

## Meeting Notes

### Community Meeting on Fort Willow Development's Phase II of the Foundry

5/11/2017 @ NREC

**Welcome:** Dave Breingan and Matt Galluzzo welcomed everyone and explained the community process. Ground rules were reviewed and accepted.

**Presentation about Phase II of the Foundry:** Alex Simakas (Fort Willow Developers), Dan Rothschild (Rothschild Doyno Collaborative architects)

Alex: Thanks to everyone for coming. I'm here because I want to hear your thoughts and get your input. Most people know where I work and where our office is. I'm available to hear from people. I'm excited about what our plans are. We have people using the parklet outside Willow Street. People have been walking along Bay 4 since we took the fence down a week ago. We're planning for events for that space now. We won't talk about that tonight, but we are here to talk about what we're calling Phase II of the Foundry, a 4 floor office space with parking on the ground floor and 3 floors of high tech office space. It will bring jobs to the neighborhood. I know people will have questions about traffic. We're going to hire a traffic engineer. We think there will be crossover between people living in the Foundry apartments and working in the office space. We already have a tenant who works at NREC. That saves parking. Want to save the Machine Shop building, regardless of its use. Hope everyone is enjoying the space out there in the Foundry.

Dan Rothschild: With Rothschild Doyno Collaborative. Our office is on Penn and 29<sup>th</sup>. Going to talk about our plans for Phase II. Will get into zoning surrounding this project. In anticipation of this meeting, we went downtown to understand what we need to do as part of the zoning process, so that'll be part of the discussion.

What we're trying to do is put the new building behind the Machine Shop so there's no adverse effect on Willow Street, similar to what we did for the Foundry apartments in setting it back from the street voluntarily. Views from residents on Willow Street will be the same but we'll be improving the brick building, but nothing will be new to you and that was important to us. We're allowed under zoning to build right to the property line, but chose not to do this. We're within all the setback lines, we're also within the height limit. This is a permitted use, and we're exceeding the required amount of parking, so we're a variance-free project. We designed it with this in mind so that we didn't have to seek relief from zoning and would fit within the requirements.

Parking requirements: according to the city, we need to provide 100 and we're providing 160, so we will have enough parking spaces for this use. That was important to us, just like the Foundry, we heard that everybody wanted to make sure that parking could be handled on the Foundry property so we added more parking than we're required to do under zoning so that it doesn't have an impact on residents.

There's something new in the city called the Riverfront IPOD. City Planning looking at value of properties going close to the river, created map with two zones (purple zone for buildings right on the river: has to go to Planning Commission for a second set of eyes; zone B = yellow zone: somewhat arbitrary fashion also wanted to look at buildings that are even 300' beyond the river... in Lawrenceville this goes all the

way to Butler Street). This project is within that yellow zone, so there will be a public process in front of the Planning Commission. I'm not sure how they're going to question this in terms of the riverfront. We'll make sure community groups know about it in advance so we can share with the neighborhood.

Physically what this will look like: building on the front is the Machine Shop. Office building will have parking underneath and some sort of architectural façade facing the bridge: looks like saw tooth. If you remember the buildings that used to be there, there were jut-outs because of the cranes: trying to bring back that historical form. Parking lot would be between the building and the 40<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. Parking on other side of building and Bay 4 as well. The office building will be lower in height than the Foundry.

Public amenities to be good neighbors: what we're trying to do with the office building is actually use Bay 4 as the pedestrian entrance to the building. Will activate Bay 4 and make it more pedestrian. Trying to make this a safe, neighborly place.

Want to do something similar with the Machine Shop as what we did to improve pedestrian/community access along Willow with the Foundry. Looking for research and development use for the Machine Shop in that high bay space. For office will be lots of open space, open windows. Jagged areas you'll be able to enter and have views across the river.

#### **Q&A:**

Josh: Square footage?

- 70,000 square feet.

Trent: Will you be able to access the dog park and under the bridge along 41<sup>st</sup> Street?

- Matt: working with property owners to create Green Boulevard that would run at the back of the Foundry under the bridge and through the Arsenal Terminal site. Working with various groups to figure out how to make that happen – not moving as fast we would like, but that's how we're hoping to create access to kayak launches.
- Trent: will there be access control in that area under the building?
- Dan: There will probably be access control, but you'll still be able to walk up Bay 4. Hope is the grandeur of walking up Bay 4 will be an attraction.

Resident: My concern is with the construction workers with what happened in the first phase. They show up at 6:30 AM, grab up all the parking spots and they're still there when we get home.

- Alex: If I had heard of this earlier, I would've taken care of it in an instant. Please let me know if this happens again. It's written into our contract with them that they're supposed to park on site and not take up resident parking. When we make a promise, we're going to follow it.

Paula: There's been talk about Willow Street being extended. Is that happening?

- Matt: Councilwoman Gross, the County Executive and the Mayor have had conversations, but I can't say there's anything definitive yet when and how and if that's going to happen. There's an issue of relocating the county's DPW station. There's also an issue of easements and who owns it. The idea is still alive. So is the Foster Street extension and improvements to 40<sup>th</sup> Street to make it safer. We asked Deb Gross to look into it – she allocated \$30,000 to hire consultants Sam Schwartz to provide recommendations for 40<sup>th</sup> and Foster and 40<sup>th</sup> and Butler. Haven't seen the end result of those plans yet.

- Alex: Would you want to see it?
- Paula: I don't know. I worry that people will use it as a raceway if Willow is extended.
- Matt: We hear that concern and we've definitely been thinking about traffic calming.
- Bruce: We've got too much traffic on that street already. Stop signs don't seem to help. Trucks using it with 40<sup>th</sup> St Bridge and coming over.

Ray: Do you have a tenant for this building?

- Alex: No.
- Ray: No plans yet to start construction?
- Alex: Not yet. Wanted to see what the community feedback was going to be first aside from parking and traffic. If there's no other real negative thoughts or comments, we would start to market this to the business community. Banks are not going to loan us a penny until we have at least 1 tenant.

Jim Montgomery: Is there any plans in the near future for them repaving 40<sup>th</sup> Street? Conditions are getting deplorable.

- Dave: I don't believe it's on the city's list this year, but best way to get attention to it is to use 311. Can also participate in the upcoming community meetings around the capital budget.

Resident: Who timed the lights on 40<sup>th</sup> Street? It's always backed up.

- Matt: controlled by PennDOT.

Bruce: With the workers over at the Foundry, it wasn't only his workers parking on residential streets, it was actually people from Butler Street who work up there, the people from 43<sup>rd</sup> Street who work there, and the people from the neighborhood who can't find parking in front of their homes. It wasn't only Alex's problem, it was everybody.

- Dave: This is a good point. It's not just one group of people that are creating parking demand in the neighborhood. There's not going to be a single solution to parking challenges in the neighborhood.
- Alex: One thing we didn't mention – a benefit to having the residential and office is a ying yang relationship. The office parking lot should be relatively available in the evening and on weekends. May change based off the tenant, but we hope to park some of the people going to Bay 4 things there, and otherwise it would be available for others to use.
- Resident: Would you be open to renting/leasing those spaces?
- Alex: We're certainly open to it.

Helene: Not gated parking?

- Alex: Probably will be gated. Our office tenants would most likely want that.
- Helene: So how would you open it to community?
- Alex: Would just open it in the evening, or provide tokens.

Resident: Any consideration for plans for 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Concrete to relocate? There's a lot of traffic created by them.

- Matt: Currently there are no plans for 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Concrete to relocate.
- Alex: Been a while since I spoke to him but he's almost taken the position that the county has – he needs someone to find him a place and it's got to make economic sense for him. One thing

he said it's got to stay in the neighborhood b/c of territory and transportation. Has to remain in the vicinity.

- Helene: Lot of activity there, as well as in the Buncher to McConway and Torley. Bringing a lot of trucks.
- Matt: Definitely not an ideal set up to bring tractor trailers through the neighborhood. That's going to remain as is for the time being. We've advocated for those types of businesses to move up to the URA owned lot on 62<sup>nd</sup> Street. These businesses have been here a long time though and are a part of the neighborhood, so want to keep them, but think there's a better way to balance with residential streets.

Resident: Are you still considering retail?

- Alex: No we think the highest and best use is a small R&D area with light work because the Machine Shop is high bay space.

What are your plans for Bay 4?

- Alex: We hosted a meeting in March or February. First meeting was a brainstorm about what we as a community would like to see and what we would not like to see. Going to start very soft. Hoping to do a night market once per week with fresh produce, food trucks, live music (not a 10 piece rock band but maybe 2 people playing acoustic guitar), and some beer and some crafts. We'd love to have a holiday market in December with someone selling Xmas trees and hot cider. We do plan on having pop-up beer garden once per month. First one is June 16<sup>th</sup>. Don't get concerned there will be a bunch of drunks walking around. Very small kind of event. Summer music series: jazz, classical, etc. Those are the types of things we're looking at. Said no to a lot of things. Not all events will be public, some will be private.

#### **Closed discussion**

- Concerns about Arsenal Terminal site work: not cleaning, parking there, starting work at 5 AM, ripped half the wall down.
- Don't want street cleaning on Foster Street
- Parking at the Foundry apartments: do those residents have to pay? Can multiple people from the same unit apply?
  - We need permit parking. People from the Foundry apartments can't get residential permits as part of their agreement.
- Concerns about impact of the Foundry Phase II on traffic and increasing gridlock.