

4 January 2017

To: Interested Parties  
From: TLNA Steering Committee on RPG Proposal

On Dec. 13, the TLNA Steering Committee met to consider the latest proposal from RPG. Not all who attended past committee meetings were present on Dec. 13, so only the opinions of the undersigned attendees are reflected in this letter.

The new proposal iteration includes a previous proposal component consisting of rezoning the two E. Johnson Street parcels to NMX, demolition of 707/709 E. Johnson, moving 711/713 E. Johnson, and construction of a mixed-use building with commercial space and 21 micro-units with no parking. TLNA Council earlier voted to support that previous proposal version, but that support was subsequently withdrawn after RPG announced it was considering demolition of both E. Johnson houses.

New proposal components presented on Dec. 13 include rezoning all of the associated N. Blount Street properties from TR-V2 to TR-U2 and creating a Residential Building Complex overlay. The RBC would include the 711/713 E. Johnson home that would be moved to E. Dayton St. behind 201 N. Blount Street, which would be demolished. The remaining 3 homes on the 200 block of N. Blount would be included in the RBC, as would a new 8-unit apartment building to be constructed on the corner of E. Dayton and N. Blount. The surface parking area behind the Blount St. homes would be brought into conformity with city regulations.

The committee generally continues to look favorably upon the construction of the E. Johnson mixed-use building and associated NMX rezoning, as well as the demolition of one E. Johnson home. The committee continues to favor saving 711/713 E. Johnson St. and is not opposed to it being located on the adjacent RPG property on E. Dayton rather than N. Blount, as was previously proposed.

On the other hand, the committee feels that the proposed demolition of 201 N. Blount St. and subsequent building of a new 8-unit building could be problematic. The demolition violates the spirit of TLNA Council's April 14, 2016 letter that reiterated land use goals and design standards in the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan for this area. 201 N. Blount currently provides affordable housing, does not appear to be blighted and the parcel is not one of the "missing teeth" in the area.

In addition, committee members feel that prior to the committee reporting to TLNA Council architectural renderings for the proposed 8-unit building should be presented and evaluated. Given that retaining the character of this block and of similar nearby blocks has been identified as an important preservation goal by TLNA Council and by the Neighborhood Plan, any new construction should be thoroughly vetted. An evaluation in this context is particularly important if a home in the local vernacular with no apparent faults is proposed for demolition.

In addition, the proposed rezoning of the Blount St. parcels from TR-V2 to TR-U2 was discussed at the steering committee meeting and many left feeling unsettled by this proposition. TR-U2 allows much higher unit densities and building heights up to 6 stories or more, while the existing TR-V2 allowable densities are lower and maximum height is 3 stories. The latter is reflected in

the Neighborhood and City's Comprehensive Plans. Committee members are concerned about the precedent-setting potential for allowing this change and opening up adjacent areas to development proposals akin to Veritas Village, also zoned TR-U2. Given that TLNA Council's April letter and the Neighborhood Plan addressed all nearby blocks between Johnson, Dayton and Mifflin, many committee members remain concerned that any rezoning could facilitate teardowns of older properties. The potential for future development proposals to request demolition of affordable housing units that contribute to the neighborhood's character needs to be thoroughly investigated before the RPG proposal is considered by TLNA Council.

Since the Dec. 13 meeting, RPG has had further discussion with City Planning concerning zoning options. One such option is to create a Planned Development of the same area proposed for the RBC. While this could provide some reassurance to those concerned about the precedent established by a rezoning, it is not clear that this is the case. There are also no apparent additional benefits provided to the neighborhood by creating a Planned Development, e.g., as part of a PD agreement RPG reportedly will not commit to renovating or remodeling the interior or exterior of the remaining homes on N. Blount.

Many of these issues may indeed be addressable by RPG, the City and/or the Steering Committee. However, given the many past iterations of this proposal and the possibility that it could evolve further, the committee recommends that RPG better develop the concept for the new 8-unit building, that RPG and the City provide additional information about any other zoning options and implications, and that the Steering Committee meet again before RPG presents their proposal to TLNA Council.

Steering Committee members in attendance on Dec 13:

Patrick Heck  
Patty Prime  
Richard Linster  
Karla Handel  
Bob Klebba  
David Waugh