

Minutes Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association Council Meeting September 28, 2011

Guests: Otto Gebhart and Christopher Gosch, proposal for Don Miller property. Christopher began discussion of RFP for 700 block of Don Miller properties, which was accepted. Development committee in discussions with City, and figuring out how to make project work. Decided to have conversation and get feedback from neighborhood, to make sure project benefits everyone. There are many goals for project (e.g., sustainability, urban infill). They are making request for TIF.

The proposal based on 12 story building, issues of density amount related to TIF amount; window of about 40 feet. Bridget asked the board if this proposal meets what we're looking for, and wanted guidance from TLNA council. Enough money in TIF budget for one project and nervous about increase in TIF request as they're in the middle of budget work.

Jim Roper asked what the status of TIF for Edgewater; Bridget said it wouldn't increase or decrease taxes, each district has its own TIF budget.

Tim Olsen thought the starting place was what was the benefit for the neighborhood and if it met neighborhood plan, and didn't want to start with financials of project in discussion. Otto agreed with Tim.

Bridget asked him to walk through the steps and how proposal incorporates neighborhood plan; thought they achieved 95-98% of that. Because of water table, soil conditions, there are challenges; parking is necessary. Parking ramp in middle of project, then surrounding with retail and two layers above that with office, restaurant space, and residential space. Original RFP 12 story component at E. Washington Ave, but then goes down in story levels and has 200 units. They want something active all the time.

Joe Lusson asked if they expected Reynolds parking lot to be there long-term. Otto responded that they've had discussions. Fred Mohs said the Reynolds family committed to staying in neighborhood. Joe Lusson asked them to explain 30 degrees.

Bridget mentioned build plan. Patrick McDonnell said build plan and TLNA neighborhood plan in sync, and established standards block by block. The standard for this block is 8 stories. The build plan gives the opportunity for bonus stories for extra considerations; this RFP is effectively 8 plus 2, making it 10 stories. Gene asked what the height of the stories was. Christopher said build plan in the 9-12 feet range.

Alan Crossley asked that to comply with Build plan, they would need 4.8 million in TIF, and would the neighborhood support the request for something higher.

Richard Linster asked what their vision of what they're proposing is. Otto said that his vision is not something that will just be store front and parking lot (had tried in past to develop parts of the street), mentioned the redevelopment of the building where High Noon Saloon is as an example; highlighted the need to have a mix (retail, office, parking, residential). And important building is attractive.

Joe Lusson asked of the quality of residential building materials, and what would last. Otto said they're in early stages but liked idea of stone and lime stone and glass facade.

Bridget asked how much they're heading off the original renderings (original RFP was on another block but committee moved them). Otto said it's a different lot, so different renderings, and not the same at all. Christopher said they have to be cognizant of views, environment, traffic, among other things, and it takes time to develop, and suggested getting frequent (monthly) feedback from neighborhood as they go on.

David Wallner wished them luck, that the corridor needs something, that we have to accept high density, activity; hoped the neighborhoods involved see beyond interests and future.

Patty Prime said they're in early design phase, and another criterion was cost to tenants, especially in relation to capitol (such as high rent around capitol), would it be expensive. Otto said they wouldn't generate commercial rents on the square, right now would have to be aggressive in pricing, would want to get quality tenants in for both residential and commercial. They would have personal office on site, and aim for high quality management of tenants.

Bridget asked them to lay out different levels of housing and pricing, and if affordable housing still on the table. Otto not going for section 8 or 42 housing. The higher units would generate more income than lower units, and lower units would meet 80% affordable housing.

Jim Roper said it was good to know that not all projects need TIF; asked how many feet the stories are with shadow at different times of year (shadow the building would create). Christopher said it was 172 feet. Jim Roper mentioned that a lower story building might be better for Reynolds lot, as it won't always be Reynolds lot.

Jim Bower from the City of Madison said many of the design conversations will involve the neighborhood each step. From City staff perspective, it becomes one of trade-offs (with TIF increase or decrease); issue becomes one of value and impact. Richard Linster we could arrange larger meeting in future.

Tom Bergamini had some observations: first, he liked project, but additional height close to E. Washington, and not troubled by height. The shadow lines move quickly and won't affect Reynolds property for future development. The other point he wanted to make is that we own this land now, and are looking for this to be spark and development in city, especially if projects like this are successful; this is the kind of project that would turn the tide in development around Madison. Being on the isthmus, there isn't a lot of land to be developed. He also does not agree with Fred Mohs that a lot families won't live here; thought that a lot of families are looking but cannot buy in the neighborhood, and that with a lot of residential space, this project will bring in families.

Joe Lusson said that on the issue of families, asked what they could do to make the townhouses the more inviting, as the higher the units go the fewer families will be living there. His other point about density was that a lot of work went into figuring out and agreeing upon height limits in E. Wash. corridor plan, and we need to think of the future; he preferred maintaining 8 stories or the design and materials merited it, 8 plus 2 stories. Christopher said that they're looking at this as a component for entire neighborhood. One of the demographics is young professionals, as well as retired people now without children who want to remain in neighborhood but don't want the house anymore (which would open up housing stock in rest of neighborhood), the townhouse demographics are for families. He said there will be more discussions in future of building materials, visibility, sustainability. More TIF makes them nervous (hence the increase in building size).

Patrick McDonnell echoed Joe Lusson's views that we should be starting with the plans for E. Washington, that height and density are not the same things and we should be cognizant of that (this is 1.3 acres). The number of units to the number of stories. Christopher said that they have to get past a certain elevation for views to start generating income and a higher quality project. The marketability of the project is what is important to project.

Patrick would like to hear what the TIF is for at a future meeting and a discussion of why a bigger building doesn't need more remediation than a smaller. Christopher said that higher apartments, higher incomes, TIF fills in that gap.

Joe Brogan mentioned the 3 major projects underway and asked if this project takes into account the other projects. Christopher said they are, and they do have concerns about some of the other projects, especially in terms of activity.

David Waugh made some comments for feedback. The build plan's number one thrust is generating employment, which he wants to see more of. The neighborhood would like to see some insurance that they do have employment as part of center in the plan. They need to sell us on more than TIF for more stories, and how it benefits neighborhood; the TIF argument is not important. Transit is another piece, and how parking and mass transit going to be facilitated by building, how will they minimize traffic on E. Mifflin St.

Richard Linster suggested they come to the Annual Meeting on October 20th at Christ Presbyterian Church, and that they would get more perspectives from rest of membership.

Respectfully submitted by Lia Vellardita, secretary.