

**Community Meeting on Sixth Ward Flats: Construction Update**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**8/7/2019, 6:30 p.m.**  
**St. Augustine's Plaza**

Introductions were made.

**Matt from LC:** context on this. LC owned a property at 34<sup>th</sup> and Penn where the “Welcome to Lawrenceville” sign is. Purchased the Wilson’s BBQ site in 2016 – big enough to combine with the URA site on the other side of Celli’s Fitness to begin thinking about what this project might be. Secured funding through Bridgeway Capital to go through a competitive RFP process to get bids for architectural firms for the site. Ultimately selected 4080 Architecture and ACTION Housing. Led a process of three community meetings on 7/11, 9/15, and 10/27 in 2016 to talk about massing of the buildings, affordable housing, design preferences for the building – through those meetings got to a place of vetting ideas.

**Dave from LU:** Came through our community process in July 2017 at the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Block Watch when zoning relief was being sought. LU provided letter of support and ZBA provided approvals for the zoning they needed.

**James Eash from ACTION Housing:** ACTION Housing is the developer, owner, and property manager – own and operate buildings throughout the county. 4080 is the architecture firm and NELCON is the construction company.

Background on ACTION: created by Richard K Mellon with a mission on addressing housing issues throughout the county. 62 years later we still have the same mission to provide safe and affordable housing to low and moderate income folks. Also developed a number of programs – supportive services, weatherization program for houses that have broken heaters or need a roof replaced, do a lot of consultation with homeowners who may be facing foreclosure, credit counseling – but one of the biggest things we do is develop and manage housing that’s affordable. Manage about 2,000 units throughout the county; focused on locating affordable housing in strong communities – trying to get away from siting affordable housing in cheap areas and trying to build it in places with high transit and access to amenities.

Project at Penn Mathilda was ours – showing that because it’s a very similar project. IN our units you won’t see stainless steel or granite countertops but feel that they’re on par with the units that are going up in market-rate buildings. Focus on energy efficiency and healthy and safe homes. We own our own buildings, we don’t sell them – incentivized to build housing that lasts. Excited to work in Lawrenceville because we know the displacement that’s occurring in the neighborhood and wanted to provide housing that can help people remain in the neighborhood.

**Jeff from 4080 Architecture:** These projects have a really long gestation period, but plans haven’t changed substantially at all: still retaining views for buildings on Spring Way, keeping building height down below what we’re able to build through zoning. Similarly, kept the opening at the corner of 39<sup>th</sup> and Penn with an outdoor plaza and the building stepped back. General massing of the buildings and material selection hasn’t changed – had to economize on a couple items, but otherwise pretty consistent. Community space on 3300 block. Small retail space on ground floor of 3400 building. Pop ups on the 3300 building are for 3<sup>rd</sup> bedrooms. Units built to be very energy efficient – lot of extra insulation, smaller mechanical units.

**James:** The project will include 35 units. 8 of the units set aside for individuals with disabilities with supportive services, which will be provided by Achieva. 1100 sqft commercial space will be included. The project will include public patio and community room, 27 parking spaces and bike parking, and will have the following maximum income eligibility: single (\$33,600), 2-person (\$38,400), and household of four (\$47,940).

James noted that they worked closely with Public Works and DOMI in order to limit impact on the neighborhood.

**Joe Nelson (Contractor):** Construction timeline is 14 months. Fencing will go up next week at the perimeter of the sites. Sidewalks will not be closed initially. Demolition of the former Wilson's BBQ will occur in roughly 1 month. Construction Mgmt Plan has been approved by the city. Site will include a site cleanliness protocol (silt screens, etc). Field office will be rented next door at the Casciato building next door with three parking spaces.

**Sidewalk and Street Closures:** The two buildings will be constructed at the same time. A portion of Penn Avenue and sidewalk in 3300 block will be closed. There will be no closures on Spring Way. The new address for the 34th Street building will be 207 34th Street. One lane on 34th street will be closed for 10-12 months in northbound direction. Contractor will work to keep that closure to a minimum. Contractor obtained a major obstruction permit. Additionally, sidewalk along Penn Avenue will be open in front of 207.

Nelson reviewed pedestrian plan and detour plan for closure of northbound 34th Street, which will both be available in presentation on LU's website.

James noted that ACTION will provide monthly updates through Lawrenceville United. James also provided his contact information:

James Eash  
[jeash@actionhousing.org](mailto:jeash@actionhousing.org)  
412.281.2102

James also discussed the billboard issue at 207 34th Street, noting that it presented a significant challenge. The building will include a static billboard with a use agreement. The two other billboards on the 3300 on the other site will be obstructed by the new building.

## **Q&A**

Anonymous: How will visibility be impacted for pedestrians?

- 6ft fence along Spring Way & plastic jersey barriers along Penn and 34th. Site lines will be maintained.

Max Garber: Is the billboard going to face downtown?

- Roughly the exact orientation it has now.

Ruthie: Where am I going to sled ride now?

- Arsenal Park

Barb Donahue: Are they all two-story apartments?

- No. There are single story units. All units are visitable & both buildings have elevators.

Barb: If you are single, do you only get a 1-br?

- We like to keep 2br for larger households.
- Dave Breingan: We have a list of folks that have expressed interest in affordable housing. What's the mechanism for getting on list?
- We'll set up phone line for folks to get on a list

Claudia: What is price range?

- \$635-770 per month + electric. Water & sewer paid by landlord with no Homeowner Association.

Dana: Will there be parking in both buildings?

- Parking underneath in both buildings.

Dana: Where will refuse go?

- Fenced and walled enclosures on Spring Way.

Frank: Parking included in rent?

- Yes.

Frank: Rvalue?

- R-15 + R-18

Owen Lampe: Criteria for retail space?

- Focus has been on tenant that cannot afford market rate rent
- Naomi: Would be beneficial to have retail presence and not office.

Amanda: Will community space be available to community?

- Generally for tenants, but open for community uses like community meetings

Amanda: Landscaping?

- Street trees on Penn and 34th. Planters along Spring Way are still a possibility—budget dependent

Amanda: Retaining wall?

- Will be a soldier pile drilled into ground—not pounding
- Amanda: Worried about vibration. Thoughts?
- Tamping will be limited and not be substantial risk to adjacent properties.

Frank: Footers will be stepped?

- Yes

Rob: Spring Way will not be blocked?

- Correct.

Rob: Corner property that housed Celli's fitness. What happens there?

- Nothing.

Karen on 34th: What time does work start?

- 7am-3:30pm

George: Fencing will be at perimeter?

- Yes.
- Will it impact parking on other side of Spring Way?
- No, it should not.

George: How frequent is garbage pick-up? What type of enclosure?

- Gates & walls and will be 90 gallon totes with lids. Tenants will be responsible for taking trash out. Private company will come once or 2X per week. Property management company is owned by ACTION and performance will be monitored.

George: Will there be mechanical noise along Spring Way?

- Equipment is a VRF system not loud and most will be screened.

Frank: Where will electrical meters be?

- Inside.

Michael: What are qualifications for tenants? Will there be room for veterans?

- We have a lot of veterans.

Max Garber: Prepared for heavy rains and washout?

- Will make efforts to mitigate impact.