

Minutes
Special Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association Council Meeting
August 8, 2011

Council Members present: Richard Linster, Patty Prime, Lia Vellardita, Jim Wright, Patrick McDonnell, Joe Brogan, Joe Lusson, Alan Crossley

Guests: Bridget Maniaci, Don Vasa

1. Called to order at 7:09pm.

2. Richard introduced the purpose of the meeting in wanting to give more time to large issues around the Don Miller proposals that we did not have time to cover in July's meeting. In the last meeting, Bridget stressed that some properties were off the table, specifically the Stone House and Ale Asylum proposal.

Richard would like a letter from the association for proposals to lend credence to some of the proposals, particularly due to certain issues such as time and potential funding (some of the Stonehouse funding comes from the federal government).

The other purpose of the meeting was for Bridget to present some introductions for each proposal.

Don introduced himself (he lives in the neighborhood) and was curious about what information we had about the Don Miller developments.

Joe asked what the vision of the neighborhood is in terms of new urbanism and if we should put some emphasis on that.

Patrick responded that the Tenney Lapham plan was part of the Capitol Build Corridor plan. Mifflin St. side should be residential, no more than three stories (but greater height stepping into block), East Washington Ave blocks to be mixed use but mostly employment. The neighborhood plan reflects this, and for E Wash side it's called "community mixed use" and uses could be retail, residential, service, institutional, civic, government; no "big box" usage. The City adopted these plans.

Bridget presented overview of the plans. She summarized process first. Three alders were on the staff committee, then Steve Colbert, Natalie Erdman, Ed Clerk, and Tom Langgraff were also present. Committee met, thought that why have everyone weigh in on all proposals instead of letting the committee sift through first and then let public weigh in (Bridget did not agree with this argument). Committee met with all proposal authors.

First proposal idea off the table was the hotel proposal, mostly because authors did not have everything together though Bridget thought it was a good idea.

Second off the table was the Ale Asylum, because of the one story building aspect, as well as competing with the private market (Ale Asylum on two proposals, one for the Don Miller site and another for the Mautz site), and the question of if this proposal was the best idea. The building would be meant for a brewery and the site either doesn't have the capacity to expand, as well as fail (would be like the Madison Dairy site on E.

Washington Ave.). Also at issue was the timing of it. Bridget thought the proposal is falling apart. Not sure if the Mautz proposal would go through.

The Rifken proposal (800 block) was liked by the committee on the surface but there were issues on if the author could follow through and get financing and tenant base. Committee decided to give proposal author the option to get those things. Committee liked Gebhart, and Gebhart had letter from the bank stating he has enough funding for the project, the only one of the proposal authors to do so. Gebhart's plan also fits build plan, and has also been allowing himself to be moved from blocks. ULI wasn't liked because of the building plans, with the large amount of parking (which they defended for commercial use), and proposal was for all three blocks of the Miller property.

Bridget met with various parties about the Stonehouse proposal to show support for it. The concerns were twofold: 1) city staff was hesitant to build without knowing what was going on with rest of the block or knowing the exact tenants; 2) Stonehouse won't know till April 2012 if they will get federal tax credits, a large part of their funding. Bridget would like to see Gebhart on the 800 block on one side with Stonehouse on the other side. She thought it is a matter of political will and sticking up for the neighborhood's vision on these blocks. She also thought pushing Gebhart to the 700 block because there's nothing else around it (Reynold's, power lines) and looks ugly, and thinks would spur energy to work on the 800 block. She didn't think it was realistic that one developer would come in and work it, as evidenced from the past decade (only one developer came forward during this time).

ULI still on the table because the committee thinks they have funding. Bridget thought it was a move on ULI's part to control the market on the commercial rent downtown, of which they own much already. ULI also claimed they may have two tenants. Richard asked Bridget what she thought the best move would be for the council. She responded that the council should be exact, specific, and look at what fits the build and neighborhood plan, and to be very vocal, as well as make the TIF an issue when discussing these.

Joe Lusson asked about parking for Breese Stevens, Bridget said no one had a proposal for that corner but that she has been vocal about keeping that space open. The TIF could be for shared use agreement for parking.

Joe Brogan asked about job creation. Ed Clerk pushed on job creation (hence part of the reason ULI stayed on the table). Gebhart and Rifken could also create space and jobs. Bridget thought ULI could stay empty for a while (it would take years to absorb). ULI did not address at all people who live and work nearby in terms of parking; they seemed to assume that all parking would be for commuters.

Alan commented that the ULI does not have proposal to actually evaluate (does not have a visible proposal), yet the committee seems to be deferring the 800 block to ULI. Alan thought about moving the Stonehouse on the entire block and Ale Asylum on the northside, with parking on southside and asked if that would be in keeping with neighborhood plan (Patrick didn't think so).

The Mautz Hovde plan seemed to be falling through. Patty commented that Ale Asylum has employee base whereas some of the retail doesn't always hold employees ("phantoms").

Joe Brogan asked about the type of retail such as a city market. Bridget said there was some talk about the Willy St. Coop doing some "ready serve" in the Rifken as well as a pharmacy.

Patrick asked about Gebhart's plan to divide the 800 block left to right (but Hovde backed out) but to parcel it out longways with Stonehouse on Mifflin and Gebhart on E. Washington. But Bridget wasn't sure if Gebhart could do the entire block for \$60 million (Gebhart's borrowing limit) but could with half. Alan raised the issue that the committee seemed to be moving Gebhart to the 700 block instead.

Richard proposed that it was crucial the council says something in a public way to get the City's and committee's attention, to make sure the process works for all parties, and for Common Council to see this. Richard said he would need assistance in drafting the letter in light of the neighborhood plan and proposals. He suggested getting a group together to work on this. He asked Bridget about the timeline.

Bridget wanted guidance from council on what to discuss with Mayor Soglin. She believed in getting 800 block back up and running. Joe Lusson suggested that the plan wants strong residential aspects. Bridget asked if we wanted more affordable or just simply fight for housing that was market rate. She pointed out Gebhart's plan, which Patrick said was in keeping with the neighborhood plan.

Patrick said in terms of the message for Monks and Mayor Soglin (for Bridget's meeting), that the 800 block comes first and that it is flanked by two green spaces, and to not address the eyesore that the block is would be a mistake; there is a clear vision that the division is longways and that the committee should re-consider the Stonehouse plan. Patrick also suggested that the City bought these parcels with option to divide.

Bridget said to target the childcare option with Mayor Soglin, and to emphasize that this is not frivolous spending on the part of the City. Patrick said the neighborhood plan was in the works before the land-banking.

Alan said that the message is to keep this to the neighborhood plan, that the neighborhood is not happy that ULI does not have a proposal to react to. Alan also wanted to clarify about the August 25th meeting and if it was time for the public to give feedback. Bridget said that we were at the last choice because so much was decided behind closed doors and suggested the possibility of going to the media. She also noted how the media is being used by city hall has changed.

Joe Lusson agreed that while not the ideal, it might be time to go to the media; he also suggested keeping Lapham School in mind and keep it open when discussing these proposals and that the daycare would be appealing to families and possibly retaining families; keep in mind the density of narrow, high volume row houses/townhouses.

Bridget mentioned someone coming along to the Mayor Soglin meeting. Richard recommended Patrick, who agreed to attend with Bridget. Bridget said she would focus on proposal content.

Richard asked for a group to meet after Bridget's meeting to focus on the neighborhood message and written communication.

Patrick, Joe Lusson, Richard volunteered to be on the group.

Patty mentioned that the feedback the values raised during this discussion should be reflected in the letter the group writes (such as retaining residential space and families through childcare; employment; retail).

3. Adjourned at 8:32pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lia Vellardita, secretary.