



**NORTH
LOOP**
NEIGHBORHOOD

**North Loop Neighborhood Association
Planning & Zoning Meeting Notes
September 21, 2016
6:00 P.M.**

Heritage Landing Community Room, 415 1st Street North

- I. September Board Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M.
- II. Nine committee members were in attendance: DJ Heinle, Kelly Nelson, Neil Reardon, Mark Hill, Karen Rosar, Francesco Parisi, Alice Eichholz, Darwin Lookingbill, and Jo Vos. Sydney Anderson and Dave Decker were absent.
- III. **A motion is made, seconded, and approved by the Board to approve the Board Meeting Agenda.**
 - a. Suzanne Johnson, Foundry Development, will attend the October meeting to present the 100 Block 1st Avenue North Redevelopment.
- IV. **A motion is made, seconded, discussed, amended, and approved by the Board to approve the August 2016 Board Meeting Minutes.**
 - a. Motion is amended to include remarks by Francesco Parisi (below) regarding the skyway connection and for the minutes to remain as they are otherwise.
 - b. “Francesco Parisi specifies that his vote in favor of the proposal is based on the fact that there was a preexisting skyway connection and hence the project is in compliance with Sections 1.41 and 1.42 of the 2010 Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines regarding skyways. He further specifies that his vote in favor of the project is based on the fact that this is not an in-fill building for the purposes of Section 3.27 of the 2010 Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines.”
- V. 729 Washington Avenue Office Development - Gordy Stofer, United Properties
 - a. Tonight’s presentation is meant to give information and to garner input regarding any pressing issues for the neighborhood. The project is a response to the successes of the Ford Center and Loose Wiles and the many calls for more spaces like those provided by those two buildings. This modern brick warehouse building, designed by architects from Washington DC. who are well

versed in the mid-rise, stone, and brick vernacular, is meant to blend in with the neighborhood. It is a 10-story, 200,000 square foot building, with floor plates of about 20,000 square feet. With its exposed ceilings, it will be designed to feel like a 100-year old warehouse, but will have modern efficiencies and green elements. The building would have a heavier industrial façade comprised of steel, metal screen, and glass; it would have a historic classic warehouse feel with the juxtaposition of glass and metal with the brick.

- b. There will be large outdoor spaces, including a plaza for the use of the entire neighborhood. The plaza, designed and programmed by Max Musicant – who programmed Capella tower and 333 South 7th – is going to be the best one in the entire city. Thoughtful design and planning from early on will allow for year round enjoyment of the space, which will be the focal point of the whole development.
- c. The 7-story parking structure, with one level of underground parking, will provide 270 parking spots. The goal will be to make the structure look nothing like a parking ramp; it will have ground floor retail and will be wrapped with efficiency and micro apartments units.
- d. These small living spaces will be located along 3rd Street. With 8 units per floor there will be 48 total. Each unit would be allocated one parking space. The building will be about 80 feet tall, and will articulate a series of massing to be more visually pleasing. The unique typology for the structure is still being explored, but United understands that it is a sensitive issue. Hopefully the parking would be helpful to business and residents as it will be publicly accessible on nights and weekends. United considering having the housing units on 2nd, but doing so would likely compromise a number of parking stalls; it can re-evaluate the layout, but there would probably be the need to add another level to make the numbers work. As currently drawn, United feels like the height is very appropriate. There has been a lot of talk about micro units in the Twin Cities, but they haven't been done to date. The units are programmed much more densely and are a great way for a young person to live in a great place for only \$900-\$1,000 a month. They are being offered for rent, rather than for purchase, because there have been many challenges with construction costs defect lawsuits and it is just not feasible in this instance.
- e. There will be 8,000 square feet of retail, alternative workspace and lounge areas, and fitness areas in the building. It may also be possible to include an indoor community room, as it is a high priority for the neighborhood.
- f. The alley and building connection create opportunity for outdoor space. Its design may allow for a nod to another archway on Washington; its design may incorporate a series of movement from the River, through the plaza, another covered alley, and then to large park on the Basset Creek site developed by Shafer Richardson. The alley can become a significant addition to the urban fabric. Regarding the historic sightlines: precedent exists because the alleyway has already been abandoned; parking structures and trees have gone into alleyway. In this historically significant corridor, United wants to be accentuating it and using it – the space should be animated.
- g. Regarding traffic circulation, there will be light parking and delivery on site; however, most of the development area, especially the alley, aims to be pedestrian friendly. In order to ensure that there won't be speeding in the alley, special materials, striping, bollards, dedicated protected pedestrian zone signage, and grade changes will be employed. Depending on the width of the alley, there may be enough space for greening as well. There are many factors

that United has to balance, but it will be receiving direct feedback from the City in the near future. It wants the space to be dynamic at night, so there will be lots of lighting and wayfinding mechanisms.

- h. Francesco referenced the sections of code that will be receiving feedback from the City: Section 3; plaza needs to be public; Section 3.14 parking below grade; Section 3.13 also allows parking in the back of the building; Section 3.22 massing should be compatible with existing; Section 3.27 scale compatibility; Gordy states that United is looking to bring the building height down and is incorporating feedback.
- i. DJ asks about variances required. United has been in talks with HPC regarding the maximum height of the building, which is 140 feet. When a penthouse is added, an extra 19 feet are also added – 14 feet of which would be allowable. Rather than have a penthouse, the building may just accommodate the height variance for an elevator shaft.
- j. Pets may be allowed in the plaza area, however, United is still studying the impact of and desire for pet space and such spaces have not been finalized in the drawings. United is a strong supporter for street trees along Washington, though it recognizes limitations with utilities lines.
- k. David Frank provides comments about the curb cuts proposed on 3rd Street, as he considers them, more than height, design, or the building itself, as the most penalizing aspect for pedestrians. The removal of a curb cut may impact circulation, but two in-and-outs crossing 3rd Street is simply too problematic for pedestrians. A solution may be having an entry point off Washington, or having the entry and exit along northern side, or reducing the ground floor to provide more space – which may present the tradeoff of another floor on ramp – or perhaps having a stoplight at 8th – though this is unlikely.
- l. Neighbor comments: Praise for the design materials, but the height is outside of guidelines; a reduction in building height is requested for both personal reasons and because of existing precedents. (At this meeting, there are not motions regarding the development being made; rather it was intended to present information and garner feedback to incorporate into designs and to present to the City).
- m. A request is made to ask the City to add 3rd street and need for infrastructure improvements to the CIP.
- n. The building has already received interest from a wide variety of prospective commercial tenants, including mid-level entrepreneurs and former Fortune 500 high level executives starting their own enterprises. There has also been lots of interest from national companies and retailers.

- VI. Smack Shack – Stephen, Restaurant Representative and Jeff, Open Air Solutions
- a. Smack Shack has commissioned an architect to usher it through the HPC process for the canopy structure that it is building on the existing loading dock outside of the restaurant.
 - b. Jeff, from Open Air solutions, explains the structure's design and materials. It is an aluminum powder coated louvre system with maneuverable louvres that can be pitched for shade or made to lay flat for a rain-proof canopy. The freestanding structure, which is not attached to the building, will be designed to respect the historical significance of the neighborhood. It will resemble canopies that exist on loading docks around the area with a little bit of a contemporary twist. In order to receive HPC approval, the color will complement the building. It will likely be gray in trim like that of the building

façade or black, more of a traditional canopy color – though the Smack Shack is open to suggestions for color. The umbrellas will be removed, but the flower boxes will remain. Residents encouraged additional greenery on site, and provided the Cooks store as an example for the integration of greenery into building.

- c. The structure is meant to be permanent. Though it will be fixed to concrete in the ground at posts, it can be removed. The structure's finish will have a satin, flat sheen, potentially similar to that of the light poles in the neighborhood. Smack Shack is not looking to convert it later, rather, it is just looking to expand summer business. Smack Shack will be going to HPC after site map redrawn in the next week, as it still needs to apply for some easements (the loading dock is still considered a thoroughfare by the City, though there is a sidewalk).
- d. **The motion to approve the pergola as drawn is made, seconded, discussed, and passed.**

VII. Jun Restaurant – Wayne, General Manager, and Jessie Wong, chef

- a. Jun proclaims that it will provide a unique hospitality experience by serving justly authentic Asian food and thoughtful and ambitious beverage menus. This will be the second restaurant for the Wong family; the first, which has been operating for 7 years, is in Roseville. The North Loop was just the type of place they were looking for to expand their business.
- b. The menu offerings, which include the exotic and the tame, will give a nod to Sczhezuan, Vietnam, Cantonese, and Korean dishes. The cocktail program, similar to those of Marvel and Parlor, will also be complemented by a tea program and Chinese spirits and will be unlike anything in the Twin Cities. The restaurant will open at 11:00 A.M. for lunch, close in the mid-afternoon, and reopen for dinner at 5:00 P.M. The dining room will close at 11:00 P.M., but a late night menu will be available in the bar until 2:00 A.M; it will be open 7 days a week. Take-out and delivery will be offered.
- c. The restaurant logo is currently under design; the demolition and remodel of the space (by Smart) will begin next week and will feature “minimalist, sleek, sexy” designs.
- d. The grand opening party in mid-November will have the mayor and the City's who's who in attendance. Jun would love the association to join the party! It is not requesting any action from planning and zoning committee other than to spread the word about the new restaurant, the impact that it will be having in the neighborhood, and its need for employees.
- e. Karen recommends that the restaurant's social media information can be added to the association's website. Francesco mentions that the smells from the hair salon in the adjacent suite are often present and that perhaps there is a way to improve ventilation by addressing the issue with building management.
- f. **Motion to approve the liquor license is made, seconded, and approved.**

VIII. Committee Business

- a. Neighbor Comments
 - i. There are no neighbor comments.
- b. Subcommittees Updates
 - i. There are no subcommittee updates.

c. Next meeting is October 19, 2016.

IX. Any additional concerns
a. No additional concerns.

X. New Business
a. No new business.

Adjourned at 7:23 P.M.