

## 10/5/16 Special Meeting on Elm/Liberty Project

Board of Trustees (BoT) present: Bob Sehlhorst, Matt Jacob, Bill Cappel, David Macejko, Amy Silver, Maurice Wagoner

Agenda: Peter Hames motioned to approve; Matt Jacob seconded. Motion passed.

Intro by Bob: Bob talked about his meeting with Katherine Keough-Jurs to go over where this development stands. Next step is a staff meeting with Cincinnati Planning Commission (CPC) open to the public before they vote on the final plan for the project. Neighbors within 400 feet will be notified prior this meeting via postcard and anyone can attend.

Source3 Development intro and Q&A: Mike Heekin gave an overview of the project. Started a year ago and met with people from the city and OTRCC to begin the process. The project is roughly:

- 1 new building, 85 apartment units of varying sizes and 12,500 SF of retail.
- 4 rehab buildings, 26-28 units and 3,000 SF of retail.
- Parking garage with 104 spaces entering from Green Street.

Developers came to OTRCC in January, February, and went to CPC where they lost 3-2. They met again with the infill committee and made changes that resulted in taking a story off the building and incorporated Freeport Alley as well as a few other things. In May the OTRCC BoT voted to recommend the project and then it was approved by the OTRCC in a 12-10 vote. Went through CPC, City Council, and HCB and got approvals. The developers then found out that one of the 4 structures that they planned to rehab was structurally unsound. They had to take on additional costs to stabilize it in an emergency situation because they knew that no one wanted to see the building demolished, even though they didn't own the rehab building yet (it's under contract with the property owners). It was a surprise, but now any rumors that they might demolish it can be put to rest now. The developers are planning to submit the final plan by the end of October to the CPC. He showed posterboard images of the project and the current design. Showed how the design changed to more of a warehouse design after taking the infill committee's architect's ideas into account. Height steps down to reduce the massing and also they have tried to cut up the faces to segment it and make the massing less intrusive.

Passed around the posterboards and took Q&A from the membership:

- Are there any low income units: No, market rate in the range of \$1.75/SF is target.
- Can you defend why your project doesn't include affordable housing with it being stated in the OTR Comprehensive Plan? The OTR Housing study that we reviewed actually showed that market rate housing was a need of the community, so that is what we are looking to fill. We are market rate developers so we don't have the best expertise to implement affordable housing.
- Is there a formula by Federal government for affordable housing and how much to provide? There is inclusionary zoning in other cities that does this, but it is not in Cincinnati currently.
- Are there larger units? Yes, and they trend lower in price in the \$1.70/SF range.

- Have you followed the Liberty Street safety study? Yes, a little bit.
- Do you plan to have an impact on on-street parking? Slightly as a space of two is affected by the garage driveways. We are still in flux with the garage and making that part of the project happen. Still trying to work through pushback from banks. There is a chance that it could be an 80 space surface lot until banks will finance the garage. Banks are having a hard time seeing being able to charge as much for spots near Findlay Market right now.
- Did past changes impact parking? We lost around 30 spaces with the changes that we've already made to the project as we incorporated the alleyway and reconfigured the site.
- What is the height of the project? Based on the way that the city measures, we think that we are at 68ft on the Liberty south side. With the 59ft on north side of Elm, one story above building next to it per the historic guidelines.
- What are you planning for the rooftop of the garage? It's open parking and has concrete and cars.
- Your apartments will look out at the garage? Yes.
- No green roof? No
- What is the financial package that you are getting from the city? We will probably apply for tax abatements and also historic tax credits. We will give some of it back to pay the streetcar tax.
- What is the amount? I don't have that off the top of my head.
- Time line for historic credits? January.
- How much in total tax incentives? I think around \$1.8M.
- Any grants? No.
- Leed Certified? LEED Silver.
- What kind of retail will you have? Definitely think there will be restaurants because that is the best growing retail segment right now. Maybe some smaller office stuff on Elm street side. We want to focus it all towards entrepreneurial local users, not national or regional big players because it would go against the feel of the neighborhood, which is what attracted us here.
- Can tax credits be sold off to others: No. We have to use them and they are enforced by the state. It would be fraud if we mishandled them.
- Are these the drawings what will be submitted (what was on the screen from the submissions to HCB)? No. There have been changes the corner per the HCB's requests. Changed corner from red to silver from red. The windows and façade is basically what is there.
- You aren't matching the historic architecture, are you? It's very expensive to recreate exactly what has been done on a lot of these OTR buildings today. We would like to go that route, but cost constraints have lead us to where we are. We've had some people asking for a little more modern and some for more historic, getting pulled in both directions, but we've been trying to find some middle ground.
- Why did they choose to do modern instead of historic on the corner versus the sides? Why not do it historic? We've gotten comments like that and tried to work through them with the architects. We were told that it was important to make a statement with the corner and this was what came from it.

Speaker section (3 minutes per person):

- Danny Klingler: First, I'm opposed to the current project. I'm co-chair of infill committee of the OTR Foundation. We've tried to work with them, but I don't want this building in my community. I don't think it fits into the historic fabric of the neighborhood. I like the developers and Mike is a nice guy, but I think we, as a community, should decide what we want on this piece of land and then if the developers want to be a part of that then that's great. But this isn't it.
- Jenn Arens - I just want to clarify what the housing inventory told us. In the OTRHI you can't see the rapid rate of loss at the bottom of the spectrum in affordability and the rapid rate of increase in the higher income category. Everything in the pipeline is market rate and everything that comes through the community council is market rate. All the affordable units are coming up for expiration soon and you don't need a city mandate to do affordable housing.
- David Macejko – I'm on fixed income and don't want to leave OTR either. I want to thank Jennifer LeMaster-Wirtz for her perspective on the letter she wrote to the BoT. I've been trying to develop here in OTR and have been stuck in bureaucracy for years. I respect the risk that the developers are taking and the chance they are taking on our community. Affordable housing needs to be addressed, but not by holding developers hostage. It's the role of the city to encourage and incentivize affordable housing.
- Josh Spring – We have the numbers and we going to vote this down tonight. Our board president has been holding this issue down and not allowing us to talk about it. All of our homeless and affordable housing resources are overburdened in our city. For anyone to not help with the problem is wrong and the responsibility falls on every citizen of the city.
- Dick Green – 3 minutes is not enough time to talk. We need to organize to make something happen. We've only got 3 minutes to organize. The developer has been organizing for 3 years. How come we can't get more people to get organized?
- Kim Green – Cincinnati isn't Las Vegas. It's not enough time (3 minutes) and we do need to get organized. Every building you buy (and there's nothing wrong with making money) need to take care of the kids; the kids need looked out for. We need low income housing and section 8. I used to walk down Bank Street and skate in this room, so I'm from down here. We need black people downtown and not other people (David Macejko– are you talking directly at me? That's disrespectful) We need jobs and neighborhood centers. We don't need the newcomers. There was a man named Mr. Denhart that made millions of dollars down here on affordable housing, but he gave poor people housing. But greed and need is another thing. When you come into a community you need to know what the needs are. I'm here for the children here today that need housing.
- Bill Cappel – we need to figure out affordable housing in our city and we need to figure out a plan for that. But this project is separate from that. It offers a lot of supply to offset the demand that is here. If this project doesn't happen the demand will still be here and make it even more expensive for everyone. Stopping this project makes housing even less affordable in OTR.
- Bonnie Neumeir – I've been active in the community. There were a lot of affordable housing units in the neighborhood that are gone now. Even people like Model are displacing affordable units. There are other groups to partner with for affordable housing. If you think there should be inclusionary zoning, then you should want to make this happen. We don't get the notices as renters about these meetings. We need neighborhood serving businesses on the ground floor.
- Margy Waller- I want to talk after the vote.

- Peter Hames – Someone said this the best development site in the city. This is a gateway and it totally fails with its modern design. The gateway district is radically more expensive than other parts of the neighborhood. We need to look forward to new infill development to keep the neighborhood affordable but we need to ensure that there's room for everyone. I'm against the project for those reasons.

Bob: we are ready to vote:

Josh – I motion that this OTRCC vote that we are against this project in its entirety because:

- They are asking for a benefit from the city
- Affordable housing not a component of the project
- It does not match the historic nature of the neighborhood
- They have not guaranteed neighborhood servicing businesses
- This project is exclusive in terms of economic class and race
- This project is not compatible with our community plans
- Requested that Danny Klingler writes the letter

Discussion: What steps should the developers take to remedy these problems before returning? Ask the opinion of the community.

Vote was taken: 31 – 5 the motion passes.

Bob: There will be a final plan going to the CPC and the meeting is open to the public. OTRCC will circulate the date and time when it's available.

Peter – I would expect you (developer) to bring your final plan to the CC and present it to this body prior to going to the CPC.

How will membership be notified – OTRCC all when we get the notice Since owners will get postcard, but renters will not.

Meeting adjourned

