

**Notes from 10 January 2017 Neighborhood Meeting
on the Houden Proposal for the 700 E. Johnson (south side) Block**

Attendees:

City of Madison:

Ledell Zellers (District 2 Alder), Heather Stouder (Planning Director)

Development Team:

Chris Houden (property owner) Melissa Huggins (Urban Assets), Tom Miller (Kahler Slater, architect), Katie Fadelli (Urban Assets),

TLNA Council members:

Patty Prime, Patrick Heck, Bob Klebba, Richard Linster, Mark Bennett, Karla Handel

Neighbors and Interested Parties:

Evelyn Atkinson, Liz Avenius, Jonathan Fritz, Gail Green, Brain Haltinner, Bob Hemauer, Kim Larson, Tim Meisenheimer, Michael Neelsen, Erik Olsen, Brian Schildroth, Adam Chern, Joe Davis, Sam Elliot, Heather Johnston, Ross Kelley, Carsen Nachreiner, Doug Peterson, Jamila Siddiqui, Greg Stroupe, Mel Trudeau

This is the first presentation of the proposal to the neighborhood.

Alder Zellers, convener of the meeting, welcomed attendees and introduced TLNA President Patty Prime, TLNA Development Committee Chair Patrick Heck and Heather Stouder, the Director of City Planning Department.

Ledell said that the developers were looking for ideas and direction from the neighborhood for what was anticipated to be a Neighborhood Mixed Use Development. She introduced Melissa Huggins from Urban Assets and Tom Miller, who is the project architect, as well as Chris Houden who owns the properties.

Ledell stated that the developer had no proposal on the table yet and that the properties were currently zoned TR-V2. That zoning category allows a maximum height of 3 stories or 40 feet with maximum lot coverage of 70%. It requires a minimum of 500 square feet of green space per dwelling unit. The general concepts for this development point to a likely rezoning request, hence Plan Commission and Common Council would need to approve that. Additional approvals that are likely to be required are demolitions (Plan Commission approval needed), a Certified Survey Map for any combining of existing properties, a Conditional Use for any multi-family dwellings with more than 8 units (Plan Commission approval needed). There could be more, depending on the details.

She also said that the Plan Commission would be considering a variety of approval criteria, including looking at the Comprehensive Plan that currently has the properties listed as Medium Density Residential (16-40 dwelling units/acre). The Tenney-Lapham

Neighborhood Plan also has MDR, but the density is 16-25 du/acre in that plan. The Plan Commission standards will also come into play for any demolition requests - the demolition and proposed use will need to be compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and the Neighborhood Plan. Ledell read several pertinent excerpts from the Neighborhood Plan, including sections related to design standards that addressed infill development sites needing to be missing teeth and that new structures should be consistent with the existing context. She added that the Neighborhood Plan's long range vision for the 700 block of E. Johnson anticipates an expansion of the Neighborhood Mixed Use land use of the 800 and 900 blocks, and the western end of the 700 block, to the entire 700 block. According to the Plan, this would increase the number of businesses while keeping some residential flavor. Ledell also added that any proposal could be referred to the Urban Design Commission, but that would have to be explicitly requested since it is not required.

Ledell then turned the meeting over to TLNA President Patty Prime. Patty mentioned that there would be a TLNA Steering Committee formed and the number of times it would meet is TBD. She then introduced Melissa Huggins of Urban Assets and Tom Miller of Kahler Slater (architect). Patty then asked for a show of hands to indicate who was in attendance. Those associated with the development team raised their hands, followed by those on TLNA Council, those from the 700 block of E. Johnson, those from within 2-3 blocks of the site, those from elsewhere in Tenney-Lapham, and those outside of T-L. The largest group was those within a few blocks of the development site, with a large number of T-L residents, a large development team and smaller groups of TLNA Council members and persons from outside T-L. One attendee lived in the development site.

Melissa and Tom then made a presentation concerning Chris Houden's company, the development site and early concepts (see <http://www.tenneylapham.org/development.html> for slides). Richard Linster asked if a zoning change would be requested. Melissa said it is not certain at this time, but possible.

They noted that this was the very beginning of the process, although they have been thinking about it for more than a year and have had some preliminary conversations with city staff and Ledell when they talked about the Neighborhood Plan and potential changes to land use for the site. At those meetings, Matt Tucker, City Zoning Administrator, suggested that they figure out their project and any zoning discussions would follow, so they are starting at the planning level.

Melissa said that Chris Houden moved to the eastside of town about 1.5 years ago. He has seen the investment in the area, streetscape improvements, the increasing pedestrian accessibility, bike lanes, and the increasing private sector. For example, City Row brought in more residents to take advantage of the E. Johnson business area. Tom Miller added that Chris Houden has had properties on this side of town for 10 years, has been restoring historic buildings and had deliberate, thoughtful projects. Melissa said that they are interested in connectivity too. Although the City did not look favorably upon two-way traffic on Gorham/Johnson, retailers would probably look favorably on that.

She pointed to Norris Court and Veritas Village as dense and good developments for the neighborhood. Norris Court is dense, mixed use housing. The key is that dense, mixed-use housing is not a brand new idea for the neighborhood – it is has been part of the neighborhood for a long time. They presented a slide with all the current E. Johnson businesses (although some admittedly were missing) and pointed to the gap on the 700 block where there are no businesses. Tom said that this will be a mixed-use project, so how can they work to fix the gap of retail and mixed-use? They want to support transit oriented development concepts too. T-L is a vibrant neighborhood and we should push the vitality so that it is all contiguous.

Melissa said that Chris Houden bought the properties with another City Row type development in mind, but there are issues with that approach – the existing land use and zoning, as well as the Neighborhood Plan and Comprehensive Plan don't anticipate a City Row-type development. The Neighborhood Plan does say that toothaches can and should be replaced and they think many of the sites' buildings have lived past their useful life. It is possible that it will require an amendment to the Neighborhood Plan so mixed-use development can occur. The Plan does anticipate this though, describing the desirability of more commercial uses on the first floors of buildings in the 700 block, particularly in the "Looking Back from 2020" portion of the Plan.

She also asked what elements could add to the Plan's vision of commercial shopping (daily needs, etc.). They envision a city within a city concept – striving to make the E. Johnson, Willy and E. Washington districts come together. The conversation has changed from 2008 when the Plan was written to 2017 - progress towards this goal has been made.

Tom added that any mixed-use development and street-front commercial spaces are TBD. They could be office, retail and/or shopping, but they want to keep the scale the same as the adjacent area with some restoration component – the latter harkens back to history.

They added that they do want to stress creating transit oriented development and want to support the newly adopted Madison Mobility Plan.

As for the existing homes, two on the block have green sheets, i.e., have some historical significance. None are landmarked or considered historical themselves – a green sheet can just give the history of ownership, etc. Tom said they hoped to create a rhythm for the new development, not just mimicking what is there now and what might remain.

After the slide presentation, Patty opened up the discussion to attendees.

Bob Klebba, 700 block E. Gorham, said that one of their themes was high density development already in the neighborhood, but he thinks T-L has supported high density on E. Washington. City Row was much above the Neighborhood Plan's recommended density – that was an exception and it was controversial. Veritas Village was a Plan exception and also controversial. Melissa said that they are planning on 3-story structures that would fit into the neighborhood. They also will work with some of the existing homes. Melissa asked if Bob thought City Row is a benefit to the neighborhood. Bob said

its affordability is what makes it valuable (implying not just the structures). He also thinks City Row doesn't provide enough open space. Melissa added that the historic component to their proposal is not yet completed, but they do want to keep some of the existing homes intermixed with new. The new could have pitched roofs to reflect the existing homes, but it is still too early to say for sure.

Richard Linster, Sindy St., said that he has been on every TLNA steering committee for every development proposal for many decades. City Row was indeed an exceptional case because it was to be workforce housing – that is what carried the day with the neighborhood and allowed its approval. Our words from 2008 are what we are now defending, so we are at a disadvantage when we argue that higher density on the 700 block might be inappropriate. We are under tremendous development pressure and having made a number of exceptions makes the pressure worse. There is pressure on the RPG project (Blount/Johnson/Dayton), Cliff Fisher has proposal just outside Tenney-Lapham, what do we have to do to maintain the neighborhood character? We are gun-shy about what to say because there is no proposal yet for this site. Tom Miller answered that they are here early in the process to engage the neighborhood – you actually have the advantage. The Neighborhood Plan's goal is to increase mixed-use on this block. Melissa asked, "Do you want to follow the recommendation in the Neighborhood Plan to have the 700 block be neighborhood mixed-use?" Linster said that he is not sure that what was envisioned in 2008 fits today.

Joe Davis, a longtime resident of T-L, challenged people to balance what Linster said with what he has to say. The neighborhood should and has changed a bit - the Capitol East District, some new neighbors, the Willy Wash vision, an active public market in the near future, and, in next decade something exciting at the Oscar Meyer site. 45 years ago this area was the eastside, now it is part of an expanded downtown. He is glad that Millennials, Epic employees, and whoever want to live here. He worked on getting Lapham School back open after it was closed for more than a decade - the neighborhood is great now, but has room to grow and develop, yet retain the character we love.

Bob Hemauer (Cork and Bottle) said he is excited about the possibility of changing the 700 block. He used to live in the neighborhood, but now works in the neighborhood. Currently, the block is affordable housing stock, but has outlived its use – he wants the affordability maintained. Bartenders and service industry workers should be able to afford a decent apartment in the neighborhood. He would like the design to effect street flow – it could change how people interact with the street.

Tim Eisenheimer, 1024 E. Dayton, just bought his house but has lived 16 years in neighborhood. They walk or bike everywhere and want a true shopping district on E. Johnson. Having more stores, light industrial, crafts, would be great, but we need affordable housing too as we get absorbed into downtown.

Ross Kelley, 639 E. Johnson, said he lives here because it is affordable. He loves patronizing the shops and wants more amenities, but ones that he can afford. He would hate to see people like him get priced out.

David Wallner was a member of City Council from '85-'95 and a member of a Downtown Housing Task Force that helped plan the future of near-eastside neighborhoods. Back then, he said that in 10-15 years they will be hot neighborhoods with new housing and protected historical elements. During the suburban boom, the near-eastside did turn around due to the neighbors and many good people in city government; the school is open now, etc. He likes the looks of City Row, but is concerned about open space – is there a way to do that? He also likes expanding the commercial area and likes most of the development that has occurred in the neighborhood, including all the new young people who just might buy houses in 5 years. We have to be adaptable.

Evelyn Atkinson, a resident of Nichols Station Condos, moved here because of the quiet residential aspect of the neighborhood, easy access to the Willy St area, downtown, and E. Johnson. She supports this project. She suggested that when looking at comparable areas, they should look at Cambridge/Summerville MA instead of downtown Boston.

Gail Green of Blair House Condos said her view is the back of the 600 block of E. Johnson. She suggested that their new development should have breaks in the buildings, not be monolithic and allow a pleasant view of the buildings for all neighbors - it could give them something better to look at.

Jamila Siddiqui, of the 700 block of E. Johnson, said that there is great character now, so it is good that they will incorporate and preserve. She is also a tenant who appreciates affordability. She also does not want a monolith – she appreciates the calm and quiet that the neighborhood provides and one large building would take away from that. Split it up and have more green space.

David Waugh, 700 block of E. Gorham, said their B&B customers love old neighborhoods – that's why they come. They remark on Norris Court – if we had only Norris Court it wouldn't be the same neighborhood. He would love to see restorations - he knows this block needs work, but he is also a huge advocate for affordable housing. Young people are great – affordability attracts them. The business district needs studying – he has seen business go – why are businesses leaving? He would like to see a proposal that fits within the current zoning, City Plan, and Neighborhood Plan, then the developers should tell us why that version won't work or what adjustments could be made. He added that additional retail shouldn't price out the existing retail stores - great funky shops shouldn't get priced out. He thinks the creative class shouldn't be forced to move further east because they get priced out of the neighborhood.

Kim Larson, Franklin St. says she is a young person who can't afford The Galaxie/Ovation and other expensive buildings. She can't live the life she wants if she has to pay that much rent. She is getting priced out of her old dingy place the way it is. She also doesn't meet City Row income requirements – she is in a gap where she makes too much to meet income restriction requirements but not enough to afford the new buildings – a single person can't afford them.

Mel Trudeau of Forequarter said she is excited by the presentation slides and the mix of retail with residential – that brings vitality. She thinks useable outdoor spaces at street level is an interesting concept - people can be neighborly and have a sense of community if those spaces are done properly. She hopes there will be no lane closures for construction.

Liz Avenius, 1400 block of E. Johnson, loves the neighborhood's character and was hesitant about the development. She knows something could be done that is good and likes the idea of building connections across isthmus – the large picture aspect. She also likes connecting to the existing architecture and keeping some aspects of what we have, yet moving forward. She wants to see how that plays out as the proposal is developed.

Mark Bennett, Constellation resident, asked if this development would have a 1:1 parking ratio (parking spaces per unit). Heather Stouder, City Planning Director, said that most downtown projects have a parking ratio of 0.8 or less. She added that the requirement is generally 1:1 unless it is a student-oriented development. There is new study out of UW group indicating that location of a development is important and less than 1:1 can work. She added that reductions in parking requirements are not uncommon, particularly in downtown areas, although it is commonplace to start with 1:1. Tom Miller said that the parking ratios for suburban developments are usually about 1.25 or 1 stall per bedroom rather than 1 stall per unit. He thinks that their development won't be higher than 1:1 and could be less.

Bob Klebba said he is intrigued by their commitment to improving the livability of the hood. Would they underground the utilities as part of the project? Heather Stouder said that it is common for a development to do this, but it depends on the setback – how far a building is from the sidewalk. She added that for a 3-story building close to the sidewalk where residents could potentially grab utility wires, not undergrounding could be problematic. Ledell added that the 800 and 900 blocks of E. Johnson already have the infrastructure for undergrounding in place and she thinks they did put conduits in for the whole street. Patrick Heck agreed with Ledell that he thought all of Johnson has the underground conduits in place in the areas recently reconstructed. Tom Miller summarized saying that the issue of public right of way and utilities is unknown until the proposal develops.

Jamila asked about the developer's timelines. Melissa Huggins said that the developer would like to move forward, get the TLNA steering committee going, and eventually have a fall 2017 project start. Tom Miller added that there would be approximately 12 months of construction, maybe more, so it could be that construction could start Aug 15, and take a year plus a couple of months.

Mel Trudeau asked for a clarification on which properties were involved. Ledell said that the first two houses next to the Caribou on E. Johnson were part of the proposed RPG development site and the rest of the properties on that side of E. Johnson all the way to N. Livingston St. were part of the Houden site.

Patty Prime cautioned that many developers run into water table issues in this area. She asked about their parking – would it be underground? She also doesn't want any new buildings' first floors to be really high; they need to be pedestrian friendly. Also, when Johnson St. was reconstructed, some parking spots were lost with some businesses were unhappy about that - parking is a big issue. There just aren't enough street spots. She saw other challenges, including struggles that new businesses will face. Rents in older commercial spaces are not that high, but they still can struggle.

Patrick Heck suggested that some of the architecture should echo the surrounding buildings, but that some of it could also be bold and contemporary. He suggested they take risks with some components so that not everything in the neighborhood looks the same.

Glen Reicheldefer, of Christ Presbyterian Church, said that the church is always interested in affordable housing – he thinks that is crucial for a development to include.

Richard Linster said that their slide with a list of commercial entities on Johnson was incorrect or missing some information – Juneberry's space is now an office, Sophia's wishes to sell, and they are missing Steve Wilke's Chiropractic office and Fontaine, perhaps more.

Ross Kelley suggested that any new structures have varied façade articulation so that it was visually interesting.

It was asked if there would be a request for TIF from the City – Melissa Huggins said no. Ledell added that the block has not seen any small cap TIF requests.

Ledell asked if they were planning on submitting any applications for affordable housing tax credits or underwriting. Melissa said no, but they have heard tonight that affordability is a neighborhood concern, so it is possible they will explore affordable strategies.

It was asked what serving on the TLNA steering committee for the project would entail. Richard Linster said that they can meet 3-4 times. Patrick Heck, TLNA Development Chair, added that sometimes it can be as few as a couple of meetings, but for more complex or controversial proposals it can be many more; it will depend on what a proposal for this site might eventually consist of. The committee will evaluate proposals and typically sends summary findings to TLNA Council who then decides whether or not to support or oppose a proposal, but can also remain neutral. Regardless, the Council usually recommends conditions that the City should include in any approvals and the steering committee makes recommendations on those conditions to the TLNA Council.

Patty drew the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for their input. Ledell echoed that thanks and also thanked city staff for attending. Ledell and Patty reiterated that 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. Patrick said he would be contacting everyone who signed up via email.

Melissa thanked attendees for coming and for willing to be open. Since there is not yet a proposal, this was different than usual, but it should help in their process.