

ANC 6A Economic Development & Zoning Committee
Wednesday September 16, 2009, 7-9:00 PM
Sherwood Recreation Center (640 10th St, NE)
2nd Floor Community Room

Committee Members: Drew Ronneberg, Chair; Cody Rice; Barbara Halleck; Jeff Fletcher
Commissioners present: Raphael Marshall (6A01), Kelvin Robinson (6A08), David Holmes (6A03)

7:00 pm Call to order

Ongoing Status Reports:

1. H Street Survey (Drew Ronneberg): H Street survey has been completed. Historic nomination package and application are the next steps.
2. Zoning Code Rewrite (Cody Rice)

No update.

3. Vacant Properties (Dan Golden)

No update.

New Business

H Street Connection Redevelopment (900 H St. NE) The developer will present updated plans for the redevelopment of the H Street connection site as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) that include renderings for the rear of the building.

Drew Ronneberg: The ED&Z Committee will make recommendations to the ANC regarding massing, design, and community amenities. The Committee is not ready to discuss community amenities and will cover that topic at the October meeting. The Transportation and Public Space Committee will discuss traffic and parking at their meetings and will make recommendations in those areas. The goal is for ANC6A to vote on recommendations at their November meeting.

H Street Representatives:

Sarah Alexander, Torti Gallas
Chip Glasgow, Holland and Knight
Garry Rappaport, Owner/developer
Gary Lustine, Owner/developer

Sarah Alexander gave a summary of the building's current design:

1. Dropped one floor
2. Decreased 1 FAR (from 6.0 in the former design to 5.0); the 5.0 FAR is a firm requirement by the developer to move forward
3. Sculpted the exterior, specifically the south façade (rear of the building). Broke up the mass by adding pavilions and courtyards – 40' wide. Back is brick with masonry accents.

4. 6 floors at 8th and H
5. 5 floors at 10th and H
6. Stepped back top floors
7. Integrated better with the neighborhood.
8. Trellis at the alley as a greenwall to help dampen noise and provide screening.
9. Leed certified design; looking into whether it's "silver"
10. Materials at 8th street side: somewhat more modern, grey brick with some metal to provide a textured façade. Not shiny.

Neighborhood comments

Resident on 10th street concerned about the lack of light; that the new building will cut all light to her location. This issue will be reviewed by the design team although it was generally thought that the building would not interfere with the light of the rowhouses because it is situated north of them.

Monte Edwards from the Stanton Park Land Use Committee stated that the SPLUC is happy with the 5.0 FAR, the number of stories, and the transition on the 8th Street side. However, the SPLUC is concerned with the modern look of the 8th Street corner, right across from the bank. Suggested moving it to the 10th Street corner (although residents on 10th Street expressed their wishes NOT to have the modern detailing on their end); and the design team also noted that at this point they would strongly prefer not to have to make any more major design changes.

Omar Mahmud: Does not want the modern view to the 10th Street side; also appreciates the consideration of the view of the back of the building. He requested that the top floor be removed on the 10th Street side. The design team said they would look at it again but were not hopeful that a change could be made and still maintain the 5.0 FAR that the developer requires.

Kelvin Robinson: Fabulous concept and design that has come along way to meet community concerns. Not offended by the modern look on 8th Street but would want to see the materials. The design team responded that as part of the PUD process they will have to fill materials.

Raphael Marshall expressed that the height issue between 8th and 10th "has been pushed under the rug" and that modifications made so far to the design are not enough, and that concerns of the neighborhood have not been taken seriously.

ED&Z Comments

Jeff Fletcher: The design has come a long way. Pleased with the look of the building and materials but still concerned with the height.

Barbara Halleck: Acknowledged the concern about the height but noted that the design did incorporate everything that the ED&Z had asked for as far as stepping back the massing, incorporating design elements so that the building fits into the neighborhood such as making the front façade look like multiple buildings instead of one large one. Generally favors the design and appreciates the effort that has been put into the design.

Drew Ronneberg: The larger community generally favors the design. It's clear that they've listened to the community and the improvements in the design are quite evident.

Drew asked whether the 8' H Street Sidewalk "indent" might be made a little deeper to allow more use of the outside space surrounding the building. However, the design team said that it would require that the ceiling be cantilevered or that the design be changed for all floors, decreasing the square footage overall, which they are not interested in doing at this point.

Also asked about the metal materials at the H Street side, stating that the more modern materials might not blend with the architecture of the banks on the opposing corners. Suggested that the design make the material "talk to" the bank architecture. The design team responded by saying that (1) the materials will not be shiny and ultra modern and would blend with the surrounding architecture, light brick matchest the brick; and (2) more information on the materials would be provided so that we can get a better picture.

Drew noted that the roof structures at 3rd and H were integrated into the design. Torti Gallas also does the same thing, making the roof structures that house the mechanical equipment part of the design rather than just exposed metal boxes.

The following motions were made and passed:

1. That the ANC6A request more details on the 8th and H Street façade and its materials. Motion passed unanimously.
2. That ANC6A support the massing and design of the building, contingent on further information about the materials for the 8th and H façade.

A brief discussion of the community amenities followed; however, a full discussion of the amenities will be held during the October meeting of the ED&Z committee. Issues related to parking, entrance to the garage, and traffic will be covered in Transportation & Public Space meetings.

Potential community amenities that have been noted by the ED&Z committee:

1. Developer support for the H Street Historic District.
2. Funds for sprucing up the facades of buildings across from the H Street site.
3. TIF money could be provided for more parking
4. ZIP car parking
5. Bicycle sharing
6. Public toilets at 8th and H.

HPA #09-XXX. The owner of 1347 Constitution Avenue would like to construct an addition to the rear of the property and build an areaway and expand the steps in front of the property.

The owners presented each modification/improvement as a separate project.

Project 1: rear addition. The property owners provided photos of the rear of the building indicating that 1345 has a single story addition already. The addition they propose is two stories with a deck at the 2nd level. There are no zoning issues as the addition is within lot occupancy regulations. They have requested letters of support from their adjacent neighbors but have not received them.

Motion was passed to recommend that ANC6A support the project conditional upon receiving letters of support.

Project 2: Basement entrance

The access to the basement from the front of the house is unsafe/too small and doesn't meet code; in order to do any improvements to the basement they will have to enlarge the access. The design of the project will incorporate the original ironwork (or replacement ironwork that matches, if the original is not in good enough condition to use). The retaining wall at the stairs is bulges out and needs to be repaired.

Motion was passed to recommend that ANC6A support the project, strongly suggesting that the owner keep or restore the cast iron steps.

1603, 1505, 1607 Rosedale Ave. The owner is seeking ANC support to have the properties reclassified as residential properties. They are currently classified as vacant.

Lyle Blanchard representing Ms. Rupert, the owner, stated that it is property tax time and that Ms. Rupert has tried diligently to sell the properties. Because she has been unable to sell them, she has begun renovating them in order to hopefully make them more attractive in this tough real estate market. She is requesting a letter of support from the ANC to invoke the "hardship" clause in the vacant property tax law so they can be classified as Class I rather than Class III for tax purposes.

Motion was passed that the ANC support the exemption due to hardship.

NEXT MEETING

ANC 6A Economic Development & Zoning Committee
Wednesday October 21, 2009, 7-9:00 PM
Sherwood Recreation Center (640 10th St, NE)
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