

**Notes from 20 April 2017 TLNA Steering Committee Meeting for Houden
Development Proposal for 700 block (southside) E. Johnson
Festival Foods Conference Room**

Attendees

City of Madison:

Jessica Vaughn (Planning Division of the Department of Planning and Community and Economic)

Development Team:

Melissa Huggins and Katie Fadelli (Urban Assets), Tom Miller (Kahler Slater, architect), Chris Houden, Pat McCabe (Palisades Property)

TLNA Council Members:

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

Neighbors and Interested Parties:

Tim Meisenheimer, Brian Schildroth, Greg Stroupe, Chris Oddo, Ross Kelley, Beth Kubly, David Waugh, Joe Luson, Bob Hemauer, Pat Kelly, Mel Trudeau

TLNA Development Committee Chair Patrick Heck brought the meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves:

Input to and Role of Steering Committee

Patrick reiterated the role of the Steering Committee – taking the input of all committee members and neighbors who contact us with the final product being a summary report that reflects the range of opinions and voices. He noted that all voices and input will be referenced in the report, including the input of neighbors who contact Ledell, Patty Prime or him. He suggested that looking at the Steering Committee reports from the RPG and McGrath proposals are good examples of reports where a diversity of opinions and input were represented. Patrick noted that neighbor input on the proposal's TLNA website was running 15 generally against the proposal, 3 generally for it and 1 uncertain.

TLNA Council will use the Steering Committee report as background for any discussion that takes place after the development team presents to TLNA Council at a monthly meeting. TLNA Council will then vote.

City entities, e.g., City staff, Plan Commission, UDC and Common Council, typically consider both the Steering Committee report and any TLNA statement on the project when they evaluate a proposal. Generally though, the TLNA statement and any included conditions are weighed heavily because that statement is considered to reflect the broader neighborhood's opinions and because TLNA Council represents the neighborhood in most City business. Also, it is succinct and easy to digest.

House Tours

Patrick then briefly summarized the input from those who toured 6 of the houses on the proposal site during the 1st week of April. He also thanked Pat McCabe and the Houden team for arranging the tours, as well as those who toured. Patrick said that the 6 homes contribute to the fabric of the hood and, obviously, any home can be rehabbed and saved

with enough investment, however whether or not it should be saved is a complex question to be answered by the owner, the neighborhood and the City. He added that reasonable people can differ in their conclusions about particular houses, so he suggested that the committee shouldn't get too bogged down in differing opinions about individual homes.

- 1) One house (717), furthest to the west, could be rehabbed if there is the will and \$\$ to do so, but it doesn't have much to offer other than its contribution to the fabric and scale of the neighborhood – in rough shape. 719 is in similar in condition, but had more to offer due to having more original features. Both likely need substantial foundation work and a lot of other work.
- 2) The next three (725, 731, 733) generally have more to offer, while recognizing that they aren't likely going to be showcase rentals. Most felt they could be rehabbed into solid long-lasting affordable apartments if the will and \$\$ are there – could be done at a more reasonable price than the first 2. Some have a fair amount of their original features, others don't – a mixed bag.
- 3) Most agreed that 737 is a gem with a lot of original features. As with all, some issues.
- 4) 727, 739/741, 743, 745, and 751 were not toured. In the proposal version from previous meetings, 727 was proposed to be moved between 745 and 751.

Patty Prime then briefly summarized Steering Committee discussions and input to date by saying that there are 2 layers of issues and concerns. There is a tier of big picture issues such as how the proposal fits into the Neighborhood Plan, the proposed zoning change, the proposed demolitions, the sheer size of the new buildings and increased density. There is another layer of issues and concerns related to the design of the new buildings, the proposed commercial components, landscaping concerns, etc. She suggested that the first tier of bigger issues is perhaps something we still need to discuss before concentrating too much on the second tier.

Bob Klebba asked if there had been any separate Steering Committee meetings organized by Melissa Huggins. Melissa said no.

Development Team Presentation

The proposal architect Tom Miller than presented updated slides (see website for slides).

He noted several changes that they have implemented in response to input from previous meetings, including the March 20 meeting (see slides). One of those changes was increasing the setback along the east side of the new building that abuts existing homes on N. Livingston. They increased that setback to 20', so there is now more space between the new building and the homes on N. Livingston. They have reduced the height of the 3 new buildings by 18 to 22 inches by using a new structural system that requires less distance between floors. They have worked with the design of the mezzanine levels and how those interact with the roofline too; they hope to lower the height even more.

They have added more streetscape differentiation along E. Johnson and are exploring

different materials and window openings in the residential components to further develop differentiation. Per Patty Prime's earlier remarks about big picture concerns, Tom agreed that it is good to discuss some of those since more detailed items will continue to evolve. He thinks some of that evolving has already happened though, due to input from the committee.

They are now proposing moving 3 more houses – two (739/741 and 743) to an empty large lot at 827 E. Gorham and another (737) to 943 E. Dayton (This would result in 5 teardowns rather than 7). Chris Houden has an option on the lot at 827 E. Gorham while someone else would be providing the lot that 943 E. Johnson would be moved to. As stated earlier, Chris Houden is willing to give any cost savings from not doing a demolition to anyone who wants to move a house – that applies to 737. Tom noted they will now be saving more than 50% of the buildings on the site (6 of 11). He added that those 6 retained houses are affordable by nature because they are moderately priced housing stock. They continue to propose self-funding 8 affordable housing apartments at 80% County Median Income (see slides).

They have eliminated the balconies at the mezzanine level in the rear of the new buildings because the City would then consider that level a fourth floor.

They have met with various city departments on many matters, including discussions of streetscape design related to increasing the terrace width in front. There is typically a 4' terrace and 5' sidewalk in the neighborhood and their current proposal is a 10' setback off property line. They are discussing an 8' terrace and 8' sidewalk option with the City, including what would be private and what would be public. It could be that terrace seating for a commercial entity would be allowable in the public right-of-way, but they are still discussing the possibilities.

They continue to commit to undergrounding the power lines.

They are designating 15% (up from 10%) of the apartments as family housing, i.e., 3-bdrm or 4-bdrms. The one 4-bdrm is a single-family house (745) that will be saved.

Tom showed eye-level views with examples of the activated streetscape they anticipate. He also showed rear yard views and cross section views of the streetscape. Some questions followed to clarify the setback distances at each floor of the apartment levels – there is a setback and recessed entry for apartment floors 2 and 3 in the front – about 4' total, but it varies depending upon articulation. They are trying to keep the mezzanine level as low as possible without compromising their usage plan (apartment layout and plans). Per suggestions from the previous steering committee meeting, they now have 4 gables in the two larger buildings where they previously had 3 each. The other new building has 2 gables.

The setback is 10' on western side, adjacent to the RPG properties.

Tom said that they believe that their proposed front articulation is very nice and is better than City Row's articulation, but he added that it was a matter of opinion.

They continue to propose 80 apartments total, but the green/open space has increased due to the increase in setback on the rear N. Livingston corner.

Melissa Huggins then showed slides that reiterated their motivation for the proposal. She discussed the Neighborhood Plan, the rationale for amending the Neighborhood Plan and for a zoning change. She noted that some aspects of their proposal are not necessarily consistent with some portions of the Plan – some elements still need to be worked out. Goal #3 in the Neighborhood Plan jumped out to them (see slides), as did Note 1 on Map 5, the land use recommendation map.

Bob Klebba reiterated that there were other parts of the Neighborhood Plan that did not support their proposed development. He counted about 12 or 13 references that he thinks do not support the proposal. Patrick said that he didn't think a scorecard was going to help the discussion move forward – the committee needs to decide if this proposal is what the neighborhood wants and needs.

Melissa showed more slides recapping their motivation and said that she thinks the development team has heard things early on in the process and have addressed them. Chris Houden added that he thinks Tom Miller (architect) has done a great job with the proposal and that they are trying to create something that is for the neighborhood. He added that it seems that the Neighborhood Plan is asking that the 700, 800, and 900 blocks of E. Johnson be a Main Street system.

Melissa said they had met with the City and determined that getting Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for the affordable component was not possible. For funding only 8 units it doesn't make financial sense. They are continuing to discuss the affordability issue with the City, including possibly establishing some sort of deed restriction on those 8 units to restrict them to 80% County Median Income (CMI).

Tom Miller closed by saying that the development team had no intention to come up with a design to rationalize how it works with the Neighborhood Plan. They realize that there are components that do and don't speak to the Plan, but they worked with Chris Houden to find out what would be a great plan rather than just rationalizing their proposal.

Committee Questions/Comments

In response to a question, Tom reiterated that the setbacks in the rear are the same as before – 20' from the property line to the building. They are still discussing with city staff about the possibilities if any of the 3 saved buildings closest to N. Livingston do not have commercial space. If they connect those buildings, they will be considered one and the planned commercial space in the first floor of 751 E. Johnson will make the entire mass a mixed-use building. There may though be requirements related to building separation and openings, e.g., windows, but they are working on that. Joe Lusson asked if the connectors would be at one level. Tom answered that it was TBD, but it could be. Joe added that he doesn't like the connectors between the three saved buildings – it defeats the purpose of keeping smaller scale sections on the site. He also doesn't like the rear setbacks – if they had a 30' rear setback it would help with improving site lines between buildings. He said they shouldn't nickel and dime on open space – they should create real useable back yards. David Waugh asked about the rectangles in the open spaces – those are fire pits. The

zoning requirement that requires the building not to exceed a 45-degree angle above the 2nd story was discussed. Tom said they would meet that zoning requirement. David Waugh asked about the current setback requirement for the existing zoning (TR-V2). Jessica Vaughn from City Planning said the current setback requirement is 25' or 25% of the lot depth, whichever is less.

Patrick Heck asked about the how the residents of the 3 retained/moved houses near Livingston would access the useable open space area behind the new buildings. Tom answered that there would be a sloping ramp/grade from their backyards to the plinth level and they could walk down the sidewalk atop the plinth level that is adjacent to the new building there.

Mark Bennett said developing his opinion on the proposal was tricky. He said that Melissa is right that there are a ton of benefits to having a higher density of commercial space – it would bring vitality. It is possible for the neighborhood to want that and it is also possible that this is not the only option. This proposal has some of what the neighborhood is looking for and at the same time some if it doesn't fit the values of the neighborhood. He sees the current commercial district on E. Johnson as different from the commercial spaces proposed here – they are different visions of what the streetscape looks like. This proposal has many lots combined along the same line - it will look like one building and taller than what he thinks would be best for this urban environment. Melissa asked what all thought about City Row's design and impact on the streetscape. She added that there is still a lot of work to be done on the design and the streetscape.

Patty Prime suggested that asking why City Row was okay was not enough. We can and do see the vision of the neighborhood in different ways. Chris Houden said that he saw the whole block crying out for complete renewal and that some of us see opportunities for renewal in a different way. He said look across the street and at the 800 block – they are different. Mark noted that he wasn't here when City Row was built, but he understands there were tradeoffs as that proposal evolved. Honestly, he thinks it looks good because of giant trees – they make a huge difference. Architecturally, City Row blends in with the classic style. Melissa said that in 25 years and due to their undergrounding the wires, the trees in the front of this proposal will provide a similar effect. Chris Houden said that this proposal is for 6 buildings and the psychology of visual design will make it look better. Tom Miller added that he doesn't think this is wholesale renewal of the block - they are saving more than 50% of current houses. It is not only a mixed-use development but also an adaptive reuse.

Ross Kelley asked for clarification on the height of the new buildings. Tom said that in the most recent version they are 18-22" lower and they expect to reduce that even further.

Tim Meisenheimer said that he is hugely in favor of the proposal. He has walked down this block for 15 years and it is replaceable. This site demands retail presence - we can say we don't want this much retail presence, but those moving back into the neighborhood (millennials and retirees) want more retail space. Younger people are driving less now and they want retail nearby. You can rehab these big homes as single family, but who is going to live in these big houses? We should provide housing that is wanted – that is his demographic point. If we don't build what is wanted, they will build it in Emerson East

and Eken Park – the next closest neighborhoods. After WWII it happened and will happen again. He thinks renewal is horse-crap. A house flipped on Ingersoll recently and more are coming – it takes out affordable housing when you flip houses too. Can we say no to flipping – no. If we keep all these E. Johnson houses, they could be flipped and no longer affordable anyway.

Pat Kelly said that the neighborhood goals of increasing affordable housing have not been met. If 80% CMI results in rent of about \$1150 for one person, she thinks that affordable housing goals haven't been met. She's also concerned about the houses that they propose to move – will they remain affordable rentals? Pat McCabe said that they will be upgraded, but will remain affordable to the same CMI levels. Pat asked about the house proposed to move to 943 E Dayton – will that remain affordable? Pat McCabe said that it will then be owned by someone else, so he doesn't know. Pat added that City Row got neighborhood approval because it was truly affordable and she thinks this proposal has not really made a serious attempt to make affordable housing. 8 out of 80 apartment at 80% CMI is not enough.

Patrick Heck asked if the zoning at 827 E. Gorham should require that two single family houses could go there rather than multi-flats, would they convert the 2 proposed to moved there to single family and move them? Yes.

Pat Kelly said again that she wants a response about affordability. Melissa said that there are no financing programs that will work, so Chris Houden will voluntarily restrict 8 units to 80% CMI. The project still has to make economic sense, so that is what he can do. Pat Kelly added that an important part of the Neighborhood Plan is that we want to make our neighborhood affordable to all - that is why she isn't in favor of this proposal. Melissa suggests that not all projects can be all things, but this proposal does have many great features.

David Waugh said he is also concerned about only 8 apartments being set aside as affordable. He also wonders if moving 4 houses as proposed is very expensive – won't they then need to have higher rents? He suggested they keep the 3 homes to be moved offsite in their current locations to keep them affordable. Couldn't they build on the lot at 827 E. Gorham rather than moving these houses from their current location? How much do they cost to move? It was said that the cost is \$10k to \$30k to move a house, depending on the house and logistics. Chris Houden said that it was a matter of economics – can they develop this land (the proposal site) into what the City and neighborhood are asking for? They are saving almost 60% of the current homes in the process of doing this. The market will determine what these units are rented for - they don't overcharge. Chris adds that he will board up the buildings on E. Johnson at the end of May if they get nowhere with the proposal. There is at least \$300k of city-mandated work that must be done to keep renting these homes, so he can't keep renting them. David Waugh said this is demolition by neglect and asks if Chris rewarded the previous owner for their neglect by paying more than the buildings are worth. If the neighborhood supports teardowns, how will we encourage people to fix up houses? He asked again if Chris bought the houses knowing they would be teardowns. Chris said yes, he bought some knowing he wanted to tear them down. David said that is demolition by neglect.

Bob Hemauer commended the design team for their work – the changes they have made are positive. He agrees with some of what Mark Bennett said about the massing issues that remain – you might want to consider breaking up some of the design elements. The elements need to feel different from each other at street level. He still has concerns about some aspects, but this proposal version is an improvement. He added that he doesn't think threatening to board up the houses is helpful. He hopes we can move towards less rancor.

Patrick Heck reminded all that there were only 25 minutes left to wrap up comments and talk about next steps.

Bob Klebba said that when he first met with the Houden team, City staff and Alder Zellers more than a year ago, he heard that a project like City Row was what they desired. The neighborhood representatives and Ledell said at that meeting that a City Row-type development would be difficult and that something more like recent developments on W. Mifflin and W. Dayton, where the new structures were bits and pieces with a lot of the build environment preserved were more likely to succeed. Bob said that we have raised issues with the massing and demolitions, but there have been no changes in massing. He also thinks the connectors between the 3 older houses changes the character. They are not moving towards what the steering committee has asked for.

Joe Lusson said he likes that they took a chunk off (rear side near Livingston), but would like to see more taken off. The precedent setting for the mass, rhythm and articulation is a problem. It is now houses and it is disingenuous for them to say that the height of the new building is the same as what is there now. They are now individual houses and the feel is completely different. The block would be changed forever. His objection is the mass - City Row is not our goal. He's for the retail components, but those can be done without a mammoth apartment building. He still thinks connecting the 3 houses is a mistake. It needs balance - give us 1 and a half or 2 buildings, save more houses onsite - moving is good, but prefers they stay where they are. You've proven that these homes are worth saving if they are worth moving. Keep more than 3 onsite.

Richard Linster commended the development team – he thinks they have given an honest good faith effort to respond to some concerns. They have presented a lot of material but he needs to further digest further. He doesn't want to pit neighbors against each other, but we need to make sure the proposal fits our criteria. He seconds a lot of peoples' earlier comments. Home ownership is also neighborhood goal, so if houses can be retained, they could also become owner occupied homes. He also thinks not enough of the proposal has been slated for affordable, but thanked them for trying. He still believes that the large density is an issue.

David Waugh said that we have not had a chance to talk much about design of the new buildings – he thinks it looks like 1970s Aspen. He would like to see the facades broken up further and he thinks the straight lines going from top to bottom are gimmicky. He is huge fan of modern, but he worries that in 20 years we might say, “what the hell?” He also likes the idea of making it look like different buildings.

Pat Kelly said she doesn't care that much about how things look - she feels more strongly about who lives in the neighborhood and who her neighbors are. She would rubber stamp

this proposal if they had more truly affordable housing.

There was then a discussion of whether or not another straw poll of committee members should be conducted and if it would be helpful. Elena Duncan suggested that an anonymous poll could be beneficial, although she also thought the straw poll at the March 16 steering committee meeting was helpful.

Several committee members summarized their current opinions on the proposal. Most felt that there wasn't enough information yet to issue a steering committee report – they want more information. Richard Linster said he wants to see the development team present an option for a smaller proposal. Joe Lusson said he thinks that another steering committee is needed – the development team needs to get a chance to come back to react to what they've heard. Patty Prime agreed.

Ross Kelley said that not everyone wants a smaller proposal. Greg Stroupe said that a lot of retail has struggled, so as a realtor he's cautious about that. He realizes though that Chris Houden is aware of that. If you really want to create something amazing like Willy Street, you need more housing density. If you bring in more places to shop it will help - like malls that have car dealerships, etc., and higher housing density. Cities are growing and higher density supports that – new residents want walk-able livable spaces. People want to hang out on the street. If the Neighborhood Plan doesn't call for this density, it should be rewritten. Tim Meisenheimer suggested that people should be more forthcoming with their full opinions – if they are fully against the proposal in any form, they should say so. A short and raucous discussion followed.

Chris Oddo said that he is all for the proposal, but modifications need to be looked at it. The committee should be more specific in its suggestions. He thinks Joe Lusson did a good job in his comments that were specific. Chris' personal comment is that the gables are too high; they need to come down 4-6' to feel right for the neighborhood. He likes the mixture of scale and the commercial component and he thinks architecturally it is great.

Tom Miller said that they have heard a lot of perspectives from a lot of different people and they appreciate that. He knows some want a much smaller project, but they will have to think about what is most achievable. He can't speak on behalf of Chris Houden though, so they need to think about the input. He thanked everyone for their good comments.

Melissa Huggins said that one beauty of this neighborhood is that there a lot of architects - it might be helpful to engage those architects about the design. She could send out drawings and ask for comments. Joe Lusson said that is a good idea, but that it doesn't address the massing and scale issues. More discussion ensued.

Patrick said he would work on some sort of survey that could help the committee's focus. He will be in touch via email. The meeting adjourned shortly thereafter.

The next meeting date is TBD.