

Minutes
TLNA Council Feb. 26, 2015 Special Meeting for
McGrath Property Group Proposal for the 1200 N Block of E. Washington
The Constellation Community Room, 10 N. Livingston
Submitted by Patrick Heck

Attendees:

Council Members: Patty Prime, Patrick Heck, Steve Maerz, Steve Wilke, Sarah Herrick, Tyler Lark, Jessi Mulhall, Matt Lieber

Guests: Alder Ledell Zellers, Lance McGrath, Mike Metzger, Robert Lasseter, Jeff Reinke, Richard Linster, Kathy Nissley, Rebecca Cuningham, Evan Wedell, Karla Handel, Karen Banaszak, John Marszal

Meeting convened at 7:05pm. TLNA President Patty Prime welcomed everyone and presented the agenda.

Patrick Heck gave a brief recap of the McGrath Property Group's proposal. He mentioned the December neighborhood-wide meeting called by Alder Zellers, the previous 4-story plus Quonset hut proposal version and the Steering Committee meetings and proceedings.

Lance McGrath presented boards with an updated proposal:

- This proposal version (these numbers and this configuration could still change):
- -Much of the landscaping depicted are placeholders – their landscape architect has not had time to work on real plans and he cannot begin his work until the building plans are set in stone.
- 1600-3700 square feet of commercial/retail
- 75-80 units, 75-80 parking spaces (this pa
- Setback from the rear E. Mifflin property lines is 20' with 8' of above-parking level deck beyond that. So, the building itself is 28' from the property lines. The 3rd floor is setback another 10' from the 2nd floor in the rear (3rd floor units in the rear will have terraces/patios atop the 2nd floor). Lance added that the distance from the 2 E. Mifflin Street apartment buildings to their rear property line is 40', so a total of 68' between buildings. This is wider than the 66' feet distance from outer sidewalk edge to outer sidewalk edge on N. Few Street. In other words, a street the size of N. Few could go through this area.
- The proposal 100% zoning compliant and will need 3 standard conditional uses.
- Recent changes:
- All commercial/retail space along E. Washington – streetscape is active and engages the street.
- Same modern warehouse aesthetic – all first floor at grade on E. Washington, About 600 sq ft on of commercial/retail either side of mid-block entryway. The 3700 sq ft of commercial/retail doesn't include the fitness space for the tenants, which is also at grade level along E. Washington.
- There will be two additional entryways – one by the parking level entrance and one in rear of the easternmost section.

- If a commercial tenant is a Snap Fitness or similar fitness business, there could possibly be an agreement with MPG to have tenants use that, plus non-tenants could patronize the fitness center. That is all TBD – no commercial/retail tenants have been secured.
- They hope for pedestrian-driven retail with some use of the nice outdoor space – should attract some good users.
- The unit mix has changed, which drove modifications to the exterior “bays” – building is now 7 pieces, exterior has dark masonry section in middle (black cement fiber board). They are exploring red undersides to retail overhangs/awnings with some lime green signage too – both would brighten up the exterior.
- For the rear elevation, trees will help shield that in growing season. Masonry on the 2-story rear portion will help with what the neighbors see. There will be balconies and walkouts – those plus the 10’ setback to the 3rd floor provide breaks in the mass “face” that neighbors will see.
- The central courtyard will be cement fiberboard also.
- They could try to get more ornate with additional brick details or cornice detail, but they are leaning towards a simpler, cleaner look.
- This version has 77 units and 75 parking stalls underneath – both subject to change.
- There is a 1:1 bike parking ratio (units to bike parking spot)
- 34 % of the units are 2-bdrm or larger, but most of those are 2-bdrm. They are now not likely to have 4-bdrm units. Currently, two 3-bdrms are located in the rear.
- They consider the neighborhood to be an amenity for tenants (Reynolds and Tenney Parks, etc.). They expect close to \$200k of park fees to be paid from the project.
- Other amenities: bike maintenance room, storage units on each floor, still trying to get solar panels on the roof for the common area electricity, electric car charging stations (a few), still looking into car sharing, and are now working with Focus on Energy to offset costs for improved efficiency of all components and low-E glass for windows.
- There will be two overhead exterior doors in the rear - one for the enclosed garbage corral and one for parking level entrance.
- Their anticipated schedule:
 - o 3/4 submittal
 - o 4/22 Urban Design Commission
 - o 5/4 Plan Commission
 - o 6/1 construction starts
 - o 5/2016 occupancy
 - o The schedule could slip by 2 weeks if they submit after 3/4.
- Lance has communicated with Simon Puleo, whose backyard is adjacent to the site. Simon said he would talk with them about landscaping/screening options.
- Trees on the adjacent properties should not be impacted, but they will work with neighbors to make sure trees are not damaged by the building or its construction.
- They are required to install a board fence along the rear property line. It might be limited to 6’ tall, but they will explore the options.
- They have no 3-bdrm units in their existing buildings. They hope that families will rent

- the 3-bdrm units rather than 3 unrelated individuals looking for cheaper rent.
- HVAC for the units will be standard split systems with a/c condensers on roof. No exterior grills or Magic-Paks. Some smaller studio units could get something other than a standard split systems.
 - Location is TBD for the exhaust fans for parking level, but they will likely be towards the eastern E. Wash corner, i.e. away from E. Mifflin St. homes. Intake will likely be by parking level entrance, but there will be no fan, just a grill.
 - Lance says that any water pumped from the parking level must go to the sanitary sewers. Roof and deck water go to storm sewers.
 - They are still working on a solution for the car headlights anticipated to shine on the N. Few home across from the parking level exit/entrance.
 - There will be no parking for retail/commercial customers, but employees will be able to use parking level spots during the day when tenants are gone. E. Washington parking spaces should increase by because there are 3 to 4 existing curb cuts that will be filled in.
 - No community room/space is currently included.

General Discussion

Richard Linster wishes that the communication/engagement with the neighborhood was stronger, but is glad they want to continue. Please listen and draw from neighbors' comments. TLNA council must balance the nearby neighbors' opinions with those of all of the neighborhood. Lance is correct that it will meet most zoning criteria, but Richard does not find the proposal to be exciting. He wonders if it is a good fit for the neighborhood. Is someone going to say this is great? He wishes that someone from the area directly impacted would be enthusiastic about the development proposal,

Jeff Reinke spoke to the potential for traffic problems, particularly on Curtis Court. He reiterated the concerns brought up by the Steering Committee. He likes many things about the project and wants it to succeed, but cautions about the traffic and density being too high – he prefers the 41-60 units per acre for the block in the T-L Neighborhood Plan. It's a residential neighborhood and 75 units will be too many people for this 1-acre spot. He also wants to make sure there are plenty of parking spots in the parking level so that overflow doesn't end up on the street.

Karen Banaszak is concerned about the fabric of the neighborhood. She needs TLNA because she is busy, but wants our help. She believes Lance has good interest, committed to quality and has listened, but she wants a community space that would draw people in and out of the building. She doesn't want transient people moving in/out. She knows a Constellation resident who says there is no sense of community and she doesn't want that. She also wants more green space. She notes that Tim Parks from Planning said at the last Steering Committee meeting that the City likely won't do anything about traffic problems until they occur – the project has to be up and running. She is also concerned about construction trucks going down her street. Lance says they can prevent the construction traffic. Karen wants projects that will appeal to people who are drawn to the community and who will springboard into buying homes in the community.

Sarah Herrick asked about the feasibility of an eastbound left turn lane being installed on E. Washington. Lance said he had the impression it is feasible and that he had volunteered to pay for that. Patrick Heck said a very rough estimate was \$30k, according to Tim Parks. Matt Lieber asked if outbound traffic could cross E. Washington if they changed the intersection to add the left turn lane. All agreed it would be very expensive and the City wasn't likely to agree to that.

Evan Wedell suggested one solution would be to make Curtis Court one-way eastbound. He likes modern architecture – likes the clean lines and thinks the architecture has gotten better with the lower commercial space and more of it. He sees no parking problem. Simple lines are good but should have bolder color palette. The new black fiberboard sections are too heavy and will be dreary in middle of winter. He thinks the building should have larger units. He wants tenants who will stay. Successful buildings are multi-generational. Maybe there will someday be a market for condos, so they should be built for this. If one couple wanted to buy two adjacent units and join them, that possibility should be included in the construction/design. Even also would we see an elevation from the northeast side – Lance agreed to provide that.

Rebecca Cuninghame likes the care they took with the exterior of the building. She liked the crème/taupe color better than the black for the fiberboard cement portions. She likes that the building is residential and approves of the increase in business space. She too would like a community room that could help build community. She suggested that if there is a fitness center, it could include a small space for residents to gather. She hopes that the center patio area be more of a green space that that more green space in general could be added. She would like the roof to be a green space/garden. She also prefers the 41-60 units/acre rather than the proposal ~75 units/acre. She dislikes the 2-story back section because they neighbors will feel like monkeys in a cage, particularly when in their backyards.

Karen said that she would like some sloping roofs like the ones that look so nice at 431 W. Dayton. She suggests everyone should look at that property.

TLNA Council Discussion and Questions:

Jessi Mulhall is impressed – thinks the commercial is much better. Progress is being made. She understands where Jeff is coming from with the need for large units. She knows a lot of single women with two kids who are looking for housing – they need 3-bdrms, She also think larger units will have 2 cars.

Lance was asked how they decide their unit mix. Lance says past history usually is the indicator, but also by talking with tenants. Lance also believes the 1:1 parking ratio is 1.1 is sufficient – they have that in another building and they have empty spots. Steve doesn't think the 4-bdrm units are useable and that 3-bdrm units will be taken by professionals splitting the rent. Lance thinks good quality 3-bdrms could work. Lance said he would indeed consider more 3-bdrm units, but he can't promise anything.

Patty Prime asked about including parking with rent. Lance said it would be separate, not sure what the going parking rate is, but probably \$100 or \$75. Patty thinks it could be good to include it. Others think it is best not to include it because that would be a benefit for those who don't drive.

Patrick Heck made a motion that TLNA not take formal position on the proposal and instead

issue a letter to city entities that lists the favorable and unfavorable aspects of the proposal. Tyler Lark seconded.

Discussion:

Steve Wilke says he thinks that approach might dilute TLNA's position. He understood this approach for the T. Wall proposal because there was a lot of hesitation. He is in favor of this proposal and thinks the problems are surmountable. Tyler agrees and he felt that the T. Wall proposal we dropped the ball by not opposing. He thinks we should put in a recommendation. Jessi agrees.

Sarah Herrick – inclined to support it, but the traffic is a problem. Curtis Ct has to be protected and traffic must be kept off bike blvd. The 1200 block of the bike blvd is already scary.

Matt says he understands that nearby neighbors are impacted more than the overall neighborhood. He reminds everyone what is on the site now. He wants to know how can it work for the community and how it can promote community connection? It is challenging... traffic is key, bike parking is key, the bike center great and it's not taking away green space. He was on the fence last week, but likes it more now, but is still not sure.

Steve Maertz is on the side of supporting it. Adding conditions that we would still like to see is a good idea. Nothing better is going there – it is a big improvement.

Patty thinks the new proposal has better massing, the view of the building is better, the indentations are nice, the street level is good. We should keep pushing to make sure traffic and parking are not continuing issues. She is thinking the product coming out of the process is good.

Ledell says that Plan Commission does read the neighborhood associations' letters, including the conditions they list. It can influence the outcome.

Steve Wilke says that the proposal could be a lot worse. He asks if the plan will change from this version? Lance says it can change some, but this is more or less what will be submitted.

Patrick Heck withdrew his earlier motion.

Steve Wilke moved that TLNA support the proposal with a list of conditions included. Steve Maertz seconded.

The motion carried unanimously. Patrick Heck will draft a letter to city entities and distribute it to the Council for editing.

Steve Wilke moved to adjourn.

Adjourn at 8:48pm.