

**Community Meeting on Mintwood Warehouse Conversion
3/25/2019, 7 p.m. @ St. Augustine's Church – Lower Room
Meeting Notes**

Approximately 20 people in attendance.

1. Dave Breingan of Lawrenceville United reviewed the **community process and ground rules.**
2. **Presentation from the project team** – Jared Korchok of Desmone Architects

Previously had gotten approvals for conversion to residential, but couldn't make the numbers work as got into it. Proposing all parking to be interior to the building. All served from the lower level. No outdoor parking. Building has been vacant for about 10 years. Lower floor would serve office tenants. Upper floor would be open space for office tenants. No tenants signed up yet, but that's what we're getting into at this point. Not proposing anything on Mintwood other than repaired exteriors, painting the brick, perhaps a new canopy. What we're proposing now is to change the use of the building to a flex office space for business. Requires a special exception. Will be at the ZBA at 4/11 at 9 a.m. Trying to bring in those technology companies into the Lawrenceville area. Trying to lower the parking burden on residents. Because it's office, it will be more of a 9-5 as opposed to residential which will add parking issues at other times that could affect existing residents. Green space: growing walls along the building. New street trees along Mintwood and Denny. Enhancing sidewalk and streetscape. No civil or landscape designs at this point – all conceptual. Providing some bike parking. 21 parking spaces inside the building. All the loading interior to the building. No disruptions to the street as equipment comes in. Majority of the construction will be interior fit-out. Exterior work will mainly be glazing, sidewalk, street trees, new roof.

3. **Facilitated Q&A**

Dan Rider: Live directly across the street. You're talking about an office business. There would be no retail? Concerned about trucks coming and going.

- Jared: No retail. Trucks would pull into building from lower level and circulate through existing garage doors. Wouldn't stop on the street.

Sam Finamore: Also live right across the street. You're looking for one tenant for the whole space? Not co-working?

- Jared: Ideally it'd be one tenant, but lot of these companies are growing, so looking at possibility of splitting the upper space into two. Idea is that the tenant would probably grow into the other space if started at 2.

Joel Cook: What if you don't get a tenant? Would you fix the building up anyway?

- Jared: Exterior windows and roof need to be done no matter what use. If there were zero interest in the building, wouldn't go through plumbing, electrical, etc. We did have a demo permit previously for the previous use – mostly interior. Started that work but halted when realized the residential project wasn't feasible.

Sam: Do you have to give financial feasibility to zoning?

- Jared: No. Have to show physical hardship or prove that there's no other use, but don't need to show the economics.

- Sam: Another comment for everyone – moved from Northside where watched the block crumble for years. Would be glad to see this building fixed up.

Dan: worked in that building, been in every square inch of that building. It needs a lot of work.

Brian: if this exception were granted, would this also allow for consumer-based uses (e.g. café, gym?)

- Jared: No. Retail would have to go back to the ZBA for another exception for use. May have some space for office users to sit and enjoy their lunch, but nothing retail based.

Maura: Looking at green roof to improve the area?

- Jared: Rooftop deck was too expensive in previous iteration, so we decided not to consider it for this option. Keeping patio spaces on the ground level. Adding green levels and planters around the area to soften it up.

Jay: Live two doors down. Question about trees. Across the street there was a tree line but busted up the curbs and all have them been cut down.

- Jared: I believe the City requires sourgum – they're smaller, deciduous, 2-3" caliper trees, 6 across the front of the building. New planter boxes – 10' x 3' boxes are longer. Street will be maintained, which it currently isn't – the sidewalk. One issue is the downspouts currently flow right onto the sidewalk. New roof will take downspouts into stormwater system which will help with freeze/thaw cycle.
- Dave: Important to note the City has gotten better at recommending trees for the right space to prevent those kinds of sidewalk issues.

Dan: Plan on using as much glass?

- Jared: Yes. All existing openings that are blocked in with concrete block. Just taking it out and putting in new glazing. Trying to create bright open space to bring tenants in. Will have high ceilings with breakout spaces for the tenant. Should create a really interesting effect. Feels a bit more industrial: large trusses, nice decking on the undersiding of the ceiling. Structurally it's in good shape. Some water concerns in the basement, but rectifying all that.

Jeff: If a tenant wants more parking, are there plans for extra parking?

- Jared: In our previous iteration, had some parking off of Woolslayer. We don't need it for this use under the requirements, but that could be where we could provide additional parking – could fit 8 parking spots there. Beyond that, would have to get creative to use the parking lot. We're going to regrade the whole back yard area, which will flatten that area.

Dan: Back yard that's fenced in – that won't be graded?

- Jared: Yes, it will be graded and will be some patio space and a yard. Clean it up and make it nice, plant trees in the rear.

Sam: How about how many people max would be for the square footage you're talking about?

- 150 maximum for occupancy.

Dan: Parking is the issue. When we all come home, we're bumper to bumper. If the people working there park on our side of the street, it would be a nightmare.

- Sam: Have you tried to do Residential Parking Permits before?

- Dan: Yes, but residents weren't into it before.

Sam: If not approved, what then?

- Go back to the drawing board. Would be a shame to tear it down.

Dave: Special exception for use is the only relief?

- 20' required in the back from garage door to street. Requesting 18', so it's a pretty minor relief.

Jeff: good luck!

- Sam: had issues with preservationists on the North Side so hope this goes more smoothly.
- Jared: areas a little oversaturated with residential, so think office makes a bit more sense.

Dan: what's the plan for the space next to the building?

- Jared: Not really touching it. There will be a retaining wall, but not planning on adding anything between the end of the building and the others back yard. Will remain buffer space. In previous plans were planting trees.

4. Closed Door Discussion

- Dave: If I'm hearing everyone correctly, it sounds like folks are supportive of this use and prefer it over the residential because parking would hopefully be clearing up at the same time that you all need it as residents?
 - Room agrees that they support the redevelopment.
- Will there be dedicated parking for visitors / customers?
 - Realistic to expect that they would have meetings, clients, etc.
- Biggest concern is parking. Worried about the sheer number of employees that could come and not enough parking for that number.
 - Dave: in the past, we've worked to create conditions to encourage businesses to plan for practices that encourage their employees not to drive. We can pursue that with the project team.