

Re: City Place

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION REPORT

The following is a summary of the public meeting that was held to discuss the proposed R4C project to be located in the 400 block of South Fifth Avenue. It was attended by members of the development team and the public.

NOTICES: 2,019 notices were sent by a combination of mail, email and personal delivery.

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES (not including development team): 21

MEETING DATE/LOCATION: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 at 6:00 p.m., Ann Arbor Public Library

Alex de Parry, developer, opened the meeting by explaining that its purpose was to present the proposed R4C project and to answer any questions that attendees might have. He then turned the meeting over to Brad Moore, of J. Bradley Moore and Associates and the project's architect, who explained, with the aid of drawings, what can be built on the site without variances. The drawings showed, and Brad explained in greater detail, two buildings with basements on the site, each at three stories high with 12 units in each building, four 6-bedroom units per floor. A parking lot with 36 spaces would separate the two buildings and there would be 3 curb cuts. The entrance to each building would face the parking lot. Brad also explained the building's setbacks and height, including the parapet at the top to hide the mechanical units on the roof.

Attendee Question: Why is the parking lot between the buildings? Brad answered that Midwestern Consulting completed the site plan based on city requirements, including drainage and setbacks. Alex also explained that a single building would become too long and narrow because the minimum setbacks would change.

Attendee Question: Would the target market essentially be students? Alex answered yes, that the market for 6 bedroom units was different from the market he had hoped to reach with the original proposal, but he added that each bedroom would be unlike the 6 bedroom units that are currently being built in that each bedroom in the proposed project would have its own bath, a small refrigerator and microwave.

Attendee Question: How noisy will the compressors on the roof be and is there anything that can be done to lessen the noise? Brad explained that each unit will have its own compressor, but reiterated that the compressors will be concealed by the 42" high parapet and that the parapet also acts as a noise buffer. Alex confirmed that the units he chooses to install will be as quiet as possible.

Attendee Question: Will there be any landscaping? Brad showed the audience a preliminary landscaping plan prepared by Midwestern Consulting and explained that it showed what is required by code. Alex added that additional foundation plantings would be added to the site plan.

Attendee Question: How many bedrooms and residents are in the existing houses? There are 45 bedrooms in the existing houses. 60 to 70 residents live in them at any given time.

Attendee Question: How many parking spaces are currently on the site? There are 52 parking spaces currently on site.

Attendee Question: What are the proposed rents? Alex answered between \$700 and \$800 per bedroom.

Attendee Question: Has financing for the project been secured? Alex answered yes.

Attendee Question: Has Alex looked into current vacancy rates? Alex answered that he has done a thorough analysis of the market.

Attendee Question: Will each unit be individually metered? Alex answered yes.

Attendee Question: Has Alex built other buildings? Alex explained that he will not be building the project. It will be bid out. The followup question was had he bid out projects of this size? Alex answered yes, many.

Attendee Question: Will there be places for bicycles and recycling? Alex answered yes.

Attendee Question: Will the units be furnished? Alex answered no.

Attendee Comment: This project seems more like high end student housing and does not seem to be affordable housing. Alex explained that comparable housing ranges from \$600 to \$1100 per month based on the configurations.

Attendee Question: Will there be a common kitchen? Alex reiterated that each unit will have a common kitchen and living space.

Attendee Question: Will there be management? Alex answered there will be on site management.

Attendee Concern: The project appears to ignore the Central Area Plan and it should pay attention to the character of the neighborhood. Alex explained that the drawing Brad presented was merely conceptual and that the building can be made to appear in any number of styles. Another attendee followed up by suggesting Alex look at the style of Wycliffe, and Alex agreed.

Attendee Question: Will fire safety issues be addressed? Alex answered yes.

Attendee Question: With every unit having a bathroom, would the city's sewer system be overloaded? Brad explained that the city required Alex to hire a company to determine if there was adequate sewer capacity and had found that there is.

Attendee Question: Where does the wastewater go? Alex and Brad explained there is underground stormwater retention.

Attendee Question: Since the project has 36 spaces, how would additional parking be handled if needed? Alex answered he had conducted an informal survey of his current residents and found that many use busses and other forms of transportation, and he expects that the location will likewise encourage the use of public transportation and other means.

Attendee Question: How does the style fit in with the neighborhood? Alex and Brad both explained that the zoning ordinance drives what can be done on the site, but reiterated that the drawings presented were conceptual and that the style could be modified. A followup question was: Why does it have to be a box? Alex and Brad again reiterated that the drawing was conceptual and that facades could be broken up in various ways.

Attendee Comment: The first version of City Place (i.e., the PUD proposal) was nice. It had the appearance of row houses. The commenter would like to see similar indentations on the new R4C project. Alex and Brad again explained that indentations and perhaps bay windows were possible.

Attendee Question: Could the project contain units with less than 6 bedrooms so that it provides a better mix? Alex stated that his preference has always been to provide a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units, but that the existing zoning limits the number of units that can be built to 24, thus making it unfeasible to decrease the number of units.

Attendee Comment: Those of us who are trying to make a neighborhood don't want apartments. Alex reminded the commenter that apartments already exist in the location and throughout most of the neighborhood.

Attendee Question: Could the existing homes be renovated and carriage houses added to the back of the property, thus providing a compromise between those who want the existing homes saved and the developer who wants additional units? Alex explained that it would not meet zoning requirements as most of the houses are non-confirming.

Attendee Question: Could the existing houses be lifted so that underground parking could be built? Alex said that this could not be done under R4C zoning.

Attendee Question: Could the existing streetscape be saved without connecting the buildings? Alex explained that an alternate PUD project is being explored with neighbors, one that keep a significant portion of the existing houses. He said that many additions had been made to the existing houses and that the additions would be eliminated, leaving the original front elevation and sides and incorporating them into a building.

Attendee Question: If this were to happen, could the buildings remain unconnected? Alex explained that the buildings would be connected, but that the connectors would be at the back and the rear architecture would mimic the front. He added that the rear would include courtyards and open space. Brad added that if the buildings were unconnected, there are safety issues that would have to be addressed and each building would have to have two staircases.

Attendee Question: How high will the porches be? Alex answered that he wants the building to be handicap accessible and Brad answered that the porches would be approximately 12" off the ground.

Attendee Comment: The idea of incorporating the existing houses seems like an effort to achieve a common goal.

Attendee Question: Would the density of the revised PUD, incorporating the existing houses, be the same as the R4C? If not, how many bedrooms would be in the PUD proposal? Alex answered that the revised PUD would be a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units for a total of about 60 units and 170 bedrooms.

Attendee Question: Would the revised PUD include affordable units? Alex answered yes.

Attendee Comment: Mix of units is better than 6 bedroom units but increased density is objectionable.

Attendee Comment: Mix of units is better than 6 bedroom units, the increased density will attract a nice mix of tenants. Commenter said, "We have no problem with increased density."

Attendee Comment: The R4C project is an abomination and called it "Sewer Place." Commenter wants to satisfy the Central Area Plan, preserve the integrity of the neighborhood, designate the houses historic and keep them.

Attendee Comment: Expressed anger about the existing zoning and said directly to Alex, "Any jerk-off can build a piece of crap. You should do something meaningful with your life." Alex responded by asking that we agree to disagree respectfully.

Attendee Comment: Told Alex, "You need to compromise because we're holding the reins." Alex explained that he is willing to compromise but his concern is that the neighbors themselves can't agree on what they want, and that 20 people can have 20 differing opinions. He further stated that we all need to realize that compromise means that none of us gets everything we want, but again stated that he is willing to proceed with a revised PUD which would incorporate the houses if the neighbors can agree on what they want to see.

Attendee Comment: Incorporating the streetscape would meet one of the Central Area Plan's goals of preserving neighborhood character. Alex agreed.

Attendee Question: When would the R4C project be started? In other words, when would the houses be demolished? Alex said that he could not give a specific date, but that he expects the project to be completed by September 2010.

Attendee Question: Was the R4C project submitted? Alex answered yes and that the meeting was part of the requirement. He added that the minutes of this meeting would be incorporated in the submittal and that planning would most likely review it in March and City Council would most likely review it in May.

Attendee Question: When does the developer have to decide on the R4C project or the modified PUD? Alex answered that time is very short. He is willing to continue discussion on the modified PUD but will continue to work on the R4C submittal, which would have to be completed by March 2.

The meeting concluded with several of the immediate neighbors deciding that they would meet on Sunday, February 15 to discuss their ideas and attempt to reach a consensus that they could present to Alex. After their discussion, Alex and Brad would join their meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

SIGN IN SHEET

18	Name	A
1	Donna Martha Luczak	
2	Tom and Susan Whitaker	
3	Bob / Bobb	
4	USA STELLER	
5	Jean FINGEREE	
6	GENE & ROSE WILLSON	
7	Nahara Basu Majumdar	
8	RAY DETER	
9	MIKE BAUGLIN	
10	Kevin Hopkins	
11	Mary Fulkerson	
12	Judith Spurr	
13	Deanna Pelger	
14	Justine Locketh	
15	Ellen Fransburgh	
16	Shirley Zempel	
17	Tom Whitaker	
18	Jane Rutherford	

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CITY PLACE

CITY PLACE SIGN IN SHEET

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