

Lenart, Brett

From: Moore, Beth <bmoore@med.umich.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 12, 2019 11:32 AM
To: CityCouncil; Planning
Subject: New 19 story building on Washington at State

Dear City Council and Planning Committee,

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed construction of yet another high-rise apartment building in downtown Ann Arbor. One of my biggest concerns is the sheer size of the structure that is proposed with 19 stories being significantly taller than other nearby buildings. Additionally, as a member of the First United Methodist Church that is on the corner of Huron and State, our church has been literally surrounded by new construction. If this building goes up on the south side of our church, we will essentially lose all sunlight into the area for most of the year, which will significantly impact our energy costs and will impact the memorial garden which is a final resting place for so many of our church members. It would be devastating to see this garden become barren. I also worry significantly about the planned addition of so much more housing, when there is already a very large number of new housing buildings that have gone up in recent years without any consideration for making downtown more livable. I would be much more in favor of seeing a downtown grocery store go into this location—hopefully one that would not be taller than nearby structures. Ann Arbor is a charming community but it is losing much of that charm with the new “tunnel feeling” that one gets as they drive down Huron. As the University of Michigan is not significantly expanding the student population, this seems ill-advised.

I hope the city council and planning commission will consider other options for this space.

Sincerely,
Beth Moore

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Lenart, Brett

From: Sarah Nooden <snooden@umich.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2019 11:58 PM
To: CityCouncil; Planning
Subject: 19 story bldg & FUMC

Today I was unable to attend either meeting concerning the impact of the 19 story building on the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) across the street from the site, but I wish to express my concerns. I have been an Ann Arbor area resident for 54 years, a church member for 32, worked and shopped in Ann Arbor for 54 years. I have seen the impact of the Maynard St skyscraper has had on Ann Arbor (a fiasco and precedent & shady deal by the Republicans who passed it on a quiet August meeting day when Democrats were away on vacation in the 1960's).

Here are my concerns:

Is there an actual need to have a building (no less at 19 stories) at this location?

Was any consideration given to a much lower height to allow sunshine on the FUMC (also the Baptist church will be impacted)?

Was an environmental impact study made?

Was any consideration given to having a smaller footprint allowing setback for ecosystem services – to allow for mature tree canopies which, for free, cleans the air, and provides a more healthful ambiance.

Was any consideration given to the impact on the FUMC, a wonderful church that serves not only a wide Ann Arbor community, but also state, nationally and internationally ?

Was any consideration given to the fact the Baptist and Methodist churches will be totally surrounded by tall buildings and be mostly shaded year around?

Was any consideration given to how this building will negatively affect the local climate and quality of life?

- Washington (& State) Street has become very congested with cars and pedestrians, this will impact air quality and safety.

- The building will cast a huge shadow on the FUMC for most of the day year around. It will impact the heating, cooling and lighting of the church, impact parking, shade our Memorial Garden and the Street trees which need the light to survive. Also it will impact the spiritual aspect of the church as all the south facing rooms will be in the shadow.
- The church is about “light” and how can one spread the message of that light when rooms that now are full of sunshine that lift people's spirits will always be in shadow. Jesus, the great healer, whose healing brings people into the light. How can one “heal” without that noon day light. We don't want to be a dark church.
- I urge the city and the developer to reconsider the consequences of having a building such as this in this already extremely congested area and whether it is really “green” to go so high and consequent impact on the community.

Sarah Nooden

FUMC member since 1987

From: Brian Smith <bmsmith8014@yahoo.com>

Sent: Wednesday, January 23, 2019 12:47 PM

To: Cheng, Christopher <CCheng@a2gov.org>; Lenart, Brett <BLenart@a2gov.org>

Cc: Angie Smith <smitha8014@yahoo.com>; Peter Avram <pavram82@gmail.com>; Megan Avram <megan.avram@gmail.com>; Juliet Pressel <jeppressel@comcast.net>; Gloria Jones <gloria.kathleen.jones@gmail.com>; Rosemary Bogdan <rosemarybogdan@gmail.com>

Subject: Fw: Mtg with Brightdawn Developer and Midwestern Consulting

Dear Chris & Bret,

I wanted to send you a quick note to let you know that a group of neighbors from Forestbrooke met with the developer of proposed Brightdawn Village project last night, as well as their consultant, Midwestern Consulting. The meeting was not productive, in fact I think it is fair to say we were all frustrated by the tone and outcome. The developer (the Schwartz family) did not even give us the courtesy of showing up to the meeting in person, instead deciding to phone in.

We were eager to engage in dialogue and discussion around solutions to the issues the neighbors raised in the PC meeting. Instead, the members of the developer's family who phoned in hostilely argued with us saying "you just don't understand" when we tried to explain our concerns over the density of the project. They charged neighbors to explain why we won't support rezoning for additional density at the site, instead of coming in with solutions to the concerns they heard us all voice at the December Planning Commission meeting, and accused us of being against "those people" when we were questioning the affordable housing aspects of the project. We are not sure exactly what they meant by the phrase, but they made inference that the 40 additional units they are bargaining for are to be earmarked for affordable or workforce housing, and therefore (because we were not supporting the additional density) we are 'against' lower wage earners. This is the furthest from the truth if you know the history of the site. The developer has used both "affordable housing" or "workforce housing" but looking at the economics (as we pointed out at the last PC mtg and Chairman Milshteyn acknowledged) they will really be charging what is more akin to market rate or above for all of these units as compared to other apartments and rental homes available in the area.

As you may remember, this site was originally zoned R1C (single family) but was changed to R4B approx 10 yrs ago when the initial developer (Simpson Housing) was looking to build an affordable housing project on the site. And we welcomed the development. The neighbors feel we and the city have already made a significant concession to consent to the zoning change of 10 years ago. Frankly many neighbors are interested in potential development on Burton Road via new ownership (as we have had many problems with trash dumping, etc on the site) but do not feel rezoning to a higher density allowance is in the best interest of the city or the community. It is important to note as you did at the last PC mtg, part of the City Master Plan **currently** envisions this property to be single family housing. It is striking to me that you have recommended that Planning Commission **deny** the rezoning request and they are not following your recommendations.

As clearly communicated to the developer, we are significantly concerned with the proposed additional density for a variety of reasons, primary of which is its unreasonable impact on pedestrian & traffic safety (with hundreds of new cars cutting through Forestbrooke to avoid traffic on Packard/Carpenter/Washtenaw Ave, as well as the impact on neighborhood schools and the larger Ann Arbor community. We noted to the developer last night, that even though their current plan does not call for the opening of Eli / Burton Road, several city services have called for this (which we **strongly** oppose and City Council supported us on 10 years ago) but regardless the developer has not (at all) studied the potential traffic impact **in the Forestbrooke neighborhood** from this development when we all know drivers are not going to turn left on Packard and left on Carpenter to get to Washtenaw/US23 but instead they are going to turn right on Packard and Right on Brandywine and cut through the the neighborhood. Brandywine has already become a cut through for those trying to avoid the Carpenter/Washtenaw intersection as well as the neighborhoods to the South of Packard. In particular, we are concerned that the area school, streets, parks and natural environment will be over burdened, and that the location -- so close to the highway and so inaccessible to main roadways, is unfit for such a large project to be developed.

Tom Covert, from Midwestern, said he would be sending in responses to the questions PC asked at the last mtg and I assume they will seek to get this on the Planning Commission agenda for Feb 5 (they all but said so). I wanted to make sure that you accurately heard our (the neighbor's) impression of the meeting from last night.

Thank you

All the best, Brian Smith, 2803 Lillian Rd.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Brian Smith <bmsmith8014@yahoo.com>

To: Brian Smith' via Forestbrooke Brightdawn Development <forestbrooke-brightdawn-development@googlegroups.com>

Cc:

Sent: Wednesday, January 23, 2019, 9:36:59 AM EST

Subject: Mtg with Brightdawn Developer and Midwestern Consulting

Good morning all. I wanted to briefly update you on our meeting last night with the developer of the Brightdawn Project (the Schwartz family) and their consultant (Midwestern Consulting). The meeting was attended by the following neighbors: Peter Avram, Juliet & Jim Pressel, Rosemary Bogdan, Gloria Jones and myself. The meeting was "interesting" to say the least. The developer was combative and just could not understand why the neighborhood would not support the project as proposed. We, as a neighborhood group, were unified that our single biggest concern for the project as proposed, and the requested rezoning, was the density of the project and its many ancillary effects on the existing neighborhood. When the developer finally realized he was not going to bully us into agreeing with him, he took a rather condescending position and the meeting was effectively over from there. I want to thank all of the neighbors who came last night, as they spoke eloquently on our issues!

We were clear (crystal I would say) with both the developer and the Consultant that in no uncertain terms our single biggest issue is density (and its ancillary effects on a lot of other issues). As we all know there are really two key issues for us: density and opening of Burton Road to Eli. However, the discussion of opening Burton is not relevant (IMHO) with the developer as it gives him an item to trade to get his density (e.g., I will try to keep Burton closed if you agree to the density). He tried to bring it up, and we didn't fall for it. And frankly, the argument over Burton is not even really with the Planning Commission. The PC (and City Departments providing input into the Project Plan) are bent on opening Burton (as they were the last time) so our best chance of keeping it closed is with City Council (as they [City Council] has previously committed to keeping it closed in an open mtg).

Therefore, I think our best strategy at the next PC mtg is to remain united on fighting against the proposed density increase. We should think about how to best approach that at the next PC mtg. **The one piece of useful information I got from last night's meeting is the developer is trying to get on the February 5 Planning Commission agenda. We need to be ready for that and come out in force (as we did last time and more).**

We also learned last night (although I think we knew this) whether the PC approved the rezoning request or denies it, the issue will ultimately still go to City Council for decision (PC doesn't make this decision). The only way it does not go to City Council is if PC further tables the conversation (likely to pressure the developer to further engage with the neighbors to try to come up with some compromise).

Below are Gloria's notes of the meeting (thank you Gloria for doing that!). We should discuss how we speak on density at the next PC mtg.

We must keep up the good work we are all doing to make this project fit within the character of our little neighborhood so we can welcome it in as a new part of Forestbrooke without having to give up all we love about our hood or risking the safety of those in it.

Best, Brian

[Jan 22, 2019 Meeting with Brightdawn Developers and Neighborhood Representativess](#)