

Minutes TWNA
November 8, 2007

Steering Committee members present: Harriet Allen, Kathy Buchholz, Stan Carpenter, Doug Faulkner, Curtis Goodson, Jeremy Gragert, Peter Hable, Susan Kasik-Miller, Rick Kayser, Sue Kayser, Katie McQuillan, Pat Kurtenbach, Bob Schwartz, Catherine Sinkewicz.

Steering Committee members not present: Duane Hookom, Jim Massey.

Other Attendees: Mary Jo Adler, Sharon Ager, Mary Ellen Alea, Kathy Attermeier, Margaret Becker, Laurie Bieze, Judy Blackstone, Steven Bircher, Kelly Childs, Carlyn Conway, David Donnelly, Paula Dusick, Ken Fulgione, Ed Garlick, Mary Graff, Nick Halter, John Hanson, Katie Heller, Bernie Hoefgen, Karla Hoefgen, Paul Hoff, Rodney Hudson, Alan Jackson, Laura Jensen, Mary Jurmain, Mary Keezer, Ron Keezer, Scott Lowe, Mary Beth Kelly-Lowe, Kathryn Kennedy, Liz Kennedy-Weichert, Allen Keniston, Rachel Keniston, Nancy Lynch, Ellen Mahaffy, Brian Mahoney, John Mann, Shyre Mann, Mary Mickel, Karl Mielke, Lance McQuillan, Pete Myers, Paige Nankivil, Ellen Nelson, Karen Nussbaum, Phillip Nussbaum, Sherry Oeffler, Marie Past, Mark Patterson, Cynthia Postlewaite, Lois Postlewaite, David Proctor, Gale Proctor, Janeway Riley, Mike Rindo, Tom Sinkewicz, Jessica Schreiner-Donnelly, Laura Sommer, Penny Stephen, Todd Stephen, Ken Sullivan, Terre Sullivan, Pat Williams.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Stan Carpenter.

1. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
2. Mr. Cary Osborn: Stan introduced Mr. Cary Osborn who is a developer for AHMC Asset Management, a local real estate company located at 3806 Oakwood Pkwy, Suite 1. Mr. Osborn has purchased the home at 1408 State St., has an offer to purchase the one at 1406 State St., and includes the historic Buffington Home at 1500 State St. in his plan for a development. He introduced Dr. Skip Van Gorden of 463 Gilbert Ave., as an investor. He also stated that a second investor, Dr. Steve Bircher of 334 Lincoln Ave. was not in attendance. (See attendee list) Mr. Osborn also introduced John Hamilton of Urban Works Architecture located in Minneapolis. (901 N 3rd St., Suite 145, Mpls., MN 55401).
3. Dr. Skip Van Gorden: Dr. Van Gorden stated that the Third Ward has 900 residences and 50 percent of those are rental properties. He said the quality of the houses and and traffic issues make it difficult for young families to purchase homes here. One option would be to build multi-family duplexes on State St. He said the Buffington Home would be kept, but the houses at 1406 and 1408 State would be torn down. The new housing would have classy Ivy League architecture, and underground parking. He felt this development would take cars off State St. and that it would be a nice "gate" to the university.

4. Mr. John Hamilton: Mr. Hamilton said that UWEC campus housing is for freshmen only and does not offer what students need. He said the foot traffic across State St. shows that lots of students live on the east side of State St. He also felt there was no place to get a cup of coffee when he visited the proposed site. His option for development would be a three-story student apartment building with 53 units housing 153 students. There would be 67 underground parking stalls. Rent would be \$400-\$500 per bed, and there would be an additional charge for underground parking. The first floor of the building would house light retail such as a coffee shop or deli. He presented architectural graphics showing the proposed three-story building. The Buffington Home remained in the pictures, and the other two properties had been removed. The building, he said, would contribute a balanced look to State St. He referred to the development as "Buffington on State." The Buffington Home is 6 ½ feet shorter than the proposed building, and sits in front of it. The Buffington would serve as the office and entrance to the building, and house a 24 hour concierge. There would be no parties.

5. Comments to the developers from Neighbors:

Referring to the balance that presently exists on both sides of State St. (with large, Victorian houses on both sides), Rick Kayser said he felt the proposed development would destroy that balance.

Tom Sinkewicz , who lives across the street from the proposed development, suggested the project be moved to Gilbert Ave., next to Dr. Van Gorden's house, where, he quipped to Van Gorden, "We could get rid of those two houses next to yours."

Mary Mickel inquired if there would be any outdoor space for activities such as grilling out, frisbie, or sunbathing. The answer was no.

When asked why the proposed building is so large, Mr. Osborn replied that the original plan had been for a smaller structure, and they added more units to pay for the cost of underground parking.

When asked what will happen if the development does not go through, Mr. Osborn replied that they may sell the houses, or rent them.

THE DEVELOPERS WERE DISMISSED AT 7:45 AND THE TWNA MEETING CONTINUED.

6. Susan Kasik-Miller questioned if there was conflict of interest for members of the Landmark Commission to attend this TWNA meeting. It was decided that this was not a problem. City Council members would have been at the meeting as well, but had another meeting to attend.

7. Stan explained to neighbors the history of previous meetings regarding the proposed development.
8. Ken Fulgione explained the condition of the “porch house” at 1408 State St. He said it has a new high tech heating system, and new sheet rock throughout. The porch can be restored for about \$20,000, and despite its outward appearance, the house is easily restorable.
9. Susan Kasik-Miller pointed out that the developer needs to go to the Plan Commission and the Zoning Board before he can move ahead. She feels he may be waiting for the houses to deteriorate so they can be torn down.
10. Mike Rindo: Mike explained that UWEC owns property behind the proposed development and that area is scheduled for a new Children’s Center. Later, in 2009-2011, Park School will be razed and a new building will be erected in that space.

Mike said that half of the students in UWEC dorms are not freshmen.
John Hamilton had stated that all students in UWEC dorms are freshmen.

11. Stan took a poll of neighbors at the meeting to see if they were for or against the development. The neighbors were overwhelmingly against the development.
12. Motion: A motion was made and passed to send a letter to the Plan Commission, City Council, and Landmarks Commission, strongly opposing the Cary Osborn proposal for development on State St. The letter will include the names of all neighbors present tonight.
13. Stan will try to get the Power Point presentation the developers showed tonight, so we can put it on the Third Ward website. He will add to the Third Ward e-mail list with the addresses obtained tonight.
14. What can be done:
 - a. Stan will investigate the possibility of nonprofits restoring these homes for resale.
 - b. Contact City Council members and tell them you don’t want this development.
 - c. Call the Health Department or Plan Commission and ask why the house at 1408 State has not been repaired.
 - d. A Randall Park Real Estate investor asked why the project couldn’t come to his neighborhood. Susan Kasik-Miller replied that the Randall Park Neighborhood opposes that idea. Some people felt Water St. might be a better location.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.
Kathy Buchholz, Secretary