



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

Planning Commission

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

12:15 PM

Council Chambers

MEETING VIDEOTAPED FOR PUBLIC RECORD ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE

A video recording of this meeting is available at:
http://allentownpa.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=1&clip_id=722

Call to order

- Present** 4 - Jeff Glazier, Christian Brown, Richard Button, and Mark J. Buchvalt
Excused 3 - Oldrich Foucek, Damien Brown, and Anthony P. Toth

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

Irene Woodward, Planning Director
David Kimmerly, Chief Planner
Tom Williams, Deputy Director and Operations Manager of CED
Craig Messinger, Interim Director of Public Works
Richard Rasch, Associate Utility Engineer
Nelson Varughese, Traffic Controls Superintendent
Casandra Magliane, Public Works Operations Manager
Tawanna Whitehead, Deputy City Clerk
Fred Andrayko, Zoning Supervisor
Kelly McEllroy, Redevelopment Authority
Jeanne Marsteller, Recording Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Nat Hyman, Aloma Zampell, Randy & Carol Wagner, Barbara A. Knoll, Jeffery DeAngelo, Megan Houppert, Bill & Lisa Lee, Paul Cesanek, Arthur Hinkle, Bob & Diane Nagle, Michael Gilbert, J.J. & Diana Fandl, Janet Gehringer, Jane Benning, Eileen Strohl, Scott Unger and Terry Erney.

Approval of Minutes of July 9, 2019 meeting

Motion made by Mr. Glazier and seconded by Mr. Button to approve the minutes of August 13, 2019 as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Hamilton Street Overlay District Reviews

Thomas Williams, 621 Hamilton Street, design review to erect an externally illuminated channel letter sign (2.42 ft. x 11 ft.) at front requested by Mohamed Hassan at the above address.

Applicant or representative were not present. Christian Brown verified no one was present from Manhattan Pizza & Deli. Mr. Buchvalt stated there are questions and clarifications on the sign that are needed before a decision can be made. Mr. Button made a motion to TABLE second by Mr. Glazier. Motion passed.

Crisis Pregnancy Center of the Lehigh Valley, 1038 Hamilton Street, design review to reface an internally illuminated 3'x15' box sign and maintain vinyl lettering on windows requested by Kevin Wenck of FastSigns Allentown.

Kevin Wenck represented the applicant.

Mr. Wenck explained there is an existing structure with a sign face, called an internally illuminated sign cabinet or light box. What is being proposed is removing the current face sign and replace with a new face sign. Technically a light box is not allowed, but this is an existing structure. Mr. Buchvalt pointed out a comment that states the sign could be approved on the condition it not be illuminated and asked if planned to illuminate? Mr. Wenck said they would like to keep the structure and would remove the lamps or turn off the sign. Christian Brown agreed that is the only way it would fit.

Mr. Buchvalt said essentially, they could approve the sign as presented but cannot be illuminated internally. Mr. Button addressed the recommendation that a Zoning Office check the windows to make sure they do not exceed the 60% rule. Mr. Wenck asked on the new proposed vinyl letter. Mr. Button said yes.

Mr. Glazier made a MOTION to approve the sign subject to the sign cannot be internally illuminated and the window coverage does not exceed 60%. Seconded by Mr. Button. Motion passed.

Rezoning

Bill No. 41 -2019 Amends the Zoning Code by rezoning the former City incinerator Site at Basin Street and 398 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard from B/LI (Business/Light Industrial District to I-3 (General Industrial District).

Mr. Buchvalt explained this was already approved but there is a technicality to amend the approval based on a change with the parcel numbers. Ms. Woodward explained the two parcels were consolidated into one and the previous zoning amendment had both parcels listed, which is a technical change. The applicant was not present, and Mr. Buchvalt agreed this is a simple change. Ms. Woodward said the Commission's recommendation goes back to City Council and they will then hold a public hearing. Mr. Buchvalt asked what the parcel number is. Ms. Woodward said it is in the staff report, parcel number 640649229609.

Christian Brown made a MOTION to amend the bill to reflect the two parcels were consolidated into one parcel number 640649229609 and ratified their previous favorable recommendation. Mr. Glazier seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Zoning Amendment

Bill No. 48-2019 Amends the Zoning Code, Article 1327.03.Z.4 to read “In addition to any storage area contained inside multi-family building dwelling units, there shall be provided for each dwelling unit that has a “habitable floor area” (as defined in Section 1302.01) of less than 700 square feet a minimum of 35 16 square feet of storage area in a convenient location (such as a basement) where personal belongings and effects may be stored without constituting a fire hazard and where the belongings and effects may be kept locked and separated from belongings of other occupants.”

Robert DiLorenzo of City Center stated this amendment has come because of circumstances that City Center has gone before the Zoning Hearing Board nine times to obtain variances to accommodate this zoning ordinance requirement. In all nine circumstances all the variances have been obtained and finds this ordinance is burdensome and not necessarily in the city’s best interest.

Mr. Buchvalt questioned according to the last minutes this was forwarded without a recommendation. Ms. Woodward confirmed that is correct it was forwarded with no recommendation to the Community and Economic Development Committee meeting of Council, who looked at it and sent the bill back to provide the Planning Commission the opportunity to provide comment.

Mr. Buchvalt reflected this requirement does come up frequently as many developers seek a variance and questioned what is defined by the square footage, as it doesn’t specify height. He continued by remarking this amendment does not address what you get with the 16 square foot and would require clarification to lessen the ambiguity.

Mr. DiLorenzo suggested then more description of the height of the storage lockers is needed. Discussion continued on the dimensions and square footage of the storage lockers and how they arrived at the size. Mr. DiLorenzo stated the 16 sq. ft. is a modular system that is a standard size unit you can obtain through suppliers in the market that developers use for storage lockers and are usually stacked two high. Each unit is given a storage locker, but not all units utilize the locker.

Mr. Buchvalt said it makes sense and is a step in the right direction, however, if the bill is left as it is, it does leave some ambiguity as far as the potential heights and someone can conceivably give less height. Mr. Button agrees the consumer may see it as 4x4x8 and it should be a cubic feet number. Christian Brown added this is a consumer driven decision and not sure why this is regulated. Mr. Buchvalt agreed and said if one developer provides storage it is an amenity for their apartments.

Mr. Glazier clarified the City of Reading is the only other city that was looked at with a storage requirement. Ms. Woodward stated yes, as staff researched other communities across Pennsylvania. Mr. DiLorenzo added they looked at other municipalities also and agrees to keep some storage but bring it to something more achievable. He continued by stating this is an amenity the developer includes to distinguish their product from another developer’s product to attract

and retain their tenants.

Mr. Buchvalt summarized the options are to pass it along as is, knowing even having in ordinance is unique and gives some requirement for additional storage or amend it. Mr. Glazier interjected we cannot amend the ordinance but recommend the ordinance be amended. Mr. Buchvalt said then recommend it be changed and some height requirement inserted. Christian Brown suggested offering two recommendations. #1 – be removed all together. #2 – if moves forward, recommend a floor area plus vertical volume in addition to that.

Christian Brown made a MOTION to recommend amending the bill to either remove this requirement from the Zoning Ordinance or amend to provide a minimum height requirement for the square footage of storage space. Mr. Button seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Adaptive Re-Use Application

418-432 N. Franklin Street 19-2 (SP). Application of Cigar Factory Allentown, LLC to convert vacant retail/storage into 16 dwelling units. Section 1327 of the Zoning Ordinance provides the Planning Commission with the opportunity to review and provide comments to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Atty. William Malkames and Nat Hyman were present.

Atty. Malkames explained they were here couple years ago on the same application, except it got a smaller due to a fire which the Zoning Hearing Board approved and wishes to comment on the staff review letter.

Mr. Hyman stated this building was previously approved for 10 units and would like to increase to 16 units. The larger of the two buildings was lost to the fire and that area will be used for a neighborhood park with benches and trees. There will be 40+ parking spaces and with this additional parking adding 6 units to the existing building will accommodate the requirement.

Mr. Hyman asked if he could respond to Mr. Kimmerly's staff comment letter. Mr. Buchvalt said yes, as he personally agrees with all his recommendations and if Mr. Hyman takes issue with anything we can discuss it. Mr. Hyman said he takes issue with all of them. Regarding the existing parking being on a diagonal, that is an existing condition that has been there forever and cannot be reworked as it is a different parcel. The garages are not used for parking, presently used for storage and plan to maintain as storage. An elevation drawing of the building has never been done in the last 15 years, and the only thing being done is reopening the existing windows and two windows on the first level; one will be a window and one for a door into the units. On the second floor all existing bricked in windows and vinyl boards will be new windows, nothing else done to the exterior. Also, the staff report recommended a gray or black metal grid window. These windows need to open, for fresh air, egress in the event of fire and typically grid windows do not open but will defer to the color. The final comment regarding the hiring of a landscape architect. Mr. Hyman continued by commenting that he is trying to do a good thing by creating a park, and on top of that the expense and inconvenience of getting a landscape architect is onerous and don't feel this is necessary with putting a park on private property.

Mr. Buchvalt asked if this is subject to the subdivision and land development ordinance or to the Zoning Hearing Board for a special exception? Ms. Woodward said the recommendation from the Planning Commission are forwarded to the Zoning Hearing Board for their final recommendation. Mr. Buchvalt questioned it seems the parking spaces are located in the public right of way which causes people to back out onto a public street. With the number of units only 24 parking spaces are needed and conceivably can restripe this to get all parking spaces in and make it 90 degrees and make it two-way traffic. Mr. Hyman responded he would be happy to restripe it and redo and could possibly eliminate all the stalls on that side and still have enough.

Christian Brown is a proponent of less parking and no need to exceed what is required and asked if the last time there was discussion on vacating Scott Street. Atty. Malkames said he doesn't remember. Christian Brown said if there was a way to keeping the parking internal, that would eliminate backing onto Scott Street. Discussion was held on what is the next step and the future procedure on getting approval.

Mr. Button concurred on the parking situation. Mr. Hyman said he has never had too much parking and is willing to do what must be done. Mr. Button asked for more information on the elevation comment on the staff report. Mr. Kimmerly explained the provisions of adaptive re-use approval is the building must maintain its historic integrity and fit within the existing neighborhood, therefore, a rendering or elevation would be useful to alleviate any questions. It is a recommendation and not a requirement.

Christian Brown asked about the air conditioning. Mr. Hyman said they will be ptac units, where the windows are built out and are fixed on the bottom with the window above. Christian Brown questioned if the units that will be stepping out onto the 15th Street level sidewalk are going to have steps. Mr. Hyman said yes, there are steps involved. Christian Brown agreed that is a good thing. Mr. Hyman interjected there will be a planting strip along there to create a colonial townhouse feel. Christian Brown asked if the planting is along the building or against the curb. Mr. Hyman said both. Christian Brown asked if these are efficiency or studio apartments. Mr. Hyman said yes.

Mr. Glazier asked what the units will rent for. Mr. Hyman answered he is expecting plus or minus \$900 with a larger unit on the third floor that will rent for more. Christian Brown asked how the garbage is being handled. Mr. Hyman stated there is a dumpster spot by the garages that is tucked away for a communal dumpster, emptied as necessary.

Mr. Glazier questioned the green space by stating it is a nice amenity for the tenants and neighborhood, but maintenance and cleaning will need to be done on a regular basis. Mr. Hyman said they have that maintenance with other properties and one concern is that it is not used as a dumping ground and moving forward making it a park and hoping it will be respected. Mr. Buchvalt asked if there was going to be lighting or a fence. Mr. Hyman said it is not his intention to do either, but if there is a problem it could become a private park, then a fence would need to be installed. Mr. Buchvalt suggested if there is no lighting, a sign stating no activity after a certain time. Mr. Hyman said he could do that.

Mr. Buchvalt suggested when going to the Zoning Hearing Board, a better

description as to how it will be maintained and designed is necessary. Mr. Button's concern is creating a large dark space. Mr. Hyman said there are no lights now. Mr. Button said it is not a park now that is inviting the neighborhood in. Mr. Hyman said true and to be frank he is trying to do a good thing with the park and if it causes any issues it doesn't have to be as there is not much green space in this part of Allentown. Mr. Glazier asked if the parking area will be lit. Mr. Hyman said yes.

Mr. Buchvalt suggested even though the park will not be used at night, some level of lighting would be helpful for security reasons. Christian Brown added greenspace is a good thing and if you want it for the community you need to make it look and feel responsive to the community. There is no overwhelming need to sit down in this community, but maybe an open area of lawn surrounded by trees to be more purposeful which would be easier to maintain. Christian Brown also suggested the Shade Tree Commission review this plan. Mr. Buchvalt summarized the comments and what is recommended.

Mr. Glazier made a motion to FAVORABLY RECOMMEND special exception approval and endorsed the comments contained in the staff report dated August 7, 2019 and make the following recommendations to the Zoning Hearing Board: All windows installed are functional and reflect the former use of the building; a more orderly restriping of the parking area along with egress from Scott Street; more thought on the layout of the park, such as relocating trees from the center to along the perimeter; lighting of the park area for security purposes and submission of an elevation of the building or a good description of what it is going to look like. Second by Christian Brown. Motion passed.

Land Developments

Five City Center-7th & Walnut, Center Square East -- 36 S. 7th Street, LMA-2018-00011, REVISED final plan approval requested by City Center Investment Corporation. (received preliminary/final plan approval at the November 13, 2018 meeting)

The application is being revised and is seeking approval to construct a multi-story residential apartment building with a parking deck below and a center courtyard from 220 units on six levels and 239 parking spaces to 170 units on four levels and 188 parking spaces.

J. B. Reilly, City Center Investment Corp and Robert DiLorenzo, Project Manager addressed the Commission.

Mr. Reilly stated basically the project size is being reduced 20% that is being driven by cost restraints from a seven (7) story to six (6) story allows to build to a different construction code. This project is being reduced from 220 to 170 units and parking is being reduced from 239 to 188 spaces. The other factor in the decision to move forward with 9th & Hamilton which will be 200 more apartments in the downtown.

Mr. DiLorenzo explained the changes to the different levels of the project. 1st level is parking accessed off Walnut Street, northern portion squared off, loading, utilities and mechanical room are the same, southwest corner being filled in to support the pool, four residential units along southeast corner of 7th Street have

been removed and replaced with amenities. 2nd level is upper level parking accessed by 7th Street, squared off northern portion, southwest corner eliminated to support pool, additional area for storage lockers. Trash pick up remains the same and the lobby remains at the northeast corner, which includes the mailroom, elevators, leasing and sales center, resident lounge space. First level of residential units previously that had all the amenities space but with scaling back the number of units also scaling back the ratio of amenity space per unit. There is still a large amount of amenity space for this building with a clubroom, fitness center, yoga studio, co-working space. The amenity space at the northern end of the building have been shifted east and filled with additional units. Outdoor courtyard will include a pool, some gaming area, firepits, grills some gazebo areas. Squared off structure to be more efficient in structural layout. A typical resident floor (2-5) only change is the glass corridor is infilled with additional apartments to the north, but still obtains the same aesthetic. The lobby will also include a coffee bar, dry and cold storage parcel lockers for residents to have their groceries delivery to their building and a pet spa. The top floor will have a terrace to overlook center square.

Mr. DiLorenzo explained the exterior façade on the different elevations and the difference from the previously approved plan to what is being proposed with six stories as modifications have been minimal.

Christian Brown stated some changes lose some of the interaction with the streetscape. Removing southeast units when going from center square to Walnut Street there is no activation. Mr. DiLorenzo tried to activate the street for residential units, but this location is a different environment, busy traffic street no intimate residential feel. The walk-up units were questioned in the past for security issues and implementing gates. Screens and plants will be planted at the corner to soften the edge of the corner, so it does not feel so intense. Christian Brown stated they are nice planters, but just making an observation and something that needs to be questioned as we move forward.

Mr. Buchvalt asked if they take any issues with any of the comments. Mr. DiLorenzo said we take no issues with any of the comments.

Mr. Button made a motion to grant revised FINAL APPROVAL subject to the staff comments contained in the staff letter of August 8, 2019 to the satisfaction of City staff. Second by Mr. Glazier. Motion passed.

Barnes Lane Subdivision, 2701 Barnes Lane, LMA-2019-00015, sketch plan review requested by Barnes Land Development, LLC.

The applicant proposes to subdivide parcel into 44 lots and create 43 new single family lots with existing house retained as lot 44.

Arthur A. Swallow addressed the Commission.

Mr. Swallow explained his company prepared the plan and speculated this is probably the last open piece of land on the southside zoned residential. The property is currently a single-family residence on 13-1/2 acres with public sewer and water. Being proposed between the two zoning districts is to comply with the minimum lot standards, 5,000 sq. ft along Appel Street and 7200 sq. ft within and explained how the number of lots was arrived at. Preliminary geological testing was done in advance of eventual water quality permits that will be

required for the stormwater to make sure site can meet future standards. The intent is single family lots, served with standard city public streets with curbs, sidewalks on both sides.

Mr. Buchvalt asked if the lot count meets by-right? Mr. Swallow said yes at this preliminary stage it meets the lot width and area per zoning and doesn't see the number increasing. Mr. Buchvalt confirmed 43 new and 1 existing compliant with the zoning. Mr. Swallow said yes, it is RL for the majority and RML on the frontage. With the widening and improvements to I-78, they installed water basins and had to relocate the access of Barnes Lane and decided to maintain that access. There is a property to the rear of this property that requires access and will make provisions for that during construction.

Mr. Buchvalt asked what is the condition of Barnes Lane? Mr. Swallow stated it was built by PennDot, 24-30 ft. wide, paved, with drainage structures. We haven't looked to see if the road can be salvaged but will see what will meet City standards and possibly utilize it in the future.

Mr. Swallow said the character of the neighborhood is single family with I-78 next to the parcel. Mr. Buchvalt reviewed the history of this parcel and what was proposed in the past and what occurred, regarding traffic and land development.

Mr. Button said the main concern when the plan is resubmitted is a traffic impact study will be needed. Mr. Swallow said that is part of development and there is no quick fix. Christian Brown asked how many more units can be added. Mr. Swallow said they look for the best soil and getting a street layout that would be efficient and not drive up the cost. The only inefficacy is keeping the existing house, which takes up 3-4 lots and the cost of demolition and restoration of the land, the owners believed the house has value and is more beneficial to keep the house. Mr. Buchvalt stated they will also have to address the staff comment letter and the circulation of traffic.

Jane Benning, 3111 Douglas Road, stated her concern is this is the last open space with Allentown preserved parkland there and the Wildlands conservancy was interested in this property. With the MS4 you must be concern about stormwater as Lehigh Street floods constantly and not sure if engineers calculate the stormwater not sure if the removal of trees is figured in. Mr. Buchvalt said there are different calculations that are run, and removal of trees is figured in. Ms. Benning pointed out there is a stream flowing through the property, but not sure if there are seeps or wetland. Mr. Buchvalt said there would be a wetland lineation that any areas would be mapped out if they do exist. Ms. Benning noted concern about the event of an emergency with one way in and one way out, the event of trees falling across the roads, PPL lines, and school busses not having access is not a good situation.

David Melman, 1050 N. 19th Street, speaking on behalf of the city's Environmental Advisory Council of which he is a member, has concerns about the environmental impact this development will have and questioned if an environmental impact study has been done. Mr. Buchvalt stated he is not sure one is required by the ordinance. Mr. Melman said they would like to advocate for one to be done and available to the public and EAC for review. With the issues of soil erosion, habitat destruction, soil pollution and stormwater issues that would potentially come from this type of project, especially the impact it would have on those living below the mountain with stormwater increase. An

environmental study has to be done and no approval should be on the table, until done and the public, EAC and interested parties have time to review.

Diana Fandl, 2434 26th Street SW, indicated 44 houses is too many and summarized what happened in the past. Nothing in the neighborhood has changed since the last meetings. A hydrological study needs to be done, less impervious groundcover and better conditions for stormwater management to prevent flooding down to Emaus Avenue needs to be addressed. Ms. Fandl continued by pointing out with the influx of traffic from I-78, cars and tractor trailers, traversing the neighborhood causing property damage using the streets to turn around and the apartment residents avoiding Emaus Avenue. Ms. Fandl also referred to the last plan submitted where building was proposed on the slope. Mr. Buchvalt answered what was done with that plan they were asked to condense the development down. If the slopes in the area exceed what is permitted to be developed in the ordinance they will need to deal with that. They have a lot of engineering and work to do and must take that into consideration. Ms. Fandl stressed it would be a problem getting school busses and fire trucks up there. It is hard to get one car through if cars are parked on both sides.

Arthur Hinkle, 2649 28th Street SW, concurred the streets are not wide enough for emergency vehicles. Mr. Hinkle pointed out he has lived in the area his entire life and noted north of this parcel there is a rock formation located on city property and the potential lawsuits from children playing on the rocks and getting hurt.

Randy Wagner, 2612 Appel Street, which is at the intersection of Appel Street and Barnes Lane, lived there 45 years and asked what the square footage of the houses will be and what is the cost. Mr. Swallow answered don't know. Mr. Wagner summarized this is one of the last green spaces in the City and this development is taking everything away from the residents of Allentown and leave the few spots alone that are needed.

Aloma Zampell, 2648 Appel Street, which is a dead-end street and lives across from a proposed entrance. She states she parks her car on the street as she does not have a garage and is concerned cars will constantly go by her house. It might be 13 acres of land, but 44 houses are too many. In the winter she needs to wait to get plowed out and cars parked on both sides, garbage trucks cannot get through.

Terry Erney, 2606 Fernor Street, at the corner of 26th & Appel. The neighborhood has changed a lot with the advent of I-78 and the traffic flow. He agrees some type of development is going to happen and stressed some type of comprehensive plan is needed for the problematic traffic and figure out how to make this work. Mr. Buchvalt explained the process the developer needs to go through and figure a way to please everyone.

Janet Gehringer, 2524 Barnes Lane, thanked the developer for leaving the house, that pleases the entire neighborhood. First, she would like the environmental analysis to happen because at the entrance of her driveway proposed is a drainage ditch with old growth trees that was not clear cut and currently does not flood. Ms. Gehringer continued by explaining the water movement and the tunnel under the highway and when it floods where does the water go. Also, she pointed out if that part of the forest is taken away it will create problems with four wheelers, motorcycles and jeeps that go under the highway getting up into

that section. Ms. Gehringer asked if the houses will be having garages or park on the street. Mr. Swallow said I imagine. Mr. Buchvalt summarized at this point the intent is to carve up the lots put in the streets and houses will be sold or built by the homeowner? Mr. Swallow said they are not that far. Ms. Gehringer asked will there be a potential of buying lots or one developer. Mr. Buchvalt said standard models or residents can build what they want. Christian Brown said the ordinance calls for off street parking. Mr. Buchvalt said two stalls per house. Discussion continued on the Zoning and issues that may arise and if a variance will be needed. Ms. Gehringer questioned the possibility of surveying neighboring parcels and shared an Environmental Impact Study from 1977 which she realizes has no impact and is not valid.

Since this is at a sketch plan level, no action of the Planning Commission is required.

Allentown Affordable Housing Project, 332 N. Front Street,
LMA-2019-00016, sketch plan review requested by Home Leasing, LLC.

The application proposes to construct a three (3) story apartment complex with 25 one-bedroom and 20 two-bedroom units.

Megan Houppert of Home Leasing and Jeffrey DeAngelo of Greenman Pedersen, Inc. addressed the Commission.

Ms. Houppert explained they are a development management and construction company based in Rochester, New York with properties in New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. They responded to an RFP for this parcel and they were selected to move forward in the process.

Mr. DeAngelo stated he is working on the project to develop the site and get through some of the struggles to maximize the number of units and making sure it meets the City requirements. There are some site constraints with the parcel located at the intersection of Gordon and Front Streets, that was formally a ribbon factory. It is just under an acre and being proposed is a three story multi-unit, multi-family building, 17,000 square feet with a total of 45 mixed units of one and two-bedroom units. There is common space and storage areas proposed in the current floor plans and there will be a maintenance area and office space. Mr. DeAngelo said overall the staff comment letters are things that will be addressed in the future. Zoning relief will be requested for two side yard and one front yard setbacks as well as the building coverage, number of units per lot and off-street parking. Site constraints include the grades along Gordon Street, proximity to the intersections and where they could propose driveway locations to maximize the number of units and the parking.

Ms. Houppert pointed out it is important to have a certain number of units to meet the threshold to afford a full-time manager on site. Typically parking utilization is about 40-50% and found urban setting residents use other form of transportations. There is interior bike storage in the building and other amenities for the residents. Mr. Buchvalt asked if it affordable. Ms. Houppert said yes. Mr. Buchvalt questioned is it limited to seniors? Ms. Houppert said no general occupancy.

Mr. DeAngelo mentioned the realignment of Gordon Street forced the minimum distance for the driveway and pushed the building toward the property line. To accommodate for this future right of way it made the site unsuitable for

townhouses and other options that were discussed with city staff.

Ms. Houppert showed a preliminary rendering of the building showing what typically is used for the siding on the outside, patios for all apartments and the community center on the corner.

Mr. Buchvalt asked about the parking and the possibility of shared parking with a nearby lot. Ms. Houppert said no. Discussion continued what will happen once Pump Place is completed what will the city do with the balance of the land. Mr. Messinger answered there are things being looked at but nothing really set in stone, the roadway will take up a lot of the land and continued by explaining some of the options. Christian Brown asked if the proposed plan will present any problems. Mr. Messinger said no, it takes care of the realignment of the roadway.

Mr. DeAngelo asked how far along is the design portion of Gordon Street and understands it is not as far along as Riverside Drive. Mr. Messinger concurred it's not far along as Riverside Drive, but preliminary enough to say that is the alignment that was agreed upon and a land swap done. As far as the elevations, really doubt very much will change.

Mr. Glazier asked about the nature of the RFP and why they believed they got the opportunity to develop this parcel. Ms. Houppert said she doesn't know who else responded but thinks what was attractive is they are proposing mixed income which is important to the City. The RFP response was townhomes and the parcel that was RFP is different than what it is now. Mr. Glazier asked if this is a city parcel. Mr. Williams concurred it is a Redevelopment Authority property in conjunction with the Community and Economic Development Office. The RFP was scored by a team from both offices and there were about ten responses. Mr. Glazier asked what the rents are going to be. Ms. Houppert said preliminary thought is they will be targeting households at 50, 60 & 80 percent of medium income, which would be about \$850-\$1200 a unit, all rents include utilities except cable or telephone.

Mr. Button asked who will own the building. Ms. Houppert said it will be owned by an LLC, with a Home Leasing investor with a 30-year regulatory agreement with PA Housing Finance Agency to maintain rent affordability. Ms. McElroy interjected there will also be a deed restriction on the property, where they cannot sell the property for 10 years.

Christian Brown commented on the staff comment on the source of funds and the requirements of the architectural compatibility with the area and compliance with the design guidelines. Density is a good thing, but think they have their work cut out for them.

Patricia Tomek, 127 W. Gordon Street stated she lives catty-corner of this property and commented the city took great care of this property. Parking is an issue now as Railroad Street and Limestone Street have little parking, so they park on Gordon Street. Mr. Tomek stated in the last 35 years the neighborhood has gone downhill and is looking to move out and not sure why someone would want to live there. Mr. Buchvalt commented that the redevelopment of the Neuweiler Brewery and the Waterfront may help this neighborhood.

Ms. Tomek stated she heard years ago the City was going to purchase her row of houses and wanted to know who she can talk to. Mr. Williams said he is not sure

how long ago and if it was a past leadership of the city, probably are not continuing and he has not heard of any property acquisition in that area. Ms. Tomek continued by pointing out some of the violence in the neighborhood and wondered if the applicants were aware of that. Mr. Buchvalt said they heard it now.

Christian Brown stated he lives on Gordon Street and if it is true that is why the City puts their focus on these neighborhoods with these types of projects that turn neighborhoods around.

Since this is at a sketch plan level, no action of the Planning Commission is required.

MR. BUCHVALT REOPENED THE FIRST ITEM ON TODAY'S AGENDA THAT WAS TABLED:

HAMILTON STREET OVERLAY DISTRICT REVIEW: Thomas Williams, 621 Hamilton Street, design review to erect an externally illuminated channel letter sign (2.42 ft. x 11 ft.) at front requested by Mohamed Hassan at the above address.

Mr. Hassan arrived at the meeting and apologized for being late.

Mr. Buchvalt referred to the staff review and wanted clarification on how the letters will be mounted, directly on the wall as individual letters or part of a channel sign. Mr. Hassan explained individual. Mr. Buchvalt asked if that is what we are looking for. Ms. Woodward said the preferred is individual letters. Discussion continued on the font and what type are easier to read and what it will look like. Christian Brown asked how far the letters will come off the building and suggested not too far off as it would cast a shadow. Mr. Hassan agreed whatever they want it he will make it.

Christian Brown made a MOTION to approve the sign with the clarification the sign will be mounted as individual letters and is found to be consistent with the Hamilton Street Design Guidelines. Mr. Glazier seconded. Motion passed.

New Business

Ms. Woodward explained each member found in their packet information on the procedure of the Hamilton Street Overlay District and is reverting to how the ordinance is written. If the application is submitted within twenty days of the Planning Commission meeting it will be placed on the agenda and advisory comments sent to Zoning and the applicant after the meeting. If application falls outside the twenty-day period, Planning staff will prepare comments and make recommendations to Zoning and a Zoning Officer will determine whether the application meets the requirement to grant a zoning permit. This process will be revisited during the update of the Zoning Ordinance.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Marsteller, Recording Secretary