

Houden Steering Committee Meeting minutes 16 Mar 17

Submitted by Bob Klebba

Attendees:

TLNA Council Members: Patty Prime, Karla Handel, Richard Linster, Bob Klebba, Keith Wessel, Mark Bennett, Elena Duncan, Patrick Heck

Neighbors and Others: David Waugh, Joe Lusson, Lori Wessel, Matt Coogan, Tim Meisenheimer, Joe Davis, Greg Stroupe, Bob Hemauer, Evelyn Atkinson, Brian Schildroth,

Patrick Heck – meeting without developer so that we can talk w/o being distracted by developer's new design/design changes and spin, so people can speak freely. He understands why developers have a spin to their presentations, but it is sometimes good to talk without that.

- too many issues to address after last steering committee meeting to be able to do report/summary
- meeting with Planning, we were told that neighborhood narrative is required in order to be able to change neighborhood plan
- tonight's meeting will focus on neighborhood plan
- steering committee informs council on what is best for neighborhood
- We need definition of what Affordability is, CMI
- more formal commitment from developer on affordability

Patty Prime – TLNA is advisory to the City process

Joe Davis – City can't compel affordability

Joe Lusson – do we want to rezone for higher density?

Patrick H – If there is n'hood hesitation on changing zoning, city will encourage compromise on proposed development

Richard Linster – We consistently ask for affordable housing

-we don't know condition of property, so we can't describe existing structures as crappy housing

David Waugh – Introductions!

- important to get word out about proposed developments in the neighborhood
- Neighborhood plan was adopted in 2008
- City refers to neighborhood plan for all new development proposals
- N'hood plan is open to interpretation
- one of main tents of n'hood plan preservation of existing infrastructure except certain areas along E Washington
- area where proposed development is requires change in n'hood plan
- some wiggle room in n'hood plan wrt commercial development
- proposal is for area in n'hood with MDR zoning (16-25 residential units/acre). MDR does not work

-n'hood plan emphasizes that built environment should be preserved and that new construction should be infill

-n'hood plan says that historic character needs to be preserved

Patrick – Preservation of affordability is important

-N'hood plan says special features should enhance livelihood

-review of TLNA's letter to Planning wrt preservation of n'hood character instigated by RPG development at Blount & Johnson

David- City's responded that it was not appropriate to demolish 6 buildings and replace with 2 apartment buildings

-lesson from working with RPG was that compromise is possible

Tim Meisenheimer – does RPG require change to n'hood plan?

Patrick – not obvious, still waiting for definition from Planning

Joe Davis – density is efficient way to fit more people in an area

Bob Klebba – Density and affordability are 2 separate issues. Increasing density requires new construction. New construction has been consistently proven less affordable

Joe Lusson – Density is best on E Wash, Dayton, Mifflin, Johnson & Gorham are lower density residential

-conversion of houses to commercial like on Williamson St is what the n'hood plan calls for

-commercial thrown at steering committee to appease us

-proposed buildings are enormous and out of scale with residential neighborhood

-City Row made great concessions: even though houses were torn down, commitment to historic preservation of 8 houses on Blount and Gorham

-City Row developers toured n'hood through houses proposed for demolition

-This proposal has too high density, massing. There's a loss of porches on the street and daylight between houses and potential for back yard gardens will be gone

-it is not the goal of the steering committee or the neighborhood council to facilitate Houden's profiting from the TL neighborhood

Patrick- better renderings of the proposed development have been requested.

Mark Bennett – adding more units does affect affordability in a city-wide sense

-proposed building has a life cycle

Patty Prime - The developer bought houses with a plan to demolish all properties

-new buildings don't match old footprints

Tim – Affordability is a big issue.

-with regard to small cap tif n'hood plan would be okay with selling properties to families who wouldn't necessarily charge affordable rents

David- theory behind small cap tif is that owners pay more attention to n'hood upkeep

Patrick – With the City Row, the Mike Fisher property restoration is awesome
-even with fix up, rental increase will be only \$60/bedroom/month

Keith Wessel – If houses in 700 block are similar to others in n'hood they were built by high-quality craftsmen
-with high-quality materials that are irreplaceable
-not all kitchens and baths need updating at once, as long as exterior is kept up

Evelyn Atkinson – summarized what she heard so far (summary received via email after the meeting):

Issues:

1) Density - good or bad? Seems like most are on the side of density = good, which raises the questions: is this development an appropriate way of increasing density? What type of density are we looking for - students, young professionals, families? That will influence the number of studios versus larger apartments we want to sanction..

2) New construction versus renovation/ preservation of neighborhood character. Seems like most folks are in favor of preservation of character even if houses get torn down. But what we want to know is, what is the specific condition of the houses that they're planning to demolish, how many are really unsalvageable? How do they plan to renovate the houses they're keeping? What is the exact facade and design of the new building (color, material, appearance from different sides - like will it have Queen Anne details in the front but be a solid wall on the side?)? How will it mesh with the surrounding houses?

3) Physical effect on the surrounding houses - are the gables considered a fourth story? What's the shadow that will be cast on surrounding houses? We need better renderings from multiple angles. What is the distance now from the rear property and side lines? How do neighbors feel about this? What's being done about the exhaust fan from the parking lot, and how big is the driveway and the effect on the neighboring house?

Patrick – We need to summarize to communicate to developers

Linster – we work well w/o developer present. Are we going to be able to move forward efficiently with the developer?

Matt Coogan – generally in favor of proposal, only difference between Houden proposal and City Row is affordable housing
-same size

Bob Hemauer – “toothache” is a bad analogy because this proposal is like a set of dentures.
-need to develop something in scale with the n'hood

Patrick – what about existing residents in Houden properties?

Brian Schildroth – How long did RPG process take (1-2 years)

Joe Lusson – This development does not have to happen

- economy can change in the next year
- developers are not straightforward about what is possible
- City Row is a different project and is a bad precedent setter
- with this proposed new construction and City Row, will these rental units look good in 10-15 years, what will be the upkeep?

Matt – everyone always says City Row looks good

David – in favor of compromise

- developer can't commit to affordability, no legal way to enforce
- n'hood needs to keep more older buildings

Bob Klebba – City Row was a very controversial proposal that divided the neighborhood. And it is very different from the proposal for the 700 block

- even though houses were demolished, 8 houses on Blount and Gorham were/are being restored with historic preservation as a top goal
- Stonehouse is legally obligated to provide affordable housing
- City Row is on the edge of the n'hood and council considered it to be closer to Nichols Station and McBride Point
- TLNA council explicitly stated that its approval for City Row should not be used as a precedent to allow for similar developments in the n'hood.

Joe Lusson – precedents happen

- people in TL don't really care about what happens to the residents in the west end of the n'hood
- imagine if this proposal were in your backyard

Bob Klebba – This same development could also be proposed for the 1000 block of E Dayton or even Sidney St since it requires rezoning

Tim – generally supportive

- 2nd iteration of the n'hood
- why does n'hood have to stay the way it was in 2008
- gives n'hood opportunity to steer development in better direction
- There are problems with the proposal: buildings are too big and the commercial space needs to be better integrated

Patrick – What about the 4th floor?

Kevin Firchow – very technical

Patrick – going forward we will give a summary of tonight's meeting to developers

Matt – yes give summary

Bob Klebba – keep developer on task, get responses to our issues

Bob Hemaer – would like to see developer put institutional resources into affordability

Elena Duncan – summary should be clear in communication so that developer can respond appropriately

Straw poll:

Go forward with proposal as is: 1

Some compromise with developer: 8

No tear downs: 6