

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION MEETING  
THE GALLERY CONDOMINIUMS

MEETING DATE: February 9, 2017

MEETING LOCATION: Office of Ann Arbor Builders, Inc., 202 E. Madison, Ann Arbor, MI

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

Alex de Parry, developer, and Brad Moore, architect, opened the meeting at 7pm for questions.

First Question: One attendee asked if the building was built to the lot line, if the balconies overhang the sidewalk, and if provisions have been made for drainage.

Answer: Brad Moore showed the closest point of the building to be 3 feet from the sidewalk and the balconies at 3 feet wide, so the balconies do not extend over the sidewalk. In fact, the building is set back farther than would be normally allowed as we are trying to match setbacks on the north and east.

Mr. Moore further explained that there is currently no storm water management on the site whatsoever so all the water flows off the site. We will be required to hold and retain all water that falls on the site so that it doesn't go into the floodplain for a period of 24 to 48 hours. We plan on doing that with a subterranean vault or tank that will have a perforated bottom so that some of the water can be absorbed underground before it's discharged into the storm sewer. The idea is to store the water on site until the city's storm water drains can clear volume. So we'll be improving the drainage and storm water retention dramatically over what presently exists.

Question: One attendee described how the area along First Street and the railroad tracks flood during heavy rains.

Answer: Brad said the parking level – at its lowest point – will be even with the current high point of the 100 year floodplain and it will rise another foot as you come around the corner, so in a 100-year event, there shouldn't be water coming into the garage.

Question: One attendee asked if the building meets the current zoning.

Answer: Brad explained that it does and that we will not be requesting a rezoning.

Question: Another attendee asked if these will be condos or apartments and what the price range will be.

Answer: Alex de Parry answered that the units will be condos and that while pricing has not been ascertained, we are trying to target pricing to begin somewhere in the high \$300's for about 1000 square feet.

Question: One attendee asked if there are mechanical operations at the penthouse level.

Answer: There may be some condensers but every unit will have its own air handler in the unit so there's not a joint piece of HVAC equipment on the roof.

Question: Is it true that some area has been dedicated for a greenway?

Answer: Brad showed where we would grant a public easement for a greenway.

Question: What will be the total number of units?

Answer: The number of units will be 22 – 7 on three floors and 1 unit on the penthouse level.

Question: How many parking spaces? 22 to 23. The idea is one space for each unit.

How many residents will there be? We can't control that. The two bedroom units could have a single person, a couple, a couple with one or two children, or a single person with a roommate.

Question: Will the greenway easement be permanent.

Answer: Yes, it be part of the master deed.

Question: Have you met with the greenway people? Have you met with the Allen Creek Greenway Conservancy?

Answer: Alex stated that he has met with Joe O'Neil and Connie Pulcifer and has informed them that we will be granting an easement for the green belt.

Question: Are you proposing any changes to the intersection?

Answer: No. Any traffic that leaves our site can't get to the intersection because it's one way. Transportation will review the project and will require a traffic study if they feel it's necessary.

Question: When you look around at neighboring buildings, is this compatible with Ashley Mews?

Answer: Yes, we did a study of the First Street character.

Question: Where are any heating and cooling units that will make noise be located?

Answer: We don't have a central unit like that do at Baker Commons. We haven't yet enlisted a mechanical engineer but compressors would be on the roof. Mostly likely there will be at least four, one on each side of the building. De Parry explained that we used the Carrier Infinity series at The Mark, and they are so quiet that you can walk by a unit that's running and not hear it.

Question: What's the siding material on the penthouse?

Answer: It will be the same cementitious panels as the bays. The same material is on The Mark if anyone wants to see it. The Design Review Board has suggested that the penthouse be the same color as the bays. At The Mark, the HDC, which had jurisdiction, wanted the penthouses to be the grayish color that you see.

A comment was made that 70 new homes have been put in the floodplain the last year and that the city is “misguided” in allowing these homes to be built and that they will be inundated when the storms come. The person said that when you build in the floodplain, you’re blocking the homeowners upstream and obstructing where the water would normally go so that people who didn’t flood will. He wants to make sure more people aren’t put “in harm’s way.”

Same person was concerned about parking and where new residents with more than 1 car would park. We are confident that occupants will not need more than one car per dwelling.

Comment – water runs down the tracks. What are you doing to prevent flooding?

Answer: We are reducing the runoff that exists now. We can’t absorb the water that runs to us from the tracks, but we are reducing the amount of water that runs to the tracks from the site.

Comment: One lady said that the floodway touches a corner of the building and the entire building is in the floodplain according to the FEMA map.

Answer: Our civil engineer will not let that happen. And the building will not be in the floodplain. Nor would the city permit any part of the building to be in the floodway.

Question from previous person: Does the city have access to FEMA maps?

Answer: We are required to use the data that the city has which is sometimes more accurate than FEMA maps. Brad then showed and explained the floodplain and floodway areas on the drawings he brought and said that the location will be verified by the city and the civil engineers and the MDEQ.

Comment: Flood insurance is going up by 25% a year and building should be stopped in the floodplain. Another way to have a greenway is to stop flooding and this negates a meaningful greenway.

Another attendee added that the floodplain is increasing.

Answer: We will comply with whatever Jerry Hancock sets as our standard. We don’t know what data he is using other than the data that he’s arrived at through his own studies and FEMA.

Comment: The Watershed Council has said we should be planning to a 500-year floodplain, not to a 100-year, and he is concerned that we’re going to get more storms and a lot of water. The building will accommodate a 500 year flood with only minor flooding in the garage level.

Question: How wide is the driveway?

Answer: 15 feet.

Follow-up question: Can it be narrowed bit a little?

Answer: We’re taking a look at that. Additionally, the current parking lot has grown over on to the railroad property and that pervious area will be replaced with green, pervious area. The new driveway will be pervious pavers.

Question: When is the Design Review Board meeting?

Answer: Two weeks ago.

Follow-up question: Will you go a second time?

Brad answered that it's up to Alex. Alex stated that we will go back to the Design Review Board for a second meeting.

Question: Will you have a green roof?

Answer: That's one thing we're considering for at least part of the roof.

Question: Did you have a meeting with the Old West Side Association and if so, what did they say about the project?

Answer: Yes, we met with some board members and they were supportive of the project.

Question: Is the building taller than Ashley Mews?

Answer: No, Brad showed a perspective in relation to Ashley Mews.

Question: Has the building on the corner of Jefferson and Ashley ever flooded?

Answer: No. The current building has never flooded although it is in the floodplain.

Several attendees asked that their email address not be made public, so email addresses have been deleted from the attendance sign in sheet.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

The meeting notes were prepared by Alex de Parry