

**Notes from the 20 May 2015 Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Meeting
on the N. Blount and E. Johnson Proposal from Renaissance Property Group**

Attendees:

City of Madison: Alder Ledell Zellers, Heather Stouder

Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association: Patty Prime, Patrick Heck

Developers: Michael Matty, Chris Oddo

Neighbors/Interested Parties: Richard Linster, Mark Bennet, Bob Sommerfeldt, Bill Holloway, Michael Metzger, Judith Wilcox, Joe Lussion, David Waugh, Bob Klebba, Keith Wessel (also a TLNA councilmember), Lori Wessel, Karla Handel, Jeff Vercauteren, Lisa Hoff, Nik Simonson, Josh Day, Jason Batton, David Wallner, Beth Kubly, Doug Peterson

This is the first presentation of the proposal to the neighborhood. It was presented to TLNA Council at their monthly meeting on 14 May 2015.

Alder Zellers, convener of the meeting, welcomed attendees and introduced TLNA President Patty Prime and TLNA Development Committee Chair Patrick Heck.

Neighborhood feedback and input on the proposal will be handled by a TLNA steering committee that will form out of this meeting. Patrick Heck will coordinate that process. Ledell also introduced Heather Stouder from the City Planning Department who will assist TLNA and the developer in evaluating the proposal.

Ledell lists paths that this proposal may go through on the city level, depending upon how the proposal evolves. If a zoning change is required, the Common Council would eventually need to approve that. In addition to zoning, the Comprehensive Plan and the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan will come into play. The Urban Design Commission may not necessarily be required to review the proposal, but city staff or the alder could request this review.

She notes that demolition permits will be required since one single-family home and 5 multi-flat rentals would be removed.

The T-L Neighborhood Plan and the city's Comprehensive Plan call for buildings with a maximum height of 3 stories on these parcels. Density concerns in the plans may also need to be addressed because the T-L Neighborhood plan calls for 16-25 units/acre. The Neighborhood Plan does reference a desire for more commercial space near the intersection of N. Blount and E. Johnson Streets.

Judith Wilcox, who lives on N. Blount across from the proposal site, asks when the T-L Neighborhood Plan was enacted. Ledell answered that it was approved in 2008 and amended in 2014.

Patty Prime then introduces the development team and discussed ground rules for the meeting.

Attendees introduce themselves and speak of their interest in the proposal. Michael Matty of Renaissance Property Group (RPG) and Chris Oddo of Insite Consulting Architects were introduced and presented their proposal.

Michael Matty (MM) said RPG has owned all the properties in question since 2007, but just recently bought the single-family home. The rentals are the last of the Kozak parcels he purchased in 2007. His research tells him that there are only 2 owner-occupied homes on the entire square block: Hazel's home on E. Dayton and the house built by Habitat for Humanity.

His original proposal was for 2 buildings, with one a 3-story traditional apartment building in the Chicago style with a courtyard like you can find in Wrigleyville, Addison, etc. courtyard 3-story) and the other building containing live/work micro-units and community/work room on ground floor. The micro-units would be 10'x30' – very small, energy efficient, convection cooking and computer/creative space downstairs. At that time, he proposed 36 micro-units and 54 traditional apartments. After talking with city staff, Ledell and TLNA, as well as after reading the plans, he has changed his proposal to this:

- 3 stories in both buildings and some of the micro-units have been combined to make some larger apartments in the micro-unit building. 26 micro-units in that building.

- Having a 4th floor requires an elevator, so to eliminate that requirement they have removed the option for 3 units atop the 3rd floor of the traditional building. They are planning a common area and “planting tray system” on that 3rd floor roof.

- There will be 42 units in the traditional building, so 68 total in the development. The 42 units will be 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units.

Keith Wessel asks if the proposal exceeds the density called for in the T-L Neighborhood Plan. It does because that calls for 16-25 units per acre whereas this proposal is for 68 units on about 0.75 acres, hence about 90 units per acre. Keith says that 90 is three times the Neighborhood Plan density. Zoning change requirements are up to city staff. MM reminded the group that the project is still in flux, so these numbers could change.

- There will be 52 parking stalls underneath the structures, lockers and bike parking, but no parking for the tenants of the micro-units. They are trying to appeal to those who don't drive.

MM says that the new structures would fit into the fabric of this particular block since Das Kronenberg is 5.5 stories, the building on E. Johnson where Juneberry is located is 3 stories, the nearby Constellation is 14-stories and the to-be-constructed Veritas Village is 4.5 stories.

MM says that units per acre is not really what we should look at. More important is how does it fit into the neighborhood. He adds that the micro-units increase the density, but they are a new concept for which he shouldn't necessarily be penalized. They promote a collaborative live/work space with tenants who will want to stay in the neighborhood. He says he could put entirely 3-bedroom units in the traditional building and meet zoning, so density shouldn't be the only criterion.

Richard Linster asks how many residents are in the existing properties. MM says there are 11 apartment units and 1 single-family home for a total of 22 people.

Doug Peterson asks if the Caribou and the laundromat would stay. MM says that they were not included in the proposal. He approached them to sell their properties to him, but the Caribou declined. He notes that 713 E. Johnson was originally moved to its current location in order to build the Caribou.

Ledell asks how many trees would need to be removed. MM says that the large black walnut behind the Caribou was already threatened, as are 2 large silver maples near 201 N. Blount. Judith Wilcox adds that there are also green ash that are marked for removal due to the emerald ash borer.

MM says that if he were renovating 201 N. Blount, he'll have to take out the large trees because they are dangerous. Joe Lusson adds that this is true of all urban trees. Bob Klebba agrees with Joe – all trees are a risk. MM says that he is worried about safety as a landlord and that one tree is growing into the foundation. The trees could hurt tenants.

Chris Oddo (CO) discusses his firm and history. Insite has a downtown office in Madison. He has lived in the 1200-block of Elizabeth Street since 1996.

First, CO answers a question about the micro-units. He reiterates that they would be 10'x30', but that the combined units would be bigger. Joe Lusson asks if this wasn't just a trendy efficiency. CO answers that micro-unit is the latest terminology. Heather Stouder adds that they are even smaller than an efficiency.

CO says his first step in searching for design concepts was to take pictures of the existing buildings in the neighborhood to establish the fabric and conditions as well to match the neighborhood's rhythm. They then looked at images of traditional 3-story courtyard walkups on Chicago and Milwaukee. He showed several examples, including Madison's Norris Court and Milwaukee and Chicago examples.

The micro-unit building, on the other hand, is contemporary style. CO showed examples that inspired him. Some had glass, metal, concrete siding and some wood. He said they are high-tech/high-touch. An example from Seattle showed that they want some transparency features so natural light can pass all the way through the micro-units.

CO showed a 3-D animated model of the new building and the surrounding structures/block. He said the streetscape informs the rhythm and massing of their building

and showed animations of various views/perspectives. He knows that the driveway proposed for N. Blount is possibly an issue, but the driveway would come out across from a pole on the other side of N. Blount, just as it does now from the house behind the Caribou.

Ledell asks how far out of the ground the parking level will come. She said that this aboveground portion of the parking level was recently an issue for both T. Wall Enterprises and McGrath Property Group – theirs were about 5' above ground. CO thinks that 2.5' is possible for this proposal due to the water table being further from the surface on this property.

Bob Klebba asks if CO can show the current massing in the animated model alongside the proposed massing so we can compare. CO said he had not yet done that, but could in the future.

Question: would all cars from the development use the proposed driveway? MM said yes and reiterated that there would be no parking spaces for the micro-units, so only the traditional building's tenants would use the driveway from the parking level. There would be no elevator in the micro-units, so it is a low impact building. Solar panels are being investigated. Ledell asked for clarification on the statement that the micro-unit doesn't require an elevator. CO said that if that building has no parking in the parking level, no elevator is needed. MM added that they would follow ADA requirements in both buildings.

Question: Are you familiar with the flooding that has taken place in this area in the past, e.g., at Das Kronenberg? Yes, and they have taken that into consideration.

Bob Klebba asks where garbage storage would be and where garbage trucks would access the garbage. MM said they haven't gotten that specific on the design yet. Joe Lusson said it likely would be in the driveway area, possibly in/near the parking level. MM agreed that is possible and said it could have a garbage lift like at City Row.

Judith Wilcox notes that in the buildings across Blount at The Reservoir apartments, all buildings have no stairs at all and some are barrier free. She thinks they should consider the aging population when designing their building. MM answers that they are considering empty nesters in their design; that's why there are 2 types of units (micro-unit and traditional).

Richard Linster asks if there would be an affordable housing component. MM says that their original concept with 90 units would have had 10% self-funded, affordable units. They still might do 6 or so, but are not sure yet. They would still ask for no financial assistance from the City with affordable housing. If they do this, they would ask for it to apply for 10 years. Judith asked what affordable means. MM said it is up to the City and Dane County to define those at certain percentage levels of income.

MM closes the developer's presentation saying that he's looked at this for a while and has come up with this mix of units and buildings because he wants tenants who will stay. He has researched what might keep them and the appropriate mix.

MM says that there is a courtyard between the two buildings. CO's shadow studies were done for today, May 20, and show that at 3pm shadows do hit Hazel's roof (the adjacent single-family dwelling that is not part of the development). He says her home is 1' from the property line and with their required setback; there will be shadows at times.

Bob Klebba brought up several issues of concern:

1. The proposal is much larger than the neighborhood plan or zoning allow. It is a radical change from what we planned for our neighborhood.
2. He is a professional landscape designer and finds courtyards to be dark, there are no backyards and breaks to let light through like now, and it will be hard to get things to grow in the courtyards.
3. This will require the removal of single-family homes and duplexes that are affordable and appealing to owner-occupants and young families. Lapham School is a nexus for young families. It is a shame to see the existing housing and tenants disappear. Once a development like this goes in, those homes and tenants are gone forever.
4. MM and RPG have a history; 8-10 homes were destroyed to put in City Row. At that time RPG appealed to the neighborhood for and received an exemption to density requirements and said restoration would be done on the remaining freestanding rental homes on that same block. This restoration has not been done.

MM answers that the new owners of those properties have the responsibility for the restoration; he has sold the properties in question. Regardless, much work has been done on those homes. MM said that Joe Lusson owns one of these homes and work has not been done there. MM disagrees that no work has been done on the properties – it is still happening and they did follow through. 609 E. Gorham has been completely redone. He said that City Row is Section 42 housing, so families have come in and the replacement for those 11 homes is successful. He dismantled, rather than destroyed the homes that were removed – he reused a lot of materials. He replaced 22 units in the run-down homes with 83 energy efficient, affordable units in City Row.

Joe Lusson disagrees that the promises were kept. RPG did a beautiful job on 609, which was done prior to City Row so he can't get credit for that, and the neighborhood expected that they would renovate 1 house per year for 8 years (6 houses on Gorham, 2 on Blair) and it hasn't been done. They may have rewired bathroom fans and maybe gotten new furnaces, but no construction permit were taken out with the City. Joe opposes this project because it is similar – taking down individual houses and replacing them with large buildings. In the case of City Row, 5 or 6 of the homes were in bad shape, but the homes on Blount are not in bad shape. At that time of City Row, Joe says MM him that he wouldn't take the Blount St. properties down. Joe said that Habitat won't take windows with lead paint, etc., so very little material from demolished houses is reused. There are also no locations to move them to. The City and the neighborhood need to look at what we want for the future of the isthmus - this is an intact single-family block other

than the Caribou. E. Washington is high density, which is good, but the T. Wall project is getting closer to the single-family part of the neighborhood, but that was an empty lot. The building that contains Juneberry building is ugly and shouldn't be used as a stellar example of which buildings to keep. The historic corner at Dayton and Blount where African-Americans settled on the isthmus is right there too – it is just too close to the traditional neighborhood. We also should value the open space between homes, the trees, and the affordability – new construction is just not affordable.

Keith Wessel agrees with Bob and Joe – tripling or quadrupling density from the neighborhood plan is disturbing. The developer's calling the existing buildings "tired housing" is also disturbing. He and his wife are buying "tired housing" and renovating – he thinks it is offensive to tear it down rather than renovate and reuse.

Karla Handel agrees with Bob, Joe, and Keith – she is concerned about density and the demolition of single-unit houses. She is a 20-year resident of Tenney-Lapham and doesn't understand people who are interested only in big, dense buildings. Why not save these houses?

David Waugh agrees with Bob, Joe, Keith and Karla. He thanks CO for the 3-D graphics model to help show what the proposal is, but he wants affordability and reuse rather than getting rid of good homes. He runs a B&B with thousands of guests who are impressed with the neighborhood's historic homes and landmarked buildings – these properties contribute to the neighborhood's character. He likes Norris Court, but if it were multiplied by 4 times, it would suck – the funky character of the hood is varied and older - not all large projects. He likes density, e.g., The Galaxie, Constellation, etc., but we need to reuse these buildings; smaller infill development would be better. If the two homes on E. Johnson are trashed, then just use those for the project, not the Blount St. homes. He wants no widespread destruction of character. He is against what he sees now. The micro-units are interesting if there were floor to ceiling windows that looked onto something cool. He also wants bigger units that appeal to longer-term tenants. He wants to accommodate an aging population too – having no elevator in the micro-units is bad. We want old and handicapped people to visit and have accessibility. Judith Wilcox added that older and/or handicapped people also want to live downtown, not just visit.

Richard Linster says that CO's comments about studying the neighborhood fabric were very good and he appreciates their research, but there is a battle in the neighborhood about density and some valid concerns have been expressed. It would behoove the developers to listen. Where we have made exceptions to density requirements in the neighborhood, for example, it has been because we are getting something compelling, some class of housing that is new and needed. He doesn't see it yet in this proposal.

Ledell read an email from Dawn O'Kroley who lives on E. Gorham (see email on neighbors' input on TLNA Development page for this project). Ledell added that she found interesting Dawn's mention of the Small Cap TIF program that allows conversion of some rentals to owner-occupied. Ledell also likes Dawn's mention of the potential to

compliment the existing businesses in the 700 block of E. Johnson with additional commercial development.

Patty Prime adds that she had stopped at Juneberry on E. Johnson. They mentioned that they would be glad to see additional commercial entities in their area.

Beth Kubly agrees with Bob, Joe, Keith, Karla, David and Richard. The back of her house would look down on this and it would be an eyesore. She thinks that the “hip” building proposed for E. Johnson is inappropriate, particularly next to the Caribou. She likes many contemporary buildings, e.g., Hillel on Langdon, so is not against all hip buildings. She thinks this design should be on the E. Washington corridor; it is out of scale and does not serve the needs of the area. She owns 711 E. Gorham. Her family originally built 703 E. Gorham, but it passed out of family – she remembers it before it was chopped up – she wants to keep the residential area. Beyond Das Kronenberg towards Johnson and Gorham, it is a good, middle-class neighborhood and should be kept.

Bill Holloway echoed that he likes the idea for 1st floor commercial on E. Johnson, but finds the proposed metal siding on the Johnson Street building unappealing. It wouldn't age well. He likes the micro-unit idea because it is naturally more affordable. He lived in an efficiency in grad school for 3 years and it was fine. He also likes that there is not a lot of parking - we have biking and buses in the neighborhood. He added that Das Kronenberg sticks out now, so something more than the current houses would make Das Kronenberg look better, but he's glad the proposed buildings aren't too tall.

Mark Bennett says that the proposed density increase is a good thing, but scale is a bigger issue, e.g., are the floors at the same level as the nearby homes? Would it fit in? He likes the E. Johnson micro-unit concept, but also likes the current Blount Street scale with trees and traditional homes. He lives in a 400 sq ft efficiency in the Constellation and he doesn't feel like he needs to escape his unit; he wants to enjoy the surrounding neighborhood so doesn't leave his unit by necessity. He is the target demographic for these new developments – 20s, professional, not a lot of possessions, etc. His demographic likes the neighborhood and the experience of living in Tenney-Lapham. Affordability is increased by the micro-units, but he also wants more commercial to increase the attractiveness of the neighborhood. He doesn't want a super modern design though; he would rather the design match the neighborhood.

MM says that they did look at commercial space for the 1st floor of the E. Johnson building, because they thought that the T-L Neighborhood Plan was not in favor of that. He knows from the City Row project that the 600 block was not slated for commercial space for that reason. The proposed design of building expresses his desire, but it can change. Ledell mentioned that the T-L Plan says more commercial space on the 700 block of E. Johnson is desirable.

Josh Day says that he likes the proposal because economies of scale allow affordability. Having two buildings also brings it physically down to scale. He thinks it is more appealing than a lot of development proposals that have been approved.

Dave Wallner says that he likes the micro-units and that it de-emphasizes cars. He thinks it is cool and the continued demand for smaller, more energy efficient units are a plus. He likes City Row and expects to like this. Perhaps some promises were made on the City Row project that didn't get completed, but he likes what this proposal looks like. Change is hard and the neighborhood is in the midst of huge changes; we have to embrace this. He recognizes that TLNA has approved higher density projects for the most part. He questions if the Blount St. homes are ever going to be single-family dwellings. He thinks the proposed scale is okay, particularly for the micro-units.

Bill Holloway asks how many units are in Das Kronenberg. Patrick Heck says 43 with 2 of those not owner-occupied. For comparisons sake, CO says that is probably about 68 units per acre. City Row is about 70 per acre.

Beth Kubly says she is not against the micro-units per se, but there should be commercial included and the design should be more appropriate for the current streetscape on both sides of street. She doesn't want the ground floor to be a meeting/conference room.

Joe Lusson says that the blocks facing the proposal site are on N. Blount and on E. Johnson not E. Washington. E. Wash is a totally different thing and they belong there. The building is out of scale. It is also too close to the neighboring structures. Hazel recently got solar panels installed; shadowing her home is disrespectful. He does like the proposed traditional structure, but not in this location. He suggests that MM should make up for not restoring the homes on E. Gorham by restoring the homes he proposes to tear down for this project.

David Waugh asks if the requirement for 500 sq ft of useable open space per unit in the zoning code will be met. Have they done this calculation? CO says no, it is too early in the process. Things have been changing a lot, so they haven't done these types of calculations. MM says that the existing homes were built as 2-unit apartments with 2- and 3-bdrm flats; they are walk-ups. MM says that rents are substantial now, plus tenants pay heat, etc. He may have been wrong to call them tired, but they have old wiring, old plumbing, no insulation, etc. He asked what kind of housing can he put there that will work for what is needed – housing for Epic people and this neighborhood is where they want to live.

Dave Waugh says that he is concerned about the scale. How much taller is this than what is there now on both streets? He wishes we could see perspectives and animations of the existing buildings for comparison's sake. CO says that the proposed traditional building would be 36'4", but he's unsure of the current buildings' heights, perhaps 32'. Joe says that the steeply pitched roofs and spaces between homes make the height comparison difficult.

Lori Wessell asks how many people will be allowed to live in a 300 sq ft micro-unit – one person? Heather Stouder says that it might be possible for a family to live there, but she's not a building inspector so Lori might be correct.

David Waugh reiterates that we need to see a rendering of the current situation. He is also concerned about the proximity of Hazel's home on Dayton. CO says the setback on that side would be 6-7'.

Ledell thanks all for attending and reminds everyone that it is still early in the process and that all are still listening. There could be some possible changes as a result of this discussion, so thank you to MM and CO for bringing it to the neighborhood early.

Judith Wilcox asks how they will finance the project. MM says there will be no public money, just bank financing.

Patrick Heck says that he will be emailing all who volunteered via the signup sheet to serve on the proposal's steering committee. He will also contact other meeting attendees and post on the TLNA listserv to solicit committee members and just to keep them informed.