

**E Properties & Development
Residential Redevelopment of Holy Family Church and School
Community Meeting
July 12, 2012
Saint Mary's Lyceum
6:30PM-8:00PM**

Lawrenceville United and the Lawrenceville Corporation hosted a community meeting on July 12, 2012 at St. Mary's Lyceum to provide a forum for residents to learn more about the proposed residential redevelopment of Holy Family Church and School on 44th Street. Nearly 150 people were in attendance and there were many questions and concerns voiced by residents adjacent to the project site. Lawrenceville United recorded the attached notes from the meeting to help outline some of the concerns and questions raised by residents and stakeholders. This is simply a summative snapshot of the dialogue from the meeting.

Agenda:

6:35PM: Welcome (Lauren Byrne, LU; Matthew Galluzzo, LC)

Lauren:

- Began the welcome at 6:37PM
- Explained the mission of LU
- Pointed out Jen Kiley in back as a representative of Senator Ferlo
- Mentioned State Rep. Adam Ravenstahl and Councilman Dowd have stayed up to date on the project and want to be kept informed as we move forward

6:40PM: Overview of Meeting, Meeting Rules and Guidelines (Lauren, LU)

Lauren:

- Introduced Matt Galluzzo
- Explained nature of meeting and meeting rules (ground rules on back of agenda)

**6:50PM: Background and Overview of Community Process (Matthew, LC)
Introduction of E Properties & Development and Landmarks Design Associates,
Inc.**

Matt:

- Introduced himself as the Executive Director Of LC
- Said he works closely with LU on community issues
- "Lawrenceville is a hotbed for new construction, rehabs, and new commercial development"
- Lawrenceville Planning Team reviews projects in order to determine if they can support community plans

- Holy Family Project is ready for large community conversation; “the large crowd tonight is evidence of a democratic process”
- “We are conveners, we are facilitators”; “We take cues from liquor license meetings, tonight’s meeting will be just like that”
- “Any questions? Is that clear?”
- Mentioned the fact sheet on where site is
- Ellis Schmidlapp is the architect on this Project
- “Thank you for your open-mindedness.”

7:00PM: Project Presentation (E Properties & Development and Landmarks Design Associates, Inc.)

Emeka Onwugbenu’s Powerpoint Presentation (President and Founder of E Properties & Development):

- He first looked at project 3-4 months ago
- Then, he engaged Ellis (architect) to start designing it
- 1.5 acres of land
- 160,000 sq. ft. of land
- “We had to start brainstorming with this amount of land”
- “We looked in PA and outside of PA”
- **Inspiration (previously undertaken projects):**
 - The Grand Hall at the Priory in Pittsburgh, PA: built in 1854, restored to banquet facility, excellent attention to detail
 - Cork Factory in Pittsburgh, PA: very successful project
 - Casimir Place in Nashua, NH: church conversion to 2 stories of apartments
 - Bliss School Apartments in Attleboro, MA: 1, 2, and 3 bedroom apartments; historic rehabilitation
 - Spinning Plates Lofts
 - Creedmore Court
 - Fifth and Market Apartments
 - Croghan’s Edge: in Lawrenceville, all new construction, showed some interior pictures
 - E @ Forty Fifth St. in Lawrenceville
 - 38th Street Historic Renovation in Lawrenceville
- **Virtual Tour of Redevelopment (Ellis Schmidlapp from Landmarks Design Associates, Inc.):**
 - Redevelopment will be at the corner of Summit St. and 44th St.
 - Windows will be added to the church
 - Parish house will be renovated
 - 2 additional stories are being proposed
 - There will be a main entrance with a lobby and an elevator; from there, tenants will go right or left to their unit
 - There will be an addition of a single level for parking above; the upper level is lower than the church
 - Looking down Summit St.: existing school and two additional floors

- Landscaping will be added
- Deck will be open
- There will be a wall around parking at waist height
- No changes will be made to the front of church
- There will be a sidewalk that goes to the side door of the church
- Parking: 30 ft. on deck; 58 spaces; can park in social room in basement of church as well and come out to lower level of parking
- There will be loading spaces and trash receptacles
- Typical floor plan: central corridor down church; common entrance from 43rd St. or 44th St.; apartments will be on both sides of church; 3 common areas; smaller lobby at entrance to school
- One bedroom plan: will be located in the church; kitchen, living room, bedroom, and bath
- Two bedroom plan: will be located in school and church; living room, bed and bath to each side, and kitchen
- Proposal is to have a total of 4 floors in the church
- Number of units: 88 units allowed and 73 proposed (purposely removed 15 units)
- Parking spaces: 51 required, 55 initially proposed, 88 with parking deck, purposely added 37 additional spaces
- Innovative solutions to boost car-less lifestyle: zip car parking spaces, Segway incentive, and non-auto tenant incentive
- Requesting 3 variances: non-conforming use to another non-conforming use (church/school to multi-family); 2 additional stories at the church/school; 10 foot setback at parking

7:20PM: Facilitated Question and Answer Session (Lauren, LU; Emeka, E Properties & Development; Ellis, Landmarks Design Associates, Inc.)

Q: Ron Deutsch on 45th St.: “I didn’t notice any projects in any residential Lawrenceville area, so what do we care?”; “Is there going to be any public money (URA, city, tax credit) used for low income people?”

A: Emeka: “We did a house on 45th St. actually.”; “Finances are not finalized yet for this project; zoning codes and requirements are not there for this project yet; we continue to work with the LC and are happy to share more information soon.”

Q: Female Resident: “Are these places rentals or for sale?”

A: Emeka: “Rentals.”

Q: Male Resident on 44th St.: “There are already problems with people flying up the hill and parking issues; do you have any plans to mitigate or reduce this? This is my concern right now.”

A: Emeka: “I do understand your concern of high traffic; we are working with the LC to investigate a way to mitigate this.”

Q: Female Resident on 43rd St.: “The entrance on 43rd St. is narrow and it is one way from Davison St. to Butler St. Are there plans with having people coming from Butler St. or any other plans to mitigate traffic on 43rd St.?”

A: Emeka: “There is a traffic concern; solution: 44th St., 43rd St., and Summit St. entrances to distribute traffic; that way there will be 3 areas to mitigate the traffic concern; have bottleneck from that one entrance; tenants will have three ways to get to the parking lot.”

Q: Male Resident on 44th St.: “I can see your inspiration; none of the other projects around here seem to have additional changes to structure; what other considerations have you given to other properties on the street around this area?”

A: Emeka: “Many projects have had new additions and construction around this area; because the elevation going towards Butler St. is too low, properties on 44th St. are back far enough and 43rd St. is the back end, so the elevation will help the view.”

Q: Additional Question: “Has anyone from your team parked on 44th St. after 5PM?”

A: Emeka: “Yes, we are working on another project now- the gray house on Davison St. and 44th St.”

Q: Male Resident: “Who are the people you are renting to?”

A: Emeka: “There is no plan to rent to section 8 in this project; finishes will be high end; we are looking to attract residents working for the hospital, young professionals, families, etc.”

Q: Female Resident: “You’re building in a residential area; did you consult anyone in this room about ambulances, the loading dock on 43rd St., elderly people on 43rd St., and that we park and live there?”

A: Emeka: “The Lawrenceville Planning Team took into account LC’s and residents’ opinions, which is why they’re presenting to this group; we understand this is a process, we want to integrate more feedback on this project.”

Q: Male Resident: “With 3 different entrances, they are narrow and one-way at it is. Where is all of this money coming from?”

A: Emeka: “We don’t yet know about public money; there is no government money; all private money; we will share if information changes.”

Q: Female Resident: “Some people have two cars now. What will we do with 71 units and 83 parking spaces? Will people take up our spots? What about visitor parking?”

A: Emeka: “There will be 73 units and 88 spaces as of now; I don’t really have an answer to that.”

Q: Female Resident: “Have you realized the number of spaces for number of units and the parking crunch?”

A: Emeka: “We have to look at this a couple of ways; there is a parking conflict; some people have cars and some don’t; some people work at hospital and will live there out of convenience.”

Q: Male Resident: “What is the zoning requirement for parking?”

A: Emeka: “The allotment is for 51 parking spaces; we are adding spaces to alleviate parking concerns; some tenants won’t have cars because of the location or may only have one instead of two cars.”

Q: Female Resident: “How many units on each of the two floors are you adding?”

A: Ellis: “8 on each floor.”

Q: Male Resident: “How do you envision this project adding to our quality of life since we’ve lived here all of our lives?”

A: Emeka: “That’s a very good question; we are reusing the building and bringing it back to life; it will increase the value of the building.”

Q: Male Resident: “What was the design decision to add two more floors to the existing structure?”

A: Ellis: “We are trying to save existing church and school; we are creating a visually interesting project that is smaller than what’s allowed; we need enough density to support development; we need to have enough money to support restoration.”

Q: Male Resident Statement: “Parking is a big issue; there are not enough spots; you’ve got to come up with a better idea for parking.”

A: Ellis: “We designed the 4th level of the CMU parking garage so we are well aware of that.”

Q: Statement from Larry Johnson on Summit and 43rd St.: “I have the same concerns as most other residents; this is going to be chaos.”

A: Emeka: “This requires constant working with the community.”

Q: Kathy Lafferty: “I am a lifelong resident; I’m not clear on financing. How much rent are you talking about? Are you required to have X number of subsidized housing if you get federal money? What other money do you need? We want your company’s financial statements.”

A: Emeka: “We are a private company; we don’t share finances; we are not applying for government funding right now; if we do apply, it will be shared publicly.”

Q: Female Resident: “How much will rent be?”

A: Emeka: “Estimates are \$750-\$1,000 for 1 bedroom and \$1,200-1,500 for 2 bedrooms.”

Residents started yelling about rent price.

Q: Bill Lafferty on Main St.: “1.) To the architect: As a matter of right, do you build after you have obtained a zoning variance?”

A: Ellis: “88 is the permitted density of site; there is no zoning variance for stories, setback, and change from church to apartment.”

Q: Additional Question: “2.) What local politicians are involved on your behalf, and have you made payments to them?”

A: Emeka: “I’m not involved in politics; we can take the plan to the zoning board without your feedback, but I want to get community feedback first before the zoning board hearing.”

Q: Male Resident on 44th St.: “Who are the principals of these properties? Who is invested in this?”

A: Emeka: “LC, the community, myself, and subcontractors: some are local and some are state.”

Q: Female Resident: “43rd St. and Davison St. is tight. Have you talked with people in this area?”

A: Emeka: “The Lawrenceville Planning Team take your opinions seriously.”; Then, Matt and Lauren interjected that the residents have a chance to voice their concerns tonight.

Q: Additional Question: “In regards to the traffic congestion, are you going to do a traffic flow study and share it with us?”

A: Emeka: “Our office is on Butler St.”; Matt interjects: “LC is doing a parking study right now; we are about 10 years behind on our parking strategy in Lawrenceville; we are working with Transassociates in PA that is providing the parking study from 33rd St.-46th St.; there will be short term, long term and mid term recommendations on parking facilities; Lauren and myself have been working on this for the past two years.”; Emeka: “I will look at this report when it comes out.”

Q: Additional Question: “If you check parking and it won’t work, would your company forget going higher height wise and just deal with the existing structure? Or are you getting it high no matter what?”

A: Emeka: “We are open-minded and evaluating decisions now; it is very organic at this point.”

Q: Female Resident on 44th St.: “Has there been any consideration given to the additional utilities that will have to go in and the impact on residents? What about children on the street? What about the impact to homes?”

A: Emeka: “We are still looking at electric, storm, and sewer on this; we are looking for the best way to address this; there is already a main storm, sewer, and gas line along this street for this project, which is good; we will close roads for dumpsters and trailers during construction.”

Q: Male Resident: “With the construction, will you be making loud noise in the morning?”

A: Emeka: “No, no.”

Q: Ray Chakowski (unsure of spelling): “Are you already closed on the church?”

A: Emeka: “We are in the process now.”

Q: Additional Question: “Since the rent is so high, what is the total cost of the project and how much per unit as far as rehab goes?”

A: Emeka: “We will phase the project over time; \$8-10 million dollars is the total project cost

Q: Male Resident: “Will there be construction for a couple of years?”

A: Emeka: “Yes, about 18-24 months all at the same time; we plan on doing it bit by bit though.”

A: Additional Question: “What about our quality of life?”

A: Matt: “Lauren and I have contractors’ numbers, so we can always address any issues.”

Q: Male Resident: “How much does the project cost compared to what you’ve done before?”

A: Emeka: “\$1.2 million.”

Q: Additional Question: “Is the zoning board here?”

A: Lauren: “There is no one from zoning board here tonight, but there will be a separate hearing.”

A: Ellis: “The zoning board looks at 10 ft. setback at front, multi-family vs. church/school, and 2 extra stories on the church/school.”

Q: Male Resident: “Before doing another project, what do you plan on doing with the house on 38th St.? There has been construction, dirt, etc. Will you use different contractors?”

A: Emeka: “We are identifying the right contractors to use now.”

Q: Josh from 44th St.: “In regards to the floor plan in the presentation, is this the final floor plan?”

A: Emeka: “Yes and no, it’s a conceptual floor plan-could be subject to change.”

Q: Additional Question: “How many 1 and 2 bedroom apartments will there be? What is the maximum occupancy?”

A: Emeka: “The breakdown is on a sheet up here; the maximum occupancy is something we will look at.”

Q: Female Resident: “So you say the additional 2 stories would not affect my view...my view will be affected. Would you buy my home and live across the street from that? My home is my biggest investment.”

A: Emeka: “I would absolutely live there; we are building high end finishes, not a cookie cutter project.”

Q: Female Resident on Summit St.: “Have you read the Lawrenceville community plan?”

A: Emeka: “Yes.”

Q: Additional Question: “Why 73? This is such a dense area. You are inundating us with parking, people, and traffic.

Q: Additional Question: “As an add-on, would you consider doing 30 condos that are owner occupied? It would decrease parking spots and add green space.”

A: Emeka: “The church is a unique building with complicated construction; it wanted to set itself away from the Church Brew Works-no restaurants or bars; the cost is driving unit counts; we can look at condos, but not now- we could turn it into owner-occupied at a later date; it is being considered.”

Q: Male Resident: Angrily complained about parking and zoning in Lawrenceville, then asked: “Have you surveyed people on the street on 44th St. to see how many cars they have?”

A: Emeka: “We are losing some spots, but we will reuse the entrance on 43rd St.”

Q: Male Resident: “Regarding the time frame of construction, a prior project’s construction wasn’t done in time. What real assurance do I have that this will be done in time? Why are you moving your people in here with new development already going on here?; What will happen in the future?; Are you just worried about today?”

A: Emeka: “There are not enough contractors and resources; we just use small contractors now; we will use more contractors for this project; I absolutely look at the future.”

Q: Female Resident Statement: “There is already a lot of traffic because of Children’s Hospital!”

Time ran out.

7:50PM: Meeting Wrap-Up and Next Steps (Lauren, LU; Matthew, LC)

Lauren:

- Thanked people for coming and for voicing their opinions.
- Invited people to stay afterwards if they wanted to talk about any additional questions or comments.
- Announced that the zoning hearing will be on July 26th at 9:20AM at 200 Ross St. downtown.
- Announced that there were papers on the front table in which the public could support or oppose the project.
- Lawrenceville United will be sending out notes from meeting and next steps for action.

8:00PM: Adjourn

Actual adjournment was around 8:30PM.