



Livingston Avenue Area Commission
General Body Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2016
6:30pm – 8:00pm

Meeting called to order 6:32pm

Call to Order

Terry Elliott - Present

Brian Scarpino - Present

Mustafaa Shabazz - Present

Josephine Copeland - Present

Margaret Nesbitt – Present

Lucy Wolfe - Present

Brenten Johnson – Tardy

Demolitions

#1626988, 1755 Forest Avenue, Driving Park, Landbank

#1627618, 715 Lilley Avenue, Driving Park, Ransom Company

#1626637, 1206 Whittier, Driving Park, Landbank

#162898, 1007 Studer, Driving Park, Landbank

All signed off by the President of the Driving Park Civic

Commissioner Scarpino, motion to Approve; Commissioner Nesbitt, 2nd

Discussion:

Commissioner Shabazz – Are they brick structures?

Commissioner Elliott – We have to physically look. Noted all but one is a City of Columbus Landbank property

All in favor – Commissioners Scarpino, Copeland, Nesbitt, Wolfe & Holmes

Opposed -None

Abstained – Commissioners Elliot, Shabazz

Motion Passed 5 – 2

Guest Speaker:

Susan Keeny, Columbus Landbank Foundation – Home Preservation Program
– Not present

Joe McCabe, WODA Group – Livingston Theater for senior housing
Specifically, no longer requesting a height variance; will fit within the Columbus City Code

5 variances being sought:

Concept of the project

Building – proposes selected demolition and the wish to save elegance and façade (signage and other parts of the building) to make it compatible and harmonious.

Currently, does not have much of the original interior (several different uses since it was a theater)

Building has asbestos, lead paint, etc. which will be completely removed

Has the tools and resources to complete the project.

Variances are conditioned are the LAVA-C approval

Resounding is how bad this property has been as an eye-sore and loss of use of a great property

WODA is one of the top 10 developers in the country

Headquarterd in Columbus

Residential ground floor variance – most units face

Sr facility, Age restricted property and becomes recorded for the property, not to be changed.

There is a severe need for senior housing: the shorter the distance traveled, the better
I.e, Greystone, as an example has 30 units, ground level

Variance for parking

60% of portfolio is senior housing, where 1.2 people are in a unit. Seniors are downsizing but want the extra space (wheelchair, side bedrail, etc); married couples or a single senior with a craft room. May not need the additional parking spaces

\$14M investment with a 30 year commitment

No occupancy problems, bankruptcies, etc.

Active CarGo system, COTA

LAVA Planning document, the artery hub is a great area to build multi-family belongs

Since 2011 there hasn't been any multi-planning development

Shuttle services will be provided

Livingston Avenue Business Association (LABA) will be involved

RTA – for dial to ride to seniors

37 parking spaces with these resources will be adequate

Noted in Cleveland, 40 units with 14 spaces

Avg occupant age is 76 years old

Transportation is the most expense that seniors cut out (vehicle, insurance, gas, etc)

Needs analysis – senior housing is in a crisis trend; none in the LAVA-C area

Preferential housing first where 40 units barely meet the demand

Bryden House is the closed and was closed, evicting 140 residents

Discussion

Commissioner Wolfe – Building square feet = 48k

Site specific –Residential , commercial, why not use other properties

McCabe – there are many alley ways that break up the blocks, making the block depth shallow. They looked for enough contiguous land for building. The Theater is also value added for its close proximity to the fire station, library, houses of worship, Driving Park Recreation Center, Alum Creek Trail, etc.

Asbestos cost? Rehab to tear down is it the same

Repurpose – no way to do so economically

Commissioner Scarpino – Depending on funds from OFA, if LAVA approves and OFA does not approve, is the project dead? And then do the variance carry over to subsequent developers?

McCabe- Want to stay the course. WODA has a legally binding contract with Mr. Smith where there will be a clean title transfer. The purchase is contingent on financing. If not approved, WODA will try again. This development would be a good catalyst for more development. A statement of hardship stipulates age requirement, development for senior housing. We would want the recommendation and approval to be in-line with the project

*Anthony Celebrezze, City of Columbus, Building & Zoning Services, suggested making the variances carry with the project, not the property

McCabe - Timeline - Jan- Feb 2017 to apply for funding with the Ohio Finance Agency (OFA); awarded in May – June. If not approved, WODA will go back to Mr. Smith for re-contract.

Commissioner Scarpino - What is WODA guaranteeing for any future problems around parking in the future?

McCabe - Tax Credit Financing has many compliance aspects, banks, developer, etc. that highly scrutinize the properties. A covenant is signed like new for a minimum of 30 years. Residents are to have parking passes (no unknowns or car-dumping); dynamic outreach including having Civic and Commission meetings on the property; sign good neighbor agreements; handicap is not only wheelchair for a handicap space, but hearing and vision disabilities as well; the property will be universally designed for disability-related issues

Commissioner Shabazz – What is the economic impact that will bring value to the community, including additional employees?

McCabe - Overall price tag is \$12.5 – 14M

With Rita Parise, look to return 30%; WBE and MBE partnership; no self-performing trades,; they do their own general contracting , 27 – 30% workforce for local hiring under Section 3

Include full-time property and maintenance managers, likely from the community and will work with LAVA, LABA and the community

Rock of Faith with Fairwood Commons and placement for employment

Commissioner Shabazz – What is WODA’ workforce development history?

See City of Baltimore

Randy Black wanted brick repurposed, re-entry commitment with Section 3, for re-entry labor force for bricks to work with the masons. Construction trade in Columbus has a shortage

Commissioner Elliott – Relative to the tax credit program, will there be complete funding from that?

McCabe – This is several million dollar construction loan (relationship with PNC) WODA is a for-profit developer, so no grants. Using the tax abatement program (City of Columbus), but only using for the improvements, meaning the taxes are paid and the schools receive their share

Commissioner Elliott - City of Columbus Consolidated Plan: 43% of the population is in poverty, 11% are seniors

Sharon – Old Oaks – no developments for redevelopment of old buildings

McCabe - Currently, there are 3 projects in Ohio, repurposing of 2 schools in Nelsonville OH and Circleville OH school development; Lima OH -former office building being repurposed with 0 parking.

Rodney Grist, Old Oaks, Cultural Arts Group – many years of research, proposal to save the Livingston Theater and nurture the community with theater, dance, wellness, education, etc., similar to the King Lincoln Theater

Partnered with Tom Katzemeyer, Kimber Perfect, Joyce Beatty, with the Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC) to pay for the feasibility study

The Cultural Arts Group has the support but not the building. They are requesting to deny the variance to allow more time for funding for the building purchase.

Karla Grist – McCabe did not address the audience. Is the community interest at heart? There are other places available for that housing.

McCabe – WODA is a developer with experience. If there are other recommended sites, dialogue is open, but this is not just a proposal. If there were other feasible sites, they would have sought them.

Molly Hogue - Old Oaks – from her experience with service organizations, the Cultural Arts Group sounds a lot like Short Stop in the Short North for youth, but with an expanded group to address. Greystone is much more costly, so not a good comparison. Don’t think that ground floor housing is a good place when we have foot traffic. Seniors have COPD, problems crossing the streets. Would much rather see another use for the Livingston Theater.

Porter Mitchell – Hanford Village

No to senior citizen facility at the Livingston Theater location because of the businesses currently in that area. Wouldn’t feel safe having his elderly relative living in that

property. Need to address other issues, including safety

Kip Holly – Old Oaks – Great connection to amenities (library, COTA, etc). Are there plans to have solid deals and partnerships?

McCabe – for OFA, WODA has to set aside a budget with an allowance and annual increases for credit education and building, Meals on Wheels, housekeeping, etc.; required to put together a full comprehensive outline; generational and outreach spaces for seniors within the property and to include seniors within the community as they partner and support the residents

WODA is requesting approval for Building And Zoning Application BZA#CV16-075cV16075, 1573 Livingston Avenue

Variance #1, Section 3356.03, C-4, Permitted uses, to permit ground level residential use, thereby permitting a 45 dwelling unit senior housing apartment house including ground level residential use.

Variance #2 3309.14, Height districts, to increase permitted height from 35ft to 38ft to the flat roof of the three (3) story addition in subarea A.

Variance 3 3312.49, Minimum number of parking spaces required, to reduce total code required parking for 45 senior housing dwelling unit from 68 spaces, at 1.5 spaces forward/DU, to zero (0)on subarea A, subject to 37 spaces being provided off-site, on subarea B, at the southwest corner of E. Livingston Avenue and Geers Avenue, as shown on the site plan.

Variance 4 3321.05 (A)(1), vision clearance, to reduce the clear vision triangles from 10' x 10' to 5'x5' for access points on Geers Avenue to subarea B, the parking lot.

Variance 5 3356.11, C-4, district setback lines, to reduce the E. Livingston Avenue (thoroughfare plan) building setback line from 60 ft to 0 ft' for the existing and proposed construction in subarea A.

*Refer to Building And Zoning Application BZA#CV16-075

Commissioners Scarpino motion to approve; Commissioner Wolfe 2nd

Discussion

It's not an either or. This is the only plan that we have presented. Mr. Grist has an idea. Currently, we are only voting on the variances. We have no say of the end use, but the variances.

However, if he does not get the variances, he cannot proceed with the development.

All in favor - Commissioners Copeland, Scarpino, Holmes & Johnson

Opposed – None
Abstentions – Nesbitt, Wolfe, Shabazz & Elliott
Motion passes 4 to 4

Treasury Report – Commissioner Shabazz

Presented the December 2016 Treasury Report
All in favor, motion passed, 8- 0

LAVA-C Election for new officers

Petitions – none submitted

Committee Reports:

Commissioner Nesbitt – Health

By 2050 , 37% of residents will be 50 or older

Commissioner Copeland - Education

Buckeye Preparatory School, Principal Jul'yanna Collier - needs of the school,
Police to monitor the flow of traffic; crosswalk; tutoring; instruments; computers
finance and budgeting and adopt a school
- schools report card – failed the last couple of years

Wolfe - the UIRF is addressing traffic calming

Michael Aaron – He and 10k fearless men are committing to a tutoring program for
school year 2017 for Buckeye Preparatory School, Livingston Elementary and Fairwood
Elementary. All are failing, school to prison system.

Copeland – there are after school programs, but they need bodies (staffing)

Commissioner Holmes – Parks & Recreation

Columbus Metro Parks is sponsoring the 2017 Winter Hiking Series in various local
parks Go to [http://www.metroparks.net/wp-
content/uploads/2016/11/WinterHikesSchedule2017_web.pdf](http://www.metroparks.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/WinterHikesSchedule2017_web.pdf)

Commissioner Elliott – Zoning

WODA/BZA – noted that this vote was NOT AGAINST the theater, but FOR the
development, seniors, etc. See the City of Columbus Consolidated Plan. We are trending
toward senior citizen. We now have 2 developers. That particular location does not have
to be the only theater.

Commissioner Scarpino - Infrastructure –

2nd Terry. Call to action sent to the community. Mr. Grist came to Brian in the Summer and Brian suggested that he get another property. The Theater was in poor condition. This is not an either/or proposal. We are saving the façade. The space of the actual Theater is more of a movie theater and not necessarily for cultural arts. The ground floor might be better used for retail but that isn't WODA's proposal

Commissioner Elliott – If this development does come, and she hopes that it does, it increases property value, and neighborhood agreements to establish other things like the theater and safety

Economic Development - Commissioner Shabazz

Brighter Stores is holding the community accountable to standards. Steve Francis, Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the February Meeting. Holding them to credentials, licenses, goods and services that enhance our community. Meetings are every 1st Saturday at the Driving Park Library, 1422 Livingston Avenue
3:00pm – 5:00pm

Comments from the community

Susan Keeny, Columbus Landmarks Foundation- Home Preservation Program
– apologized for arriving late. Will return and present at the January Commission meeting. Distributed some literature for the program.

Meeting adjourned at 8:03pm