likely take place.

Mark asked if RPG had looked into what makes a good and what makes a bad micro-unit. Chris and Michael said they want lighter cabinetry, darker floor, a decent-sized shower, lots of natural light, some white paint colors, mirrors, very wired (internet included in rent) and they know the bathroom should not be forward in the units.

It was clarified that if 711/713 E. Johnson is moved, it will have a 3-bdrm unit on its first floor and a 3-bdrm unit on the second. If code allows, then the 3rd floor loft area will add a 4th bedroom to the upper unit. Ledell asked if they knew what the density would be if they included all the homes on Blount and the new building. Michael said no, they didn't know that number. Ledell and others thought that would be an important calculation because it is in some ways all part of a larger development proposal since one house is moving there, parking is shared, etc. It was mentioned that there needs to be justification for a change in the zoning and the Neighborhood Plan – we wouldn't want other developers to see this as a precedent. We need to know what is exceptional and unique about the proposal and if approved, it won't be seen just as the beginning of teardowns to replace all the older rental homes on this and nearby blocks.

Patrick reiterated that if RPG wants TLNA to support a zoning change (and a change or exception to the Neighborhood Plan on zoning and density) they should add to that list of plusses that David mentioned, including density calculations of all sorts. Anything they can come up with that could help the Steering Committee's eventual report to TLNA Council to be more positive. The report will try to reflect all the positive and negative discussions brought up in Steering Committee, so the more positives they can provide, the better case they will have.

The Committee generally agreed that it wanted to meet again, particularly to consider any additional design issues for the new building and wants to further discuss the density issue. Patrick said he could start drafting a Steering Committee report, but that it might not be a quick turnaround due to all the other development meetings going on now. He might have a draft he can circulate and/or bring to a meeting. The date for a next meeting was not chosen.