

## **SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

### **SP #449 American Legion/APAH**

#### **SPRC Meeting #1, November 13, 2018**

**Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Stephen T. Hughes (Chair), Elizabeth Gearin, James Lantelme, Elizabeth Morton, Kathleen McSweeney, David Ricks, James Schroll, Daniel Weir.**

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### **MEETING AGENDA**

This was the first Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting for a proposed new site plan to demolish the existing American Legion post and to construct a new 160-unit seven story residential building.

The meeting began with introductions. The applicant then made an introductory presentation.

Staff then made an introductory presentation, including recommended points of discussion on architectural issues. And a quick overview of architectural and urban design guidance staff had given to the Applicant.

### **SPRC DISCUSSION**

- Daniel Weir asked if the site was planned to be consolidated, and that the Special GLUP study had recommended consolidation of sites.
  - Staff responded that the Special Study anticipated consolidation of smaller sites, but the American Legion site was always considered a standalone site in the Guiding Principles (page 14, Principle 14).
- Kathleen McSweeney asked how Fiberboard aged
  - The applicant replied that Fiberboard is a low-maintenance material, but that it may need to be repainted after 30 years.
- Elizabeth Morton stated that the building looked rather flat.
  - The applicant's architect stated that there would be some definition around the windows.
- James Schroll requested that the applicant bring a material board or samples to the next SPRC meeting. Wanted to see staff's analysis of the requested parking ratio, and stated that he liked that the bicycle room was on the ground level.
- Kathleen McSweeney stated she concurred with the architectural suggestions that staff had made, and that she wanted a different treatment for the above grade transformer than the artificial foliage.

- Elizabeth Morton asked about the storefront on Washington Boulevard, and that the main entrance to the apartments on the alley frontage was not very prominent.
  - The applicant replied that the entire retail space would be occupied by the American Legion, there would be a commercial kitchen and venting because of the catering event the Legion holds. They also stated that they could consider making the main entrance to the apartments more prominent.
- Derek Huetnick asked if the construction would be concrete or stick, and what the proposed unit mix was. He also stated that he would like the applicant to study if the ground floor units open directly to the outside.
  - The applicant replied that it would be stick built over a 2-level concrete base. Carmen Romero stated that the proposed unit mix now was 48 one-bedroom units, 83 2-bedroom units, and 25 three-bedroom units.
- James Schroll asked if other retail was planned.
  - The applicant replied just the American Legion, and that they would own the condominium unit.
- David Ricks stated that if the shared road was built, it would alter the alley access.
  - Robert Gibson stated that it would be difficult for cars to make a 90 degree turn to the right from the garage.
- A question was asked about the above-grade transformer.
  - The applicant stated that considering that there is only one level of garage, the requirements of Dominion Power for access, the proposed above grade location is the only place they could meet all the various requirements. Undergrounding adds an additional seven figures to the project.
- Kathleen McSweeney asked what the proposed material for the fence was and if the applicant could add plantings.
  - The applicant responded that the materials are undecided but would be opaque. And they couldn't have plantings on their side but with the agreement of adjacent property owners they could place the plantings on their side.
- Elizabeth Gearin encouraged native plantings.
- Henry Staples stated that the nearest neighbors would like more space for plantings, but the wall was what they only had room for.
- Robert Gibson stated that the fence might be difficult if the right of way is public.
- Guus Bosman stated that the community preferred the garage entrance to be in the middle of the building, similar to the location of the loading dock.
  - The architect responded that they had looked at that in the design process, but they need seventy feet of length to get the appropriate head clearance, and if placed in the middle of the building, would split the ground floor in half.
- Elizabeth Morton asked the applicant if they thought of stepping back the top floor as staff suggested and did they consider staff's suggestion to raise the brick an additional story.
  - The architects stated that stepping back the top floor would squeeze the units. About the brick, the Masonry Institute recommends a maximum of 30 feet or so for brick. The

applicant would consider raising the brick, but that things such as metal studs would be a cost concern.

- Bill Braswell suggested that the applicant explain in detail the affordable housing plan in a future meeting.
  - Chair Hughes said that should come at the last SPRC when community benefits are discussed.
- The Chair then opened the floor for public comment.
  - Cara Troup stated that the neighbors were concerned that the height in feet was over what the Special Study Recommended. Also wanted the American Legion to explain the plan for events: frequency, scheduling, parking. Was concerned if the American Legion left what sort of retail would be there.
  - An additional neighbor stated that the garage entrance/exit location was less than ideal, and wanted to see what the long-term plans for the east-west connection, since that would have an impact on the community.
  - Another neighbor also stated that the garage entrance location was disruptive to the neighbors to the west, was concerned about overflow parking, and wanted to see more options for the privacy fence.
  - Sharon Valencia was concerned about the 12<sup>th</sup> Road access required for Fire Trucks, 12<sup>th</sup> Road is very narrow, doesn't have sidewalks, and overflow parking would narrow the street.
- The Chair then asked for wrap-up comments from the Committee.
  - Daniel Weir advocated to keep the grid connectivity.
  - James Schroll stated his issues had been covered already.
  - Tom Kornis said the building is a good asset but could be better. Glad to see the playground. The proposed new connections must be nice places to be, good for pedestrians.
  - Kathleen McSweeney wanted the applicant to bring architectural samples, follow-up to the Committee's suggestions, and recommended that the alleys be green.
  - Elizabeth Morton called for playfulness in the architecture and site design, and a suite of little opportunity spaces.
  - James Lantelme is sensitive to the cost concerns of APAH, but would suggest to the applicant improvements to the architecture that could be low cost.
  - Derek Huetnick wanted to know about the day to day operations of the American Legion post, the on-site parking, and if the proposed plan complied with the sidewalks standards on Washington Boulevard.
  - Guus Bosman stated he was not happy about the garage entrance/exit location, but liked that the applicant would help build the internal east west connection.
  - Bill Braswell suggested that the neighbors meet with staff or the applicant before the next SPRC to see if some issues could be resolved, or at least questions answered before then.

