

Community Meeting #2 on Holy Family
4/9/2019, 6:30 p.m. @ St. Mary's Lyceum
Meeting Notes

43 people in attendance.

1. Review of Community Process & Ground Rules - Dave from Lawrenceville United and Matt from Lawrenceville Corporation reviewed the community process, history of the site, and ground rules for the meeting.

- May of 2012 there was a plan for 80 residential units. There was a revised plan based on community push back. The revised plans were completed by October of 2012 and supported by LU and LC. In January the zoning board approved that request, but there was an appeal made in Feb of 2013 and a long legal process followed until a settlement agreement in February of 2016. In November of 2016 the site was listed for sale. In December 2017 there was a contract with potential buyers -- E Properties reached out to LU and LC regarding the demolition of the church, LU and LC indicated that they wouldn't support it. A demolition permit was filed, and LU and LC worked with Lawrenceville Historic Society and Preservation Pittsburgh to nominate the church for a local historic designation, which stopped the demolition. E Properties and LU and LC came back to the table and created an agreement to renew engagement in community process. In November of 2018 there was a community meeting to update residents and present conceptual plans for the site. Tonight is about presenting more detailed plans for the site in advance of their Zoning Board hearing on April 18th at 10:30 a.m.

2. Presentation from project team

- Emeka of E Properties and Development: Our company has been here for 8 or 9 years and we have been in Lawrenceville the entire time. I became a godfather in 2012 and I use my god-daughters age to think about this project. Last November we went to a design team to see what we can do to create the project so that it aligns with the neighbors. We initially wanted 60 to seventy units, but this project is much smaller. It has approximately 47 units.
- Rob and Luna with Indovina Architects: Initially we were planning on keeping the church and keeping the school. Based on what we heard in November, we are now not thinking of keeping the school and doing townhouse on the school site. We will walk you through that program. There are some variances there, the church will be a multi family building and we are asking for special acceptance from zoning. We have two designs for the townhomes, one that is by-right with zoning, but we think there is a better plan that is more contextual with the community. The church will stay and the school will go. Here is a site plan that presents conditions that is a fifteen foot front setback and a fifteen foot rear setback. We are going to end up with 22 units entirely within the fifteen feet set back. 43rd, 44th and Summit will have driveways entrance, requesting curb cuts at every entrance initially. That's what is by-right, but we are looking for a condominium project that would allow us to put all the garage entries in the back of the houses so that there are front doors, front yards, and front facades facing the street. Currently there is a curb

cut on 44th and we're proposing removing that and put two curb cuts onto summit. The way this is set up is that there is a drive court where you pull into your garage and you could drive back out. Then we have units facing 43rd, it makes sense. On Summit and 43rd, we will have some distance and front yard and a bit of landscaping. Where the rectory use to be is two units and creates a project that is inline with all of the units.

- Creating a "drive court", we want to place landscaping and trees so that it's just not a drive court and it also holds a few units that hold the court. It will give a nice dynamic between larger and smaller units and the historic buildings. Will also create a community walk way through, it's a big site and we want the community to be able to go through not just around. The middle area, the inspiration was a European plaza with village units in the center. This is how villages were built specifically around a church, creating an intimate feel between the church and the houses. Twenty five units within the church and fifteen exterior parking spaces and nine parking spaces within the church so each unit gets one to one. All of the outside units have 2 car garage and front doors off the streets. Another important part is that the church has a drive port that allows for direct driving into the church to access parking below the church units. We are looking to create a break in the neighborhood, a small green spot that has pullback on the corner and have some benches or small landscaping. The units have front doors facing 44th with units entrance on front door and garage underneath. Units on summit have parking on the back. Our goal is always tuck things down so it doesn't feel too tall from the street. All of the units have a sloped roof and the site has a very dramatic slope that we are working with. We are excited to hear feedback but one of the things we like about the massing is that there is a strip of housing with gabled roofs -- it breaks things up and turns the volume so that you aren't meeting a wall of units without an ability to see around or through it. We are still working on what this will look like with architecture and materials, it's the early phases. We want to use brick and different details that set it apart and still provides a unified look. One touch is that the doors will match and refer to the red doors of the church. Each unit will have a third floor deck set inside the roof lines and gives folks access to outdoor space in the unit. We did a sun study to research the impact of the new structures and it is essentially the same as the pre existing structures, there will not be any dramatic impact. To the neighbors on summit and 44th, it's not going to be the same as it is now but you will not be in constant shade. Before the school was there, there were houses so this is actually a return to the way the site was.
- We didn't touch upon the redevelopment of the church. We haven't forgot about it, the illustrations are part of the first studies. The next step is see how we can incorporate the church and see how it moves forward

3. Facilitated Q&A

Owen Lampe: All the traffic will have to come down 43 in order to come in. Davison is already saturated and there is talk to change Summit. If I'm in a car how do I get in? there isn't a entrance on 44th, so all of the traffic flow will have to go between 43^d and Davidson. Is there any discussion to see if Summit could become a two way street or flow the other way?

- There is currently one entrance on 44th to get into the parking lot that we are proposing to move to Summit

Brian Mendelssohn: Emeka I appreciate the massing and keeping the church which is great. The concern isn't the massing it's the quality of the built products that I've been seeing. The condo style houses are poor and maybe we were spoiled by the houses on St. John's Way. Since you are asking us for things, a few things we would want is commitment in building materials (brick) exterior and the same material with neighborhood AND where the curb cut are currently it would be great to do a headlight study and since you are redirecting traffic what are the headlight impact on street traffic cuz that would be a nightmare.

- E Properties: We are incorporating brick and I think it's subjective to say it needs to be one hundred percent brick. The way it is now the entrance and first floor is brick. From a historical standpoint repurposing the church is a big objective for us and and bring life to it. How do we repurpose that structure? In regards to the headlights coming out of the parking lot on Summit we can research that.

Halee, Summit Street: Is the curb cut facing the Baptist church or further up facing my home(s)? I am trying to figure out the traffic on Summit Street and if my homes is going to be impacted. We are losing a lot of parking on Summit now. The curb cuts will eliminate on-street parking.

- E Properties: We can include more context on the plans to detail where the curb cuts are happening. One thing we thought about is traffic flow. Designing something that would be low impact. How can we minimize that. We have two car garages for every home trying to minimize the impact.
- Neighbors: if the traffic was dispersed on three separate entrances it would alleviate how the traffic impacts us on Summit. We love the design but worry about the traffic. Could you move one of the entrances/exits from Summit onto 44th so that each of the adjacent streets are bearing the load?
- Indovina: we can look at that.

Judy Zavatchen: I like the changes. I want to see something going there. There was a fire and there are problems. There are only twenty units and not hundreds of people going there. When you are doing this, does the townhomes come first then the church? What is the timeline.

- E Properties: The variances are the first step and are for both the townhomes and the church, so we're getting it all together. The plan is to construct them both at the same time.

Neighbor: How many stories are these going to be? Are you requesting 41' instead of 40' for a variance for height? In these renderings it shows three on the side.

- E Properties: You have to request four stories but it does not take up four total stories. No two units sit the same way on the site. We want to tuck it down as much as possible. The façade on different angles is 2-3 stories depending on the slope. There are many examples of townhomes that are two stories and a pitched roof, and we are essentially using the space inside the space.

Cory Ricci: You don't have the plans for the church. How many bedrooms in each church unit and each townhouse?

- E Properties: 1-2 units for the condo. 2-3 units for the townhomes.

Neighbor: From gathering all the information there is small squabble here and there, but this is the best deal we are going to get, so I say just build it!

Margaret Garlicki: Is there enough space to come in and drive your car into your garage? To make that turn? Even in the middle part. And why the three units in the middle?

- Yes there's enough space. The minimum is 24ft with the width of the street. And all of them are 24 feet. To create a village feel is the reason to have the units. We are still fine tuning the units in the center and a small nip and tuck will help out.

Neighbor: Is there any parking for visitors that come to the garage?

- There is not any visitor parking included, but we are including two spaces for every town house. We are including these townhouses with more parking than the original. If you visit a town house you can park behind the house. 37 units and 70 parking spaces so well over what we need to provide.

Ken Farnan: There was a fire at the church yesterday. Numerous break ins. The weather is breaking and squatters are there and have been staying there. How are you going to secure the property? I cut the grass and get rid of the squatters.

- We are boarding up the property. Our plan is to start the project and that will bring activity and without the support moving forward it will continue. It's a big site and it's difficult do secure every inch of it. The fire started in the basement yesterday.

Is there going to be a dumpster? Where is that going to be placed?

- E Properties: Yes. We don't know yet.

Brian: Frankly, you've done a terrible job of keeping the property up. It's hard to have trust. How are you going to preserve the main building? I would love specific details around what you are preserving and what you are putting into zoning. How can we support this project? Would you delay the zoning hearing until we get details about preservation?

- E Properties: I hear your feedback. We can board up every window. The MOU we have with LU and LC is standing. Are you asking us to commit to historic standards now? I have to think about it.

Dana Cress: I'm with Preservation Pittsburgh. Would you be willing to voluntarily go in front of the Historic Review Commission to get feedback on your preservation plans for the church?

- Indovina: from an architectural standpoint, we would be focused on an adaptive reuse rather than a historic preservation. Preservation would prevent something from happening here.
- Luna: We just completed a renovation of a church in the South Side. Understand concern that folks may not want to trust a developer, but from a marketing standpoint the historic aspects are going to drive the strongest value so there's incentive to keep that.

Judy: I was a member of the church and want to see something done there. I understand desire to preserve but the main thing is wanting to see something done, the sooner the better. Time's been wasting.

Joseph Lapinski: Resident. With this being a condo association, we're in RPP area. Will anyone there be eligible for street parking? If they're ineligible, how does a visitor come to visit?

- Indovina: intent is to provide all the parking on site. For visitor parking, there's 1 hour.
- Luna: I really thought we hit gold with getting 2 parking spaces per unit. We're providing so much parking. If you look at the other plan that would be by-right.
- Matt (LC): Acknowledging there's an impact. Unfortunately no site is zoned permanently vacant. It's our job to figure out how to mitigate the impact.

Ray: Where are the mechanicals going to go? And would you be willing to deed restrict it to prevent permits?

- E Properties: That would mean that your neighbor could park on the street but you can't. Doesn't feel fair to me.
- Ray: You don't have enough parking. You're meeting the city requirement, but it's still not enough.
- Indovina: The city requirement is one parking spot per unit.
- E Properties: We've done this before with other condos and it works. We provided additional parking for condo owners and they didn't want it.

Councilwoman Gross: Will you be sub-dividing and parcelizing?

- Indovina: Previous plan was fee simple. This is one site with condos.
- Gross: Changing zoning?
- Emeka: special exception for church for use, but not for townhomes b/c in R1A.

4. Closed Door Discussion - Project team was thanked and excused.

- Matt from LC: Didn't hear about affordability. [Discussion about inclusionary zoning, which is currently pending legislation. Under it, this project would have to provide 5 affordable units.]
 - Could they segregate the houses? Could they make the middle ones.
- Joe Lapinski: find it concerning the church has no detail
- Matt: trying to get through zoning. What he has to get first is those specific zoning variances. We have in the past though tied conditions to the zoning to these kind of desires.
- Ray: I filed the appeal last time. I like this plan but he's not giving any details. Concerned he's going to flip it. I can guarantee that there's going to be an appeal.
- Bill Joyce: There's 2 fundamental issues. There's some positive features but the site access is a legitimate issue plus I'm surprised about the lack of info about the church. To get 25 units in the church, he's obviously going to have to modify the fenestration and that's one of the key elements from a preservation standpoint. Surprised we didn't see more at least conceptual. They've obviously at least done that since they know the # of

units. Understand immediate neighbors are concerned and impatient, but this feels a little premature – concern that supporting variance we'll lose some leverage.

- Matt: Got some time. Ray you're going to appeal?
 - Ray: Want deed restriction on RPP and more detail on church.
 - Dave from LU: If you're just going to appeal anyway, we're all wasting our time here trying to work this out.
 - Ray: need to see those things resolved first.
- Matt: Does this need traffic study?
 - Councilwoman Gross: Not sure. It's a big jump.
 - Neighbor: Can we squeeze additional parking by taking out a unit?
 - Owen: If you push too hard, it's just going to sit another many years.
- Brian: It's sad to me that he doesn't board up the building. Think it's unbelievable that he doesn't care when we cut the lawn each week. My gut feeling he's going to outsource the townhome project to CRAFT Development. Quality of those townhomes are abysmal. Concern about physical materials. If he doesn't address church, we're back to nominating the church. There's an easier path for him and he's choosing not to take it.
- Matt: Understand some of what you're saying, but they've also addressed parking, lower unit count.
- Brian: commend this design over any previous.
- Ray: never heard back from Emeka.
- Haylee: we all owe a lot to Ray.