

Northfield Neighborhood Association
Special Meeting: November 21, 2011 7 to 9 p.m.
Dayspring Chapel

Agenda

Presentation by Alliance
Presentation by Pinaki Ghosh
Discussion

Brandon Easterling from Alliance Residential Company gave a presentation about their updated proposal for the Howard's Nursery Site. (See <http://www.northfieldna.org/minutes/NeighMtgNov21.ppt>)

Questions

Q: Along 56th, will the 4-story area have roof access along 56th?

A: Don't intend to create a rooftop deck. It would create noise for neighbors plus 3rd story residents.

Q: With variance, how many units would be allowed

A: Without, would be 133 units (reduced from 140 by driveway change). With, would add 30-40 units.

Q: Will there be a difference in lighting along Koenig?

A: Every floor has to comply with compatibility standards

Q: How tall will the garage height be now?

A: Can't go above 47'

Q: Are you now proposing that the only exit/entrance is Avenue F?

A: Yes

Q: How many trips per day?

A: Based on City of Austin metrics (3.4) Roughly 600-650 trips per day for 133 units. ~770 for 170 units. Out is one trip, in is another.

Q: Is there a pedestrian exit other than 56th?

A: One on Koenig and one on 56th

Q: What configuration are the extra units?

A: Ratio of 70/30 are 1s/2s throughout the

Q: Have you looked at doing a Koenig-only exit/entrance instead of Avenue F?

A: Yes. The problem is that someone going West can't legally make a u-turn. Didn't seem like a viable option for residents. Lighted intersection at Avenue F was better ingress/egress.

Some argue that Koenig would be better, but there's no real good answer.

Q: Any plans for a protected left turn onto Koenig?

A: Anything that involves lights or parking would involve the city. Alliance would appreciate that. Mike Wong asked Gary Schatz to attend but he was unavailable. We'd have to work with the

city.

Q: Don't see a way to avoid dumping traffic into the neighborhood. Would you be willing to put a speed deterrent along the areas that are already problematic with speed? Stretch between Avenue F and Duval on 56th is a problem.

A: Mike reviewed with Gary and that roundabouts might be good. Alliance would support contributing to traffic calming (wouldn't run process). Alliance would commit to providing funds to put in traffic calming.

Q: When would the project begin? How long would it go?

A: Earliest might be May 2012, but if there are holdups with the city. 14-18 months.

Q: What occupancy limits will you have?

A: We're not a student housing environment. We won't turn away qualified individuals. We are not renting by the bedroom.

Q: How is this being developed?

A: A joint venture. We have a management company.

Pinaki Ghosh presentation (electronic version not provided).

Pinaki is an architect and neighbor

Discussion of development of north Loop Property

Time-line of events between 2007 to November 21, 2011

Facts about the property in question/56th Street (2 slides)

Perspective on how 56th street looks today

How the trees look today

What do we know about the request for variance

* Notes that the variance mentions next 3 properties too

* Variance document mentions that safety, traffic and parking are not applicable

What we do not know

* Why is the construction not viable without a variance.

* What is the hardship

* Traffic impact on the neighborhood

* Storm water removal and impact

* Level of light pollution

* Level of air pollution due to garage

* Sound pollution mitigation

* How are we going to handle precedence for the other three properties

* What will be the renter profile

* What are the other long-term effects

Showed the Hardship section of the variance request.

Slide showing different building profiles and angles of sunlight

Slide: What we should also know.

- * What will be the construction standards - like LEED Platinum
- * If the city approves the variance then the only way to challenge it is in the district court.

Things that are not the neighborhood problems

- * How much profit the land owners or the developers make
- * What money it takes to do the studies mentioned before the variance is requested
- * Whether funding will be available to build the complex
- * Why is the variance a neighborhood problem. This is a city issue and we pay taxes to the city to resolve these issues.

Typical scare tactics

Typical Architectural Procedure

- * Conceptual design
- * Logical design
- * Physical design

Pinaki noted that if this is approved as is, he will be taking it to court. He insists on being part of the conceptual design.

Discussion

Q: When did this project start/get initiated?

A: October 18 contract signed. Met with officers of the neighborhood within 4 days. Actual negotiations with the Howard's took about a month. Developer did work on the project before contract was signed in faith that a project would be worked out.

We have to consider the impact on neighbors especially within the immediate area. The developer can build to 3 stories without getting a variance.

Q: How can we have a vote on this when we have only the people here that we have?

A: We are at a quorum. Notice was provided by mail to the entire neighborhood.

Q: Pinaki, what would you like to see in this space.

A: Howard families have to come to the neighbors and show a conceptual solution that will work for everybody. Have to include everybody in the process.

Q: You're saying that the variance granted sets a precedent for the three adjacent properties?

A; The properties are mentioned in the variance document.

Regarding precedent: what type of developers do we want to reward? We'd like to have the developers come to the neighborhood immediately before finalizing design rather than those that go ahead with their plans without working with us.

Q: Will the neighborhood have any say if the variance isn't granted and the project goes forward?

A: It's an administrative process if they meet the current code.

Q: Could you explain how we are going to get this into writing so that what we want is binding?

A: Alliance would attach a letter to the request of what they agree to with the neighborhood.

Doing a restrictive covenant would only be as binding as the people willing to enforce. City will

not enforce. Letter of agreement is tied to the execution of the project. This is something that everyone could physically look at prior to a vote.

Neighborhood is providing a position on the request to the board of adjustment to consider.

Skyview neighbors are affected by the project but don't have the ability to vote. They will have to pursue with their own neighborhood association.

Board of Adjustments meeting is a public meeting and everyone has the opportunity to go and speak. The neighborhood letter will not be the only voice.

Would like to have something in writing prior to the vote.

Discussion of postponing the vote from tonight until there is something in writing. If we don't vote tonight, 11/21, the next official get-together is to 12/5 and that is the earliest we could have another meeting. What happens on the 5th if we vote then? Any changes to the variance request would be available before then. A subcommittee could meet on behalf of the neighborhood. The developer would have to put something together and present back to the neighbors to evaluate. There may be some back and forth. Brendan can start the document (it wouldn't be limited to the issues they include).

Moved and seconded to not vote tonight and postpone until December 5.

* Mike Wong moved

* Pat Taylor seconded

yes=postpone = 29

no=don't postpone = 29

Motion failed

Moved and seconded to vote tonight on whether to support the variance based on information required:

* Kelly Gardener moved

* Multiple seconds

* Andrew Amendment requested: Can we vote to approve the variance with the condition of our acceptance of the letter of agreement (a vote on December 5)?

* Another: Make tonight be a preliminary, non-binding vote. This idea was rejected.

* Discussion

* Bonnie seconded the amended motion. Kelly accepted Andrew's amendment

Yes=Review the letter of agreement and vote again to approve = 36

No=the NNA does not support = 21

Motion passed

Next meeting will be December 5 at 6 p.m. at Dayspring Chapel.