

Notes

TLNA Steering Committee Meeting for the Dane County Proposal to Create a Day Shelter and Resource Center for the Homeless at the Messner site, 1326 E. Washington

29 Oct. 2015, Tenney Garden Apartments, 302 N. Baldwin

Attendees -

Patty Prime, TLNA President
Patrick Heck, TLNA Development Chair
Heidi Wegleitner, District 2 Supervisor
Alder Ledell Zellers
Captain Carl Gloede, Madison Police Dept.
Lynn Green, Director Human Services, Dane County
Tim Parks, City of Madison Planning Div.
Jim O'Keefe, Director Community Development, City of Madison

Neighbors and Interested Parties: Richard Linster, Bob Klebba, Deborah Boehm, Michael Ryanjoy, Susan Springman, Jon Becker, William Gilles, Steve Maerz, Herb Schmidley, Richard Freihoefer, Steve Wilke, Christy Holz Sheppleman, Marsha Cannon, David Staple, Jeremy Cesarec, Shawn Kapper, Joe Hoey, Pat Kelly, Karla Handel

Meeting Introduction -

After introductions of all attendees, Patty Prime discussed the meeting's goals, including information sharing by the County and City with a follow-up question and answer period. She also expressed a desire to get an updated schedule from the County.

Patty also referred to the meeting ground rules that should be observed to keep the meeting running smoothly.

Patrick Heck presented the role of the steering committee. Chiefly, the steering committee will evaluate the County's proposal for converting the Messner property into a day center for the homeless. The committee will evaluate the County's proposal, as well as evaluate the City's need to grant conditional uses concerning the proposed usage of the property. Patrick also stated that TLNA development steering committees typically produce findings that full TLNA Council uses to educate itself in preparation for establishing TLNA's position on a development proposal. He also mentioned that the fact that TLNA Council had already taken a position against the County's purchase of the site, the committee's work was no less important. The City process for granting Conditional Uses for the site was to be the largest focus of the committee's work, assuming that the County moves forward with the site purchase.

Information Sharing from County and City guests and Q&A -

Heidi Wegleitner distributed an updated schedule with process information on the reverse (see TLNA website for this document).

She said that there were opportunities for input on the County level. One example is that once the County has chosen a service provider, neighbors will have a lot more information on what the activities at the day center will be.

The site purchase resolution from the County has been amended. The County Personnel and Finance Committee included the Homeless Issues Committee report and also amended it to address some concerns of residents. She believes a lot of planning still needs to happen. She will put a set of commonly asked questions on her blog and those will also be distributed via email. She reminded all that both the operator's plans and any binding conditions that might come from Plan Commission can potentially change the situation a lot.

Heidi added that it really is a Day Resource Center, operating in the only during the daytime. The resource component allows clients to access and connect to services/agencies that can help them with housing, employment, public benefits, health care (medical, mental), support groups, classes, training – there is a lot of potential, but nothing is set in stone yet. In the original RFP and recommendations from almost 3 ago, there is more information on the services they hope for.

Pat Kelly asks who some of the panelists are:

Jim O'Keefe answered that he is with the city's Community Development agency, which includes supplying affordable housing and working with the homeless to connect with services. They financially support non-profit services. The City's primary thrust is increasing affordable housing, particularly for homeless. They are in the midst of a 5-year, \$25 million effort to add as many as 1000 units of affordable housing. 250 of those will be built for homeless or recently homeless people. They want to do 5 separate development projects for homeless. The Rethke Avenue project is under construction and should be ready by early 2nd quarter 2016. It will house 60 single adults who are chronically homeless or have had multiple episodes of homelessness in the previous 3 years. A 2nd location on far west side is being considered; the City's strategy is to spread them in different areas. They know they won't eliminate homelessness completely, but they believe they will house the chronically homeless. Those who experience shorter-term episodes of homelessness could be users of the day shelter once the others are housed.

It was noted that the City will provide no funding for the property purchase; it is a county-funded purchase.

Lynn Green from County Human Services said that her agency works closely with the City's Community Development Department and the County does some joint funding of both.

Tim Parks said that his role is as staff for the Plan Commission. They advise Plan Commission on process and the lenses that the Commission will look through on each proposal. They also assist the development team and associated consultants on the development of their application materials and hearings. If Plan Commission approves a proposal, they assist with the post-vote

implementation. The Planning Division will take a position on how an application meets the standards. They assess the permitted and conditional uses that are necessary and how a proposal meets those requirements. Tim said he thinks the operational portion of the conditional uses might be focused on more than the physical portion for this proposal. A granted conditional use allows for continuing jurisdiction, i.e., a development must continue to meet the standards of approval. The Plan Commission can hold a public meeting if there are operational issues and can even revoke a conditional use permit. In his 12 years with the Planning Division, they have reviewed 1 to 2 per year. Only once was a Conditional Use actually revoked; usually the process is to modify rather than revoke a CU.

It was asked if the TLNA resolution from 2 nights ago will have an impact on the County's upcoming vote to endorse the purchase. Is it an option to not approve this? Tim Parks explained that the public buying private property is subject to input. Lynn Green says the County had to buy it and then pursue the Conditional Use Permits – timing did not allow for them to pursue the CUPs first.

Shawn Kapper asked Heidi about County Res-072. Didn't that commit the County to conducting a cost-benefit analysis of all prospective sites? If that didn't happen, why not? Heidi answered that she asked about this when the site came up in the Homeless Issues Committee. The county was then in the thick of negotiations on the site purchase and there was no report until later. She also brought up that a cost-benefit analysis was needed for all properties considered. There was an email paragraph on each site that was considered from mid-July to early October. That is the only report that she has seen. Shawn says that was not a cost-benefit analysis; it was an email.

Joe Hoey stated that Heidi should say the cost-benefit analysis was never prepared, that no comprehensive analysis was done. The County Board voted res-072 on and a comprehensive process was laid out. The County said that is what they would do. Joe Parisi (and Heidi?) ignored the process. How can he (Joe) trust them? They did not live up to their word. Joe adds that he understands real estate problem, but it isn't a private developer – they are our elected representatives. Our elected representatives told us they would involve the whole downtown neighborhood.

Heidi explained that when Messners was identified in late August, she came to TLNA and said there were 3 or 4 properties that the County (and City partners) was evaluating, including Messners. She is 1 of 37 supervisors – they do pass resolutions and the executive branch implements. What happens is often not what was supposed to happen; it is very complex at times. Not all the things happen the Board votes on – it is disappointing. She says that Res-084 that first funded a day shelter should have included funds to identify sites back then. She's sorry that the process has not been what the neighborhood wants. The County does do a lot, but she wishes they did more on homeless issues and that there was the political will to do more. She has met with many groups downtown on homeless issues and she feels she has been engaged and encouraged others to be engaged. This is not the same as getting everyone involved, but she is not sure that would work. The City added the Conditional Use process to the County's ideas for a day shelter and the City holds developers to the law and binding conditions. She hopes to repair and rebuild trust. She also gives County staff the benefit of the doubt in the process.

Susan Springman, representing the Mullins Group that owns many of the properties near the proposed site, said they are not taking a position on the proposal – they are not for or against it, but they question the process. When there is to be a large expenditure for a building, they buyer should want to know the conditional uses ahead of time. She also doesn't believe the County has enough money to retrofit the building with the services they want to provide. They have looked at the building - it is full of water and the roof needs replacement, HVAC is not appropriate and there is no bathroom. \$1 million is not adequate. She wants the County Board to be aware that they need to put millions more in to make it work. It cost more than \$1million to retrofit Fyfe's into Pasqual's and the right operator to do it. This facility needs to operate properly and she's concerned about day care center. She wants the day center to be an asset - will the County Board be made aware of the possibility that they will need to spend millions more than budgeted? The process is backwards – there were other offers to by and they did not make a contingent offer. She thinks the building could sell to someone else if the County doesn't purchase it. She is also concerned about who determines the scope of the architects work on the building? Do they have to fit into the current budget for the project? If not, the rebuilding will be a train run amok. Lynn Green mentioned that she walked through the building with county engineers and, even though this is not her area. She wants public works to give the facts – they are the ones who put out and decide on the architectural and engineering RFP. She agrees it will take a lot to fix it up. She added that she has seen a lot of the earlier proposed sites. Bellinis fell through because County Engineering said it would be too expensive. Lynn said that the RFP responders don't base their response on the amount allotted by the County – they respond with what they think the building needs.

Tim Parks said that the city has to issue building permits for the project – this is a change of occupancy (industrial/warehouse to larger density) so it will need safety improvements – ADA, fire protection, sprinkling, electrical, plumbing, numbers of water closets, etc. If the conditional uses are approved, then the building permits typically are issued.

Susan Springman asked if the proposal would go to the Landmarks Commission because of proximity to Pasqual's. Tim Parks said the standard that would be in question asks if it so large or visually intrusive so as to damage the landmarked property. Since the Messner building is an existing structure and may actually be decreased in size, hence not getting any closer to Pasqual's, it probably will be okay from a Landmark's perspective.

Susan said that the conditions that the neighborhood should be listed. Ledell said that TNLNA steering committees have been involved in the Conditional Use process before and a number of their Conditional Use desires have been included in approved proposals - they participate in that process.

Michael Ryanjoy asked why, if the design RFP responses are due on 11/3, won't those bids be visible so the neighborhood can look prior to the County Board vote on 11/5. Lynn Green said she can't say what public works does, but Human Services doesn't allow their RFP responses to be released. You are picking who you will negotiate with – not necessarily the eventual winner, so they need to keep the responses private so if they go to the second place response, they have leverage. Until a contract is signed, they don't make the responses public.

Patty Prime asked if the ballpark amount would be available for Supervisors for their 11/5 vote? Lynn said that an RFP usually contains the maximum amount allotted, but the proposals can be different. Heidi said that the County Board approves the eventual contracts, but they do not approve the selection process. Michael Ryanjoy questioned the earlier timeline. He thought staff was looking the first couple of days of August. Heidi said that the site came up in a meeting of city and county elected officials and staff in late August. On Aug. 4, it was mentioned, but staff didn't visit the site until early Sept. Lynn Green added that it didn't come up earlier from what she knows. She didn't know until about 2 days before they went to look on Sept. 2 and the purchase offer was made on Sept. 9.

Jon Becker had 3 questions – he wants to know more about the steering committee role, how the County's homeless services and buildings relate to Housing First (their buildings are mostly single-room occupancy style in many areas and deliver services in those same buildings), and how long will the proposed site serve in this capacity? Would it have to be changed to another function eventually because of Housing First success? How much money should be put into it if it will change? He also thinks the County should reduce the energy usage/cost; they might want to make a cistern with water to reduce long-term energy costs. Lynn Green answered that she hopes that it has 2 distinct components: (1) a homeless shelter providing basic needs (lockers, showers, coffee, snacks, shelter from the elements) and (2) the larger part is the resource component (similar to a job center), helping with getting health insurance, people and computers to help you, even not homeless but having eviction problems will have a housing desk to get help, yet as more people get into housing then the emphasis will shift into the resource work. The County currently owns and operates the job center on Aberg Avenue. It is asked if the job center in the new site will be a duplicate of the Aberg site. Lynn said that the Aberg site is mostly related to employment and has a housing desk; the proposed site will be much more than a job center can provide.

Wayne (last name unknown) asked for the opinion of Captain Gloede. Capt. Gloede said that like with a prison, jail and a detox center, his concern is safety. Given what you/they saw in the 800 block of East Washington (the temporary day resource center) and what has been seen along the river and the Mullins loading dock – they will monitor safety. It is asked how much manpower the police will need. Capt. Gloede says he can talk only about what he knows – he can't forecast yet because they don't know the details of the proposed operation. They haven't this type of thing, so he can't say. They have had emergency shelters and 2 years of temporary warming facilities and he can address those. The temporary warming facility in the car dealership showroom had heat and a bathroom – was really just a warming facility with no programming like the day resource center plan. The 2nd year of a temporary day shelter was at the Lussier Center. From a public safety standpoint, the first location was not good – there were no rules, no supervision and no programming. The 2nd location had staff and volunteers with programming. Those didn't solve all problems, but there were fewer calls for services. The population that the providers deal with has a lot mental health concerns (typically undiagnosed), so with programming and services they can get help, including with drug and alcohol addictions. Those 3 things are the biggest barriers to getting people down the path to housing, etc. They see the resource center as a positive, but it doesn't mean there won't be issues. They recommend strongly that any entity have good management – wherever it is built the key piece is the organization and staff that runs it day-to-day.

Patty Prime asked for clarification on how many clients it will serve and the hours of operation. Lynn Green says the proposed hours of operation are 8:00am -5:30pm. Capt. Gloede added that there will be a maximum capacity set by the City. Lynn said that the Martin Street capacity was 99. Heidi says that in the RFP 8:00am-5:00pm. Will the hours will be listed as a Conditional Use? Tim Parks says the Plan Commission could consider setting both hours and capacity. He adds that it is early in the process and all the information isn't yet available, so some details are to be determined. He said that the client base isn't a sedentary group of people, but there will be a lot of clients who drop in for services, meetings, counseling, will be between jobs, needing help with healthcare - it won't be a static group of clients. He adds that from a building code perspective, there will be a maximum threshold that can't be exceeded. Jim O'Keefe adds that people will come and go, just like at the Central Library, Bethel Church, the Hospitality House, etc.

Susan Springs says that when the clients get kicked out of their night shelters, they will be congregating at the day center, so it should open early enough so that -30 below zero temperatures they aren't waiting for the day center opening. If the idea is that the shelter will expand in any way, that should be in Conditional Use Permit. She is also concerned about adequate parking. Mullins is adding 300 employees to their nearby buildings.

Joe Hoey asks about the center's annual operating costs – research of similarly sized shelters in other areas indicates that the cheapest budget is close to \$800k. This budget is \$300k, is it a really a budget for a comprehensive resource center? Will they say that if the comprehensive services are not offered, it will close? He thinks it could just be a warehouse for the homeless given the budget. Lynn Green says that the budget amount is a misunderstanding - it is not capped at \$300k. The shelters Joe is referring to are not government run so have different situations. The \$300k is meant as seed money – it will support the core operator staff and they anticipate a lot of donations to add to the budget. Pat Kelly asked then what is the actual budget? Lynn says there are current contractors who will supply some of the services for no charge. Bob Klebba asks if can we get an idea of what the contractors will supply and for what charge? Heidi says that the previous Shine608 vision from the proposed Martin Street location has some of that. She adds that another way to look at is that the \$300k has been floating around as a base commitment – other resources are currently funding in other locations, but would move to a day resource center. Intake services for the homeless have a \$145k budget, so that could just move to the resource center. If UW does put in a response to the RFP and it is selected, they can bring in additional resources. Proposed community partnerships will also help determine an RFP responder's success. She has an additional \$30k budget amendment for this year and it would be included the following year. The City has done something similar, i.e., added additional funds.

Christy Holz Sheppleman says that she has 2 young children and she is scared about the proposal. She is social worker who deals with homeless kids, so has experience with the proposed clients. She wants to know about safety concerns. What can be written in the Conditional Use Permit that will provide a sense of security? How will she know that her kids, who are too young to process interactions with some people, won't be exposed to certain things? Patty Prime and Patrick Heck answer that these issue will be raised as the steering committee forms; the requested Conditional Uses will be raised with the City. Tim Parks adds that

Conditional Uses can't address individual behavior, but he thinks the conversation has to focus on the Conditional Uses rather than the County Board's actions.

Deborah Boehm says the Capitol East Washington Plan and the Yahara River Plan were created to attract people and now they are putting the public market here – the City and everyone put a lot of energy into these. She thinks Messners was always an eyesore and will remain an eyesore if the day shelter is there. She thinks we need to get the homeless off the street and into housing now, but where? The empty Shopco on Aberg is a possibility. We are now going to save a butt ugly building and create a magnet for homeless. Our neighborhood is finally coming together, but at 5:00pm when it is 20 below zero, these people will be out the door. They need a roof. Instead, the County should consider buying the Messner site, raise it and build a 4-story building that fits the neighborhood plan. Don't make the homeless traipse all over; their wheels will come off quickly. If you come into our neighborhood, do it right.

Heidi says in the Homeless Issues Committee, Alder Rummel added an "other uses" phrase to so that the center could incorporate other uses. Developers have approached the County with ideas for housing and other service uses, but that hasn't gone anywhere yet. There is funding for affordable housing initiatives. She agrees comprehensive as possible is best.

Bob Klebba says that the horse is out of the barn – there are 36 supervisors who want this facility not in their district so they will vote to site it here. Capt. Gloede says we have to steer the consumers of the shelter in the right direction. Bob says he did this steering with the previous locations because he had to call the police when people were in his backyard looking for things to steal. He thinks that on E. Dayton and E. Mifflin there will be crimes of opportunity. Tenney-Lapham neighbors will have to steer those people in the right direction. How do we address that in the Conditional Uses? Tim Parks reiterates that the purchase is irrelevant – we do need to focus on the Conditional Uses.

Tim adds that Common Council can hear an appeal to the Conditional Uses under continuing jurisdiction provisions. Ledell agrees with Tim – that section of the Plan Commission approval standards is important. She says that the Plan Commission will also discuss Standard 4. Tim adds that it is likely that Standards 5 or 6 will come into play too.

Susan Springman suggests that a TLNA representative be on the RFP selection committees.

Patty Prime said that the TLNA statement opposing the purchase was sent to the County Board specifically to let them know prior to their 11/5 meeting. We are not decision makers.

Patty thanked all for their attendance and input. Announcements about future meetings and new information will be sent via the TLNA listserv and email.