

**Notes from 9 Dec. 2014 Neighborhood Meeting
on the E. Washington and N. Few Proposal from McGrath Property Group**

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 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 Tim Parks from the city Planning Department who will assist TLNA and the developer in evaluating the proposal.

Alder Zellers turned the meeting over to Patty Prime who facilitated the presentation, questions and answers.

Lance McGrath of McGrath Property Group was introduced, as was Mike Metzger who is in charge of MPG's property management. Joseph Lee, the project architect, was also introduced. MPG currently manages 136 apartment units (mostly downtown), owns various other properties and have developed both apartment buildings and condos. Lance presented the development proposal details.

Lance stated that they were early in the process, so not a lot of detailed information was available, but they look forward to receiving neighborhood feedback. They plan to build on the lots currently occupied by American Auto, Mad Motors and Patriot Glass and associated asphalt parking lots. The property is a little over one acre in size and mostly flat. It is made up of 5 lots with 2 current owners. There is some environmental contamination on the lots that will be remediated. The water table is quite high there.

Current zoning is Commercial Corridor – Transitional (CTT), which would allow up to 4 stories with setbacks. The E. Washington Build Plan calls for 3 stories maximum and has a 15-foot setback requirement on E. Washington. The TLNA Plan calls for 41-60 housing units per acre. Their proposal is for 70-80 apartments with the final number depending on the mix of apartment sizes – studio through 3-bedroom.

They would like to save the front half of the Patriot Glass building that is a Quonset-type structure. It is a hidden gem, unique and has lots of character. The interior is raw milled aluminum.

There are two ways for them to approach the project:

1. Construct a 3-story apartment building, which would require removing the Patriot Glass structure, or
2. Construct a 4-story apartment building, which would allow them to save a portion of Patriot Glass.

They want neighborhood input on which approach is preferable. The 4-story option

would have a 4th floor step back of 12 feet on the side facing E. Mifflin.

They would have 75 parking stalls underneath the building with about 4 feet of the garage being under grade level. Commercial space would occupy 1200 to 3500 square feet of the first floor, mostly on E. Washington. There would be a fitness room, the building would be dog and cat friendly, and the rents would be market rate. The rents, however, would be \$150-\$300 less, depending on unit size, than similar apartments closer to or in downtown.

They need to do the following:

1. conduct an environmental study;
2. a geotechnical investigation;
3. choose the building's HVAC system;
4. investigate the possibility of using some solar energy component;
5. explore having a Community Car, although it can be expensive for a smaller development;
6. explore the feasibility of electric car charging stations, and
7. conduct a shadow study to assess the impact on neighboring buildings/houses.

Lance showed examples from other buildings of possible designs and exteriors – they favor a warehouse/industrial design look with big windows and brick exteriors with detailing.

Joe Lee showed preliminary plans for the 4-story option. The parking level would extend under the entire building and a bit more. There would be a 35-foot distance from the property lines on E. Mifflin to the edge of the building. 20 feet of that would be green space. The setback from the 3rd to 4th floor would meet the 45-degree angle requirement.

They would like to activate the corner of N. Few and E. Washington. That will depend on what type of commercial tenant they get on the first floor.

The project will need a demolition permit, certified survey map and a potential Condition Use Permit due to exceeding 8 units.

They would like to submit to the city on Feb. 4 with the proposal coming before the Urban Design Commission on 3/25 and Plan Commission on 4/6. Common Council could be scheduled concurrent with the Plan Commission if all goes well. Common Council approval is required for the 4-story option, because it is a change to Urban Design District 8. CC approval is not needed for the 3-story option. They hope to start construction on about 5/1 with occupancy in 5/2016.

Patty Prime opened up the floor for questions and comments.

Adam Schesch, who owns an apartment building on E. Mifflin behind the proposal site, said that the neighborhood plan calls for 41-60 units per acre for a reason. 4 stories would loom over his building given the direction of the sun. He said people want to plant bushes

and flowers in the back yards and privacy would be compromised. He advertises his building as a quiet building on a quiet street – it is a family street. He asked who MPG wants to attract with their rent structure. He gets calls from single mothers who can't afford high rents.

Lance answered that would not expect students to live in the apartments. There could be some students working towards advanced degrees. He also expects empty nesters and working professionals. Adam asked if MPG would not build if they had to keep it at 3 stories. Lance said they would like to save the Quonset building, but can do 3 if not. He added that the number of units in the T-L Neighborhood Plan is not a zoning requirement.

Pat Kelly asked what the building configuration would be if it were 3 stories. Lance said it would extend further down E. Washington where the front half of Patriot Glass currently is.

A neighbor said that he/she liked the idea of using brick on the exterior, but was concerned about the height – doesn't want 4.5 stories looming over them. This neighbor is also concerned about shadows and privacy. The metal building currently extends to the back of the lot – what will happen there? Lance said that they will cut the building in half, saving the front half. He added that they will do shadow studies and that he thinks that the shadow impacts won't be as dramatic as some seem to think.

David Waugh, who lived for many years at 1213 E. Mifflin, directly behind Patriot Glass, asked where the cars would enter the parking level. Lance said they would turn off N. Few near the back of the lot and immediately turn right to go down to the parking level. He added that the garbage trucks would enter from Few. David also asked about fencing along the property line – currently there is chain link with vegetation. Tim Parks from City Planning said that there is a requirement for fencing along the property line, so the existing would likely be replaced. David said that he is a proponent of owner-occupied housing or maybe a mix of owner-occupied and rental. He thinks the developer should honor the intent of the T-L Neighborhood Plan, which is 41-60 units. Lance said he could not get financing for condos, but that the apartments are long-term investments for them. They will be of high quality, so could be converted to condos if the market changed.

Lance restated that the Quonset hut would be a restaurant, brew pub or bar, if the 4-story option is preferred.

Krys Wachowiak from Curtis Court asked about how the traffic pattern would be impacted. Lance said that he expected most traffic would come out of the parking level and turn left onto Few then right onto E. Washington – many will work downtown or in Verona. Coming home, they could make a U-turn at Baldwin, which is legal if not marked.

Jeff Reinke, who lives on Curtis Court, said they would need speed bumps on Curtis Ct. to keep traffic down. Lance said he would be open to supporting some sort of traffic restrictions on Curtis Ct. Jeff added that there will also be an on-street parking issue with

the new building. Lance said he does not think it will be an issue – their buildings have successfully had this ratio of parking spots to apartments with success.

Jessica Becker from E. Dayton asked who the commercial tenants might be. Lance said he would like to hear what the neighborhood wants because getting tenants in that spot will be a challenge because it isn't at grade level (need to walk up 3 or 4 stairs).

Richard Linster from Sidney Street said he appreciated their willingness to consider both Community Car and electric car plug-in stations.

Patrick Heck asked why the building shape in the renderings had a cutout on one side. Why not fill that in, thereby reduce the need for a fourth floor? Lance said that apartment buildings are typically 55-60 feet wide with apartments on either side of a hallway. This is the best design for allowing windows and entry. The cutout/courtyard also allows for a nice deck for residents.

A neighbor asked again about traffic flow. Getting out onto E. Washington is difficult – the light at the Constellation intersection is nice – could they do a light at Few too? Lance said that is a question for the city. Tim Parks said it would need to be discussed with Traffic Engineering. A building of the proposed size could generate about 500 trips per day through an intersection – might not be enough to warrant a light. Lance added that they will likely be charging their tenants for parking.

Jeff Reinke asked where restaurant customers would park. Lance said it would primarily be on E. Washington. Patty Prime added that the proposed Public Market and other projects have the potential to turn the nearby blocks into walking areas, at least more so than now, parking pressure may lessen. Adam Schesch said that he thought the proposed restaurant would need its own parking – parking on E. Washington would not be enough. He also thinks that his tenants, some of whom have 2 cars, will be crowded out of their on-street spots due to overflow from the restaurant and apartment building. Parking is already crowded in the neighborhood. Lance said he thought most restaurant users would be from the neighborhood. They would walk from the neighborhood, The Constellation, The Galaxie, Johnson St. and Willy St.

Bob Klebba, who lived behind the Patriot Glass building for many years, said that the Neighborhood Plan called for 41-60 units per acre and this is a 1-acre site. People should understand that this project will require a change in the Plan due to increased density. We need to be very careful about changing the Neighborhood Plan.

Bekah Wilce from Curtis Ct asked if the indoor parking could be used by the building's commercial customers. Lance said it could, but would have to be shared with the tenants. Since many tenants are gone during the day, a sharing arrangement might work. Mike Metzger from MPG said that we should compare this to Willy St and their parking situation. Bekah said that our hope is that this area will evolve to be like Willy St, i.e., more walkers/bikers and less need for cars, but the issue is now – it is not like that now and will take years to get there. Lance said that retail in this block is pioneering – they

think someone can survive in the spot because the apartments will carry the development. Commercial rent will not be top dollar.

Pat Kelly asked if their rents being lower means that the quality of their building materials would be less. Lance said that they use the same high quality materials as other market rate projects, e.g., granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, solid surface flooring – they are not cutting back on finishes. Pat added that she hates the fact that the building goes so far back on the lot – they need green space there. She feels it doesn't respect the residential neighborhood on E. Mifflin. Mike Metzger said that the building setback from the E. Mifflin property lines is already much more than is required.

David Waugh said that for many years he lived directly behind Quonset hut – he likes that they want to reuse that. He encourages them to have a smaller-type restaurant rather than a bar. It needs to close at 10 or 11pm because it is next to a neighborhood.

Lance said they would have a private contractor for trash removal.

Adam Schesch said he previously lived on Jenifer and Baldwin and was then active in the Marquette Neighborhood Association. They had battles concerning density and lack of parking. They didn't require that every apartment would get a parking space and parking was difficult. He said that there are homes across Few St. from the proposed building and that on two sides of the building are 2-story homes. He said that they have not addressed parking.

Jessica Becker said that she used to live on Baldwin Street and does not want something like the Baldwin Street Grille in the Quonset hut. She wants a restaurant. She is also interested in what will go into the commercial space – it could help establish a people-friendly zone on E. Washington.

Jonny Hunter from N. Ingersol said that density issues in the neighborhood aren't going away. We who live in the neighborhood have to deal with density issues – it is silly to ask developer to deal with all the parking/density issue. A wider issue is that we need to work on is getting better transportation. E. Washington is the place for high density. He would understand the concerns if the proposal were on Mifflin. He added that if this building is not built now, in 10 years it could be 8 or 10 stories.

Asked about limiting the building to 3 stories and saving some of the Patriot Glass building, Lance said that the numbers don't pan out with that option. It isn't feasible for them.

Lance discussed the vision behind BUILD Plan - density is only one of several things that are used to measure a project's worthiness. The 41-60 units is based on the number of dwelling units, so he could keep the same mass with fewer units, which honors the 41-60 requirement, but has the same result in building mass. We need to keep the 41-60 units/acre in perspective. He said that honoring the neighborhood plan will play into the decision of the Plan Commission, but that the Commission determines how well it

follows the Plan. There is a relationship between the neighborhood plan and the BUILD plan – they tried to create a consistent vision when those plans were created.

Tim Parks described the requirement for the E. Washington 15-foot setback and the view shed. He also said that under the 1966 zoning code, everything had to have parking and for good reasons the city has moved away from that requirement. It was a suburban vision. For a lot of uses, businesses just don't need any parking. The current zoning code typically requires restaurants to have parking, but not so much anymore in urban areas. It now talks about sharing parking. There is also now more ability to have less onsite parking. The City wants activated sidewalks, is trying to improve the transit system and also wants to accommodate bikes.