

ANC 6A Transportation & Public Space Committee Meeting Minutes  
Capitol Hill Towers (900 G Street NE)  
September 21, 2009

I. Call meeting to order at 7:08 pm

II. Introductions

A. Present: Shane Artim, Lance Brown, Sean Lovitt, Marlon Smoker and Omar Mahmud (Chair). Also in attendance were several members of the H Street Connection redevelopment team, including the property owner, Gary Rappaport and his counsel, Norman "Chip" Glasgow, members of the community, ANC 6A Commissioners David Holmes and Kelvin Robinson, and Drew Ronneberg, Chair of the ANC 6A Economic Development and Zoning Committee

B. Absent: DeLania Hardy and Diane Hoover

III. Community Comment - None

IV. Announcements. Mr. Mahmud made the following announcements:

A. There will be a follow-up public meeting on X1, X2 and X3 bus service on September 22, 2009 at the Sherwood Recreation Center. This is the second of three public meetings to be hosted by DDOT and WMATA to gain public feedback on bus service and to present information about a study being conducted regarding X lines service.

B. DDOT has announced completion of the Union Station bicycle facility. Memberships are now being taken online via the DDOT website.

V. New Business

A. Presentation/Q&A with H Street Connection Redevelopment Team

i. Mr. Mahmud briefly explained the review schedule agreed to by the development team. This meeting is intended to allow the developer an opportunity to present the project before the committee and gain initial feedback from the committee and the community. The next committee meeting on October 19 will afford the developer an opportunity to address feedback raised at this meeting and for the committee and the community to provide additional feedback on the project (Mr. Mahmud wanted to ensure the community had an adequate opportunity to provide feedback to the developer since notice of this meeting only went out a week before the meeting date). If all issues are not addressed at the regular meeting on October 19, the committee will reconvene again for a special meeting with the developer approximately a week later (date to be determined based on participant schedules).

- ii. Mr. Mahmud thanked the development team for attending the meeting and invited it to present plans for redevelopment of the H Street Connection site. Mr. Mahmud asked all in attendance to limit questions to clarifying questions during the presentation and to hold off on substantive feedback until after the presentation has been completed.
- iii. The development team gave a brief overview of the proposal, focusing on the transportation aspects of the project:
  1. The streets surrounding the site are all two way streets. A 22 foot-wide private alley will be maintained at the back of the property (side opposite and parallel to H Street) along with two garage entry ramps, one at 8<sup>th</sup> Street (for retail customers and residents) and the other at 10<sup>th</sup> Street (for residents only). The developers indicate a 22 foot-wide alley will be wide enough for two way traffic through the alley.
  2. The current plan contains a two level below ground parking structure under the proposed building with a total of 161 retail parking spaces on the first level and 340 total residential spaces on both levels for 384 planned residential units.
    - a. One of the residents, Ms. Marie-Claire Brown raised a concern about there not being enough residential parking spaces for the planned number of residential units. The development team pointed out that the current ratio of parking spaces to units is above .8 and that this is in the normal range for development projects in the District (the development team represented that a ratio of .66 to .9 is the norm in the District).
    - b. Mr. Lance Brown asked whether residential parking spaces would be bundled with sold or rented units. Mr. Glasgow confirmed the parking spaces would be sold separately, not bundled.
    - c. Mr. Lovitt asked whether there would be controlled access to the residential entry on the 10<sup>th</sup> Street side. The development team confirmed access would be controlled.
    - d. Mr. Brown asked for clarification on whether there is a pedestrian aisle between the two curb cut entrances to the property on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Glasgow confirmed that there will be two separate curb cuts which will allow pedestrians a place to stop safely in the event traffic is occupying both curb cuts.

3. All trash and all large trash storage bins will be stored inside the building and not outside as is the current practice at H Street Connection. Garbage trucks will access areas inside the building where trash is stored using loading docks.
4. Pay parking is currently planned for all visitors. The current plan will include 100 extra parking spots requested by the city to accommodate H Street parking needs. The development team is still working out a plan with the city for how to utilize these extra parking spots. So far the developers have spoken with the Mayor's Office for Economic Development and Anwar Saleem of H Street Main Street regarding utilization of the city-requested extra parking spots.
  - a. Mr. Mahmud asked that the ANC be included in future discussions and that any proposed plan eliminate the motivation for visitors to park on surrounding residential side streets. Mr. Mahmud expressed concern on behalf of nearby neighbors that plans to charge for parking at the site will flood nearby residential side streets with people who don't wish to pay for parking in the garage. Mr. Mahmud cited examples of recent developments at Harris Teeter near Potomac Metro and Whole Foods near Logan Circle where customers are allowed to park for free, thus mitigating this problem significantly. Despite the best efforts of the city to designate nearby side streets as being for residential use only, the problem will persist during times of lax enforcement. Therefore, Mr. Mahmud expressed preference for resolving the problem by incentivizing visitors to park in the garage with free parking. The developers agreed they still need to work out a plan to address parking concerns with the city. Mr. Mahmud asked that details be provided to the ANC once they are available.
  - b. Mr. Ronneberg asked about allowing access to the parking garage at 10<sup>th</sup> and H. The developer currently has no controlled access entry to the garage for pedestrians at this corner. Mr. Mahmud expressed a concern about allowing uncontrolled access to the garage given safety concerns. Mr. Glasgow agreed that it would not be prudent to include an uncontrolled access point to the garage anywhere on the property. The developer may maintain an exit door, but not two-way access unless it can be monitored and controlled effectively.

5. The development is planned to occur in two phases. Phase one of project will be the building between 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Phase two will be the building between 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Street, which may occur separately depending on the economic climate. The garage will also be built in two phases.
  - a. Mr. Brown asked what will become of the current buildings on the phase two side of the property if the two phases are not built simultaneously. Mr. Rappaport indicated the whole current building will be demolished at once and there is no plan for whether the phase two side of the property will be an empty lot with utilities in place for the phase two building or a parking lot. Given that the “B of A building” currently on the phase two side of the property is a separate building, Mr. Rappaport indicated a willingness to consider maintaining that building until the lot space is needed to build phase two.
- iv. Mr. Mahmud thanked the development team for the presentation and opened the floor to discussion and feedback on the proposed plans:
  1. Mr. Mahmud suggested the new development take measures to ensure the row house adjacent to the alley entrance on 8<sup>th</sup> Street is no longer struck by traffic (particular large trucks) entering/exiting the alley, including installation of bollards as was suggested to Mr. Mahmud by Commission Chair Joe Fengler. The development team agreed to take measures to prevent this harm in the new project, including consideration of bollards and expanding the width of the curb cut that currently runs along the width of the home.
  2. Mr. Mahmud asked about the possibility of an H street entrance to the property, as has been suggested in the past and during a recent phone call with the development team. Other community members in attendance expressed support for an H Street entrance pointing out that there is already a traffic light, pedestrian crosswalks and a curb cut for an entrance at 9<sup>th</sup> and H Streets. Mr. Glasgow indicated the team is currently looking at developing a site proposal which would include an H Street entrance. Mr. Glasgow indicated the team is trying to resolve technical barriers to accomplishing this and that an entrance on H Street wouldn't be as aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Brown indicated he favors the current plan with entrances on the side residential streets only. The development team cited DDOT traffic volume statistics showing traffic volume has decreased on H Street in recent years. Mr. Mahmud pointed out the drop in numbers clearly correlates with ongoing streetscape construction and utility upgrade work that has

been ongoing on H Street for a few years now. Mr. Glasgow agreed to come back to the committee with a possible alternative site plan that includes an H Street entrance by the next meeting on October 19.

3. Mr. Brown asked whether the development would include car sharing spaces. Mr. Brown speculated that there may be a future city requirement that developments incorporate car sharing spaces in their garages. Mr. Mahmud pointed out that the current plan calls for car sharing spaces. Mr. Glasgow indicated the development team would like to incorporate more car sharing in the project, beyond the two proposed zip car spaces in the plan currently.
4. Mr. Mahmud raised a concern he heard from a nearby neighbor about drainage causing flooding on her property. During discussion, it was clarified that the flooding was caused by a street drain backing up, not from a back up on the H Street Connection property. The development team agreed it would work with the city the best it could to ensure its site drainage plan did not cause flooding problems for nearby residents but that maintenance of the street drain is ultimately up to the city.
5. A concern was raised about the size of trucks entering and exiting the alley. Mr. Rappaport indicated he could not limit the size of trucks using the alley since it would inhibit his ability to find tenants for the retail spaces. A concern was also raised about the hours trucks currently use the alley for trash pickup. Mr. Rappaport initially expressed resistance to limiting the hours trucks could pick up trash or make deliveries but later softened his stance once Mr. Glasgow pointed out his interests would be aligned with neighbors on this issue since residents living in his building would also be disturbed by late night/early morning truck traffic in the alley. There are currently video cameras in place to monitor truck activity and Mr. Rappaport agreed to possibly install cameras at alley entrances for the new development as well.
6. A question was raised about the location of the “green wall” along the back of the property. The green wall was mentioned by the development team at the Economic Development and Zoning Committee meeting. The green wall will be installed against the back of the building, not along the fence bordering the Capitol Hill Towers parking lot. Some in attendance were initially confused about the location of this wall. The developer pointed out that placing the wall along the building would be aesthetically pleasing and not hide possible illegal activity in the alley from the view of residents living behind the property.

7. Mr. Ronneberg asked about a bicycle parking plan for the development. The developer pointed out that the current plans include small parcels in the parking lot for secure bike racks. The residential garage (level two) will have 50 bike spaces for retail customers while the retail level (level one) will have 25 bike spaces. Mr. Glasgow indicated this commitment is above that required for LEED green certification. Mr. Brown asked what types of racks will be put in, but the development team has not worked that out yet. Bicyclists would use the elevator to access the garage with their bikes, but according to the development team the driveway lane (currently 25 feet) is wide enough to accommodate bikes as well as car traffic in the event bicyclists enter the garage where motorists do. Mr. Brown also asked whether residents would be able to access the garage through the motorist traffic entryways even if they don't have a parking spot. The development team indicated they would look into this.
8. A question was raised about the location of resident visitor parking. Mr. Glasgow indicated this would be located on the retail level.
9. The developers have not decided whether to lease or sell units in the building at this point. The ultimate decision will be based on the economic climate.
10. Mr. Mahmud indicated he heard talk of possibly including public bathrooms with entrances along 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets. Mr. Mahmud expressed safety and health concerns with this idea. Mr. Glasgow agreed and indicated the developers are not currently considering this idea in the proposal.

B. Consideration of Public Space Application for 921 12<sup>th</sup> Street NE

- i. The committee reviewed the site plans provided by the developer and evaluated the application. Several questions were raised that require answers from the developer. Mr. Mahmud agreed to present the following questions and comments to the developer:
  1. Exactly which curb cuts are being requested in the site plan? The one along K Street, the one along 12<sup>th</sup> Street or both?
  2. What is the width of the curb cuts and alleys being proposed? The committee expressed a desire to make them as narrow as the city will allow.
  3. Clarify that existing curb cut on 12<sup>th</sup> Street in front of lot 925 on the site plan will be removed.

4. Mr. Brown speculated that the developer still needs the public space permit to build a fence along the property enclosing public space front yards. The committee decided it would only support the proposed fence if doesn't require a variance and complies with existing regulations.
5. The committee would agree to the proposed walkways from the sidewalk to the units so long as they are no more than four feet wide.
6. The developer should provide assurance that the green space (public space) along lot 104 in the site plan will be maintained and that it will not be used as an additional parking spot.
7. Request that the developer install curb or fence along driveways to be installed on public space.
  - a. ***Mr. Mahmud made a motion that the committee tentatively recommend the ANC approve this application pending resolution of the questions above. Mr. Brown seconded the motion, which passed unanimously without objection.***

VI. Additional Community Comment - None

VII. Adjourn meeting 9:15 pm.