

December 26, 2008

Re: The Madison Citizen Participation Report

A second neighborhood meeting was held in the spirit of the pending, but not yet effective, Citizen Participation Ordinance. A prior meeting was held on June 23, 2008 at the Downtown Branch of the Ann Arbor Public Library. 1,073 letters were sent to residents and community groups notifying them of the most recent meeting. The meeting was held at the Downtown Branch of the Ann Arbor Public Library on Tuesday December 23rd 2008. Eleven people attended and three others arranged to speak with me individually, as I offered to do in the letter, as they were unable to attend the meeting. A summary of those conversations follows in this report.

In addition to the neighborhood meetings, we have conducted a great deal of community outreach over the course of the project. Communication with our neighbors and other groups with an interest in this area has been a priority throughout the design process of The Madison. Prior to the inception of the design of the prior version of the project and during the redesign of the current version, we have met with those neighbors interested in doing so and numerous other community groups, business owners and residents. Letters were sent to all of the owner occupants, even though there are only a few, along our block of S Fourth and S. Fifth Avenues explaining our plans to redevelop the property and inviting them to meet with us individually to discuss the project if they would like. Following is a summary of a few of the conversations that have occurred with owners in the area.

Walt Spiller - Our neighbor to the north on S. Fifth Ave. Mr. Spiller is one of the few owner occupants in the area. He lives in a former single family home now converted to a multiple family dwelling which he owns. He also owns a number of rental houses across the street on S. Fifth Ave. which, pursuant to his description of his typical tenants, would be competing properties with The Madison. After discussing our conceptual plans with him, his comments were encouraging. He suggested that the area was in need of redevelopment given the dilapidated state of the properties, the industrial nature of the historical uses and the history of crime and drugs that has been prevalent in this area in the past. He also suggested that he was of the opinion that living in an urban environment such as this came with the understanding that new and taller buildings would be developed around him and it was appropriate for this site. We have had many conversations with him since and have made changes to the plans based on his comments, such as elimination of outdoor uses adjacent to his house (outdoor patio, balconies) that would, in his opinion, potentially be noise generating to a degree he found undesirable, We have also designed the building to create as much space between his house and The Madison as possible. The building is approximately 50 feet from his house at its closest point. When we discussed the original plan with Mr. Spiller (the 14 story version) he commented that 14 stories was too tall for him to support, but something half as tall seemed more appropriate. We have also addressed this concern by reducing the height to much less than half as tall as it is now just four stories tall. After meeting with Mr. Spiller again individually, his comments to us have now changed such that he seems to think that anything greater than the R4C permitted height is excessive.

Beverly Strassmann – Our neighbor on the east side of S. Fifth Ave., a few houses north of The Madison and adjacent to the Perry School. We have repeatedly offered to meet with Mrs. Strassmann to discuss her concerns with the project. She continues to decline to meet with us. She has insisted that any redevelopment of the site should only be for the construction of single family homes. The main concern she has expressed to us is that construction of a building similar to The Madison will “destroy the neighborhood” as home owners would not be willing to invest in their properties if such a tall building were located in the neighborhood. This concept is somewhat perplexing to us as it is contrary to her statements to have invested significantly in her house, which is located immediately adjacent to the Perry School, where the Perry School is significantly taller relative to her house than the Madison would be to others. She has also voiced her opinion that the project will attract only students as residents. Mrs. Strassmann was not in attendance at our most recent neighborhood meeting and we have, accordingly, offered to meet with her individually if she would like. After the most recent Planning Commission working session, I offered to make myself available to discuss the project with her. She became verbally abusive and continued her refusal to speak with me about her concerns or ways we might work to address them in the redesigned project. Claudius Vincenz, who lives at the same residence as Mrs. Strassmann, has echoed her comments in his.

Mary Ann Jacobson – Owner and resident of an apartment building on the west side of S. Fifth Ave. north of The Madison. Mrs. Jacobson left a voicemail message in response to the letter I sent to owners in the area expressing her lack of support for the project (14 story version). Her comments were that she thought the area was in need of redevelopment as the buildings are “pretty nasty” but she wants to see them redeveloped as “individual homes”. She also assured us that she had spoken with the city and had been informed that the “city is not going to allow it (The Madison).”

Rick Williams – 543 S. Fourth Ave. Mr. Williams expressed support for the project and submitted a letter indicating such. He sited in our conversation the poor condition of the existing buildings, that a building of this nature seemed to make sense here and the need for reinvestment in this area.

A second neighborhood meeting held on December 23, 2008 generated the following discussions and comments.

Comments from those who made arrangements to speak with us prior to the meeting.

Evelyn & Richard Lossia – 600 S Main St. They were very supportive of the project. Mrs. Lossia commented on the run-down condition of the existing houses and the industrial building, the need for reinvestment in this area of town and the need for more housing downtown.

Cathleen Connell – 445 S. Fourth Ave. Mrs. Connell indicated she was “mildly supportive” of the project and would be willing to pass out flyers and help market the property at the School of Public Health where she works, stating that this type of housing would be appealing to people she works with. She said she walks her dog past the property each day. Her preference would be to have the property redeveloped as single family homes or possibly as for sale condos but understood that may not be economically feasible. She also noted that based on her own

experience, the houses on the property would not be viable to be rehabilitated in their existing condition. We discussed the proposed architectural style of the building and she expressed a slight preference to a pitched roof look versus a more modern style but said that was of little importance and a style that appeals to the target market is more important.

Mariah Cherem – Marshal Ct. Mrs. Cherem expressed tentative support for the project. She wanted to speak with a friend who is an urban planner prior to formalizing her opinion. Ms. Cherem identified herself as a young professional and member of our target market segment. Our conversation touched on a number of relevant topics including: the lack of high quality housing that is appealing to YP's, affordability issues for housing in the downtown area and the lack of her YP friends who continue to live in Ann Arbor due to the housing situation. She lives in an old single family home and talked at length of the energy inefficiency in her house and many like it. She works from home and during the winter has two sheets of plastic covering the windows and still wears a winter hat and fingerless gloves for working on her computer while the furnace runs full speed all day.

Comments from the neighborhood meeting – Following is a summary of the discussion.

Concerns were expressed in regard to the floodplain given existing issues on some properties in the area. This is an issue we have been able to address in improving upon the existing condition of the property by approximately 100% in terms of storage capacity and by over ten fold in peak hour runoff.

Salient facts such as the number of units, entrances and parking capacity were discussed as were anticipated rental rates. One person suggested that every resident that wanted a parking space should be provided with one as she felt the parking system downtown was too congested as is. We are providing for over 1.5 spaces per unit, the typical multi-family standard, to address this issue as much as possible. The existing conditions and rental units on site were discussed as well.

Utility capacity was inquired about and we explained that the systems planning department would be modeling and reviewing the capacity requirements and we would work with them to address any shortcomings.

A concern was expressed that one person thought the housing on site was affordable in their opinion and they didn't want to see that lost. A discussion ensued regarding the condition of the rental units and whether they were affordable because of their poor condition or affordable by design. This led to a discussion of the lack of high quality affordable housing downtown and our addition of such units to the housing stock.

There was discussion among the attendees about the 4 Eleven Loft development.

The issue of balconies was discussed and the general consensus seemed to be that people do not like the idea of balconies for fear that they will look "junky" over time.

One person expressed concern that tenants would double up in bedrooms. We committed to not allowing that as a policy and that we would not sign leases to multiple "un-related" individuals for the same bedroom.

Many people expressed their opinion that single family, owner occupied housing creates stability in areas whereas "transient" rental housing does not and that too many renters in an area would ruin it. We believe that not to be the case. This area is already primarily rental units which has not resulted in a lack of stabilization.

Many attendees expressed their opinion that a four story building was too tall and that a PUD was inappropriate in an area such as this outside the DDA. This is an issue that we have already addressed since our previous submission and one that we are not able to address any more than we have done. This would not be at all out of scale with the surrounding buildings that exist today being approximately one floor taller than the Law School Development Office and shorter than the Perry School.

One attendee discussed the size of The Madison in relation to buildings in her neighborhood larger than the single family home she lives in. She commented that their neighborhood was not destroyed by such buildings as some suggested this would do. She thought The Madison would act as a buffer to the residents to the north from the potential encroachment of commercial or institutional uses given the existing zoning and buildings on site today.

A theme that came up a number of times was the question of consistency with the Central Area Plan (CAP). Some expressed their opinion that this was contrary to the CAP as its primary goal is to protect the single family homes close to downtown. This of course generated much discussion. We expressed our belief that the project as proposed is consistent with the CAP and that being consistent does not mean being the same. There are many goals of the CAP that are met by development of The Madison and we believe it is in whole consistent with it.

A brief discussion of the uses that are permitted as a matter of right based on the existing zoning occurred. There was consensus that the M1 uses and other forms of multiple family housing permitted in the R4C district were undesirable. However the consensus among the attendees was that they preferred single family homes or for sale condos rather than any other use that might be proposed. We discussed the economic realities of both of those uses and the resulting practical impossibility of their development given the value of the existing income producing properties on site.

The final issue that was raised was the projected lifespan of the building. Although we do not have a specifically calculated lifespan, our best guess is that a building of this nature would last 100 years or more.



March 1, 2009

Mrs. Alexis DiLeo
City of Ann Arbor, Planning Department
100 N. Fifth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Mrs. DiLeo,

In an effort to keep you abreast of our ongoing efforts to provide opportunities for input and suggestions from the community at large, following is a brief description of activities since our last neighborhood meeting on December 23, 2008.

Noting the absence of Ms. Beverly Strassmann from the Dec. 23rd meeting and knowing her interest in the project, we reached out to Ms. Strassmann via a letter dated Dec. 26, 2008, a copy of which was sent to you, again offering to meet with her. She declined to meet with us as she has done in regard to all previous such offers.

On February 26, 2009 we held another neighborhood open house at the Ann Arbor Public Library's downtown branch. Seven individuals filled out the sign-in sheet and a few others were present but did not sign in. All of those that spoke at the meeting expressed support for the project. Discussion focused on the need to increase density in the downtown area, support for this project in particular in that it would address that need while enhancing a poorly maintained area and improve the streetscape, and the sustainable and energy efficient aspects of the project.

We have also spoken with Susan Pollay of the DDA, as requested by staff, who reviewed the plan, particularly the streetscape improvements, in light of the DDA's future plans. She confirmed that the plans are consistent with and will enhance the efforts of the DDA in better connecting the south end of Main Street with the area near Packard and Division where new streetscape work is pending. She also approved the design of the pocket park with the benches and sidewalk meandering in and out of the Right-of-way.

We also continue to be in regular contact with Walt Spiller, our next door neighbor on S. Fifth Ave. who is now attempting to coordinate a private meeting with him and a few others from the neighborhood. We anticipate that meeting will occur on Wed. March 4th.

Best regards,

Jeffrey P. Helminski

Community Supporters of The Moravian PUD

Ken Fischer, Resident 2115 Melrose Avenue, President University Musical Society, Executive Committee member of Ann Arbor SPARK, participant in Washtenaw County's Community Success process, cabinet member of Washtenaw United Way, board member of the Cultural Alliance of Southeastern Michigan, and member of the Arts Alliance's Cultural Leaders Forum
Ellie Sarras, former director of Main Street Association

Peter Schork, Owner, Café Habana, President, Ann Arbor State Bank

Joe Ferrario, Resident 2969 Heather Way, President of multiple manufacturing businesses

David Crouse, VP of Engineering, Sithe Global, Resident and downtown employer

Kristne McCardle, Creative Director, Ann Arbor Film Festival

Kevin Hawkins, Resident 439 Third St.

Peter Baillia, Resident 1979 McKinley

Nick Contaxes, Resident 522 Hill St.

Bill Krebaum, Resident 1484 W. Liberty

Mike Forgacs, Resident 112 N. 7th Street

Molly McFarland, Resident 1611 ½ Jackson Ave.

Kyle Mazurek, Resident

William J. Davis Jr., Owner, Arbor Springs Water

Wendy Johnson, Owner Poshh (clothing boutique)

Laurie Blakeney, Resident, 530 N Ashley, Owner Ann Arbor School of Yoga

Britten Stringwell, Local Artist, The Yellow Barn Organizer

Laurie Prager, Resident, Board Member UMMA

Brianna Fritz, Resident, Campaign Manager (Carsten Honke)

Sam Valenti IV, Resident 113 ½ W. Liberty, Owner Ghostly International

Jesse Bernstein, Resident 3110 Bolgos Circle

Patrick Macoska, Resident 1916 Sunrise Street

Chris Easthope, Resident

Conan Smith, Resident 234 8th St.

Alan Aldworth,

Amanda Uhle

Andrea Steves, Resident

Andrew Hauptman

Andy Labarre

Britten Stringwell

Catherine Hauptman

David McNamara, Resident

Donald Harrison

Deb Pearson

Edward Shaffran

Elizabeth Palms

Gale Redding

Greg Lobdell

Lee Gunn

Jeremy Peters

Lee Berry

Linda Brown
Louis Callaway
Matt Turner
Marsha Chamberlin, Resident, Director Ann Arbor Art Center
William Milliken
Paul Ganz
Gene Ragland
Russ Collins, Director Michigan Theater
Rob Cleveland
Stewart W. Beal, President, Beal Properties
Patrick J. Cavanaugh, Resident, VP United Bank & Trust
Jim Ryans, Resident 350 Pinewood St.
Edward Surovell, Owner, Edward Surovell Realtors
Rebecca Lopez Kriss, Resident
Geoff Gaedner, Resident 1979 McKinley
Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce
Main Street Area Association
Rick Williams, 543 S. Fourth Ave. (adjacent property owner)
Rita Filippini, Resident 1395 Millbrook Trail, Owner Brazamerica & Gentle Laser Body Care
Neil Loney, Owner, Rogow & Loney P.C.
Elisabeth Magiera, Resident 2926 Leslie Park Circle, Owner, Copernicus European Delicatessen
David William Minehart, Resident 411 S. Fifth Ave.
Valerie Sathe Brugeman, Resident 1537 McIntyre
Fernanda Quadros, Resident 3081 Signature St.
Monica Sendor, Resident 616 Lawrence
Cristine Santanna, Resident 2141 Glencoe Hills #11
Doug McClure, Resident 5425 Scio Church Rd.
Robert A. Boonin, Resident 1545 Chapleau Dr.
Nancy Shore, Resident 2020 Winewood Ave.
Stephen D. Schmier, Resident 645 N. 4th Ave, Unit D
Jane Lumm, Resident 3075 Override Dr.
Ed Shaffran, downtown landlord and employer
Jim Zamberlin, Resident 1403 W. Huron St.
Jeffrey C. Higgins, Resident
Hongbin Chen, Resident 3705 Fox Hunt Dr.
James H. Getty, Resident 1124 Kay Pkwy
Joshua Brugeman, Resident 1537 McIntyre
Sarah Ryans, Resident 350 Pinewood St.
Deb Pearson, Marketing Director, Bluestone Realty Advisors
James Ahnert, Resident 655 Barber
Barbara A. Roberts, Resident 2441 Bunker Hill
Jeff Wenzinger, Resident
Arnold Geldermans, Resident 2559 Antietam
Vita M. Ciemiorek, Resident 2605 Fenwick Ct.
John Langs, 206 S. Fifth Ave.
Gretchen Meyer, Resident 1726 Fair St. Unit 1

Jeremy Peters, Resident, Head of licensing Ghostly International, downtown employee
Gale Redding, Hooper Hathaway (downtown employee)
Jason Costello, Owner Cabrio Properties, downtown landlord and employer
Luz Glover, Director of Accounts, Oxford Companies Ann Arbor employee
Maura Thomson, Resident 2321 Devonshire
Dan Glazer, Owner/Manager Café Habana
Laurie Gendron, William Davidson Institute at the UofM

Re: the Madison / The Moravian

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2-26-09

N'hood meeting

sign-in sheet

provided by Jeff Helminski via email 3/3/09