

Minutes of the Prospect Park Association Land Use Committee Community Meeting Thursday, November 12th, 2019 Luxton Park

In Attendance persons names as listed on Sign-In sheet – attached.

No Agenda was distributed.

John Wicks welcomed all persons attending the meeting and called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Mr. Wicks further stated that the PPA Land Use Committee and it's Residence Inn Task Force have been meeting with representatives of the Kaeding Management Group, developers of Residence Inns for the last couple of months and PPA members felt that before the project proceeded any further that it was necessary to bring the current design to the attention of the neighborhood for comment and feedback. Therefore the primary topic of tonight's meeting was to discuss the proposed Residence Inn located at the Southeast corner of University Avenue and SE Bedford Street. Mr. Jeff Wrede, Partner of Momentum Design Group Architects will make the presentation and field questions.

1. Mr. Wrede described elements of the project:

- Project (building) is planned to be constructed on two parcels of land one zoned Residential R\$ the other Commercial C1.
- Rezoning of the parcels to C3A is necessary to build the hotel.
- Project lies in an area designated as part of the 2040 City Development plan as T-10 zoning which enables buildings of 10 story height.
- Building design is "L" shaped with mass along University and Bedford with on grade parking on east side of site.
- Parking on lowest level of building with access from south h side.
- Building is five stories in height.
- Primary pedestrian entrance at corner.
- Entry for persons driving to site is on the east side from parking there.
- Parking contains 36 spaces enclosed in building and 29 on grade exterior spaces.
- Hotel will have 101 rooms.
- Sidewalk width along University Avenue approximately 12 feet wide.
- An extended stay hotel is one where the tenants reside longer at the hotel than a "normal" hotel stay. All rooms are fitted out as suites and contain kitchens, living areas, bed area and bathrooms.
- Finishes tend to be "High-End" with well-appointed furniture.
- Access to the building from the west will be from University Avenue with initial parking on grade. Access from the east will require a left turn to Bedford from University Avenue, the driver will either make a U-Turn back to University Avenue east or continue south on Bedford to the south end of the site and turn left into it then follow the pavement to the on-grade parking area. Persons using the LRT have a crosswalk to access the property just east of the intersection of SE Bedford and University Avenue. West traveling LRT riders have a longer route to the building than those traveling east.
- It was noted that the elevations of the sidewalks will not change.
- There will be landscaping along the east side of the building with trees planted in the boulevard.
- There will be approximately 17' from the south end of the building to the nearest residential building.
- The architect did not bring a drawing of the west elevation that depicted the residential buildings south of the proposed hotel.
- As part of the COW application the architect will do a site shade study over a year's time period.

- There is no coffee shop in the building.
- There will be adequate parking for overnight guests. The site can sustain about 65% of total guests. There should be no impact on cars parking in the street.
- A Summary of the Variances include: Zoning Change of C1 to C3A and R4 to C3A. Height Variance: allowable height 56' height by Variance 58'.The decorative elements which extend above the roof along University Avenue are cause for the additional height.
- Curb and sidewalk elevations will not change although an existing curb cut entry will be filled in and a new one constructed further south along Bedford.

Questions and Responses:

Q: A question was asked regarding the relationship of a Residence Inn adjacent to a residential neighborhood. What can people expect? A: In most circumstances, Residence Inn does not like to be in downtown areas and prefers to be in or near residential neighborhoods.

Q: A statement by a resident who spoke positively of the “project” and noted that they had visited the Residence Inn in St. Paul and was impressed by it and the management group and were also visited by the members of the design team and who discussed his concerns. He felt that the hotel will have a calming effect upon the exterior environment of the corner and supports its construction.

Q: Another resident felt that the project is the wrong use for the site since another extended stay hotel has already been approved for construction a short distance west along University Avenue. The building should have a larger impact along University Avenue and not along Bedford. Lastly the parcel should never have been zoned R4 to begin with.

Q: The design was received well by another resident who felt the location near an LRT stop makes sense. He was pleasantly surprised by the project.

Q: Locating a hotel at the site will mean the loss of potential housing for the neighborhood. The R4 zoning will be lost which is a problem because the location near a LRT stop means a loss to potential residents of a R4 project.

Q: Comments regarding Vertical Fins:

- They are interesting because they are unique.
- Doesn't like them because they are along University Avenue
- They form the space for the outdoors roof deck which is unheated!
- One resident noted that they liked the fins & celebrated their character by being outside the box.

Q: The redesign of the front entry area was felt to be successful.

Q: The intersection of University & Bedford is a prominent corner with a tremendous opportunity for architectural expression but the elevation as presented, especially at the corner is confusing and not distinguished. There are too many ideas here all going on at the same time.

Q: The Bedford elevation was felt to be dignified but when you turn the corner it is lost and becomes confusing with too much going on. The corner and University elevation need to be simplified to make it coherent.

Q: A question of operation of the windows? Yes,, the windows operate with a 4” opening.

Q: Snow removal will take place with snow being removed off site to a disposal area.

Q: What are the exterior materials? Response: At the base area will be a masonry product, size 12” x 24” similar to Limestone. Prefinished metal panels in three colors; Two (dark and light) shades of stucco. Use of anti-graffiti tape throughout the façade.

Q: A concern was brought up regarding the existing power poles along the site and how the site will be served. In response Mr. Kaeding noted that he will have to drop at least 5 power poles below grade and go beneath the new curb cut, but if there is a way to reduce the amount of work he would like to hear about it.

Q: In response to other projects Kaeding Management Group has completed, Mr. Kaeding noted their newest project is near Children’s Hospital in St. Paul, near 7th and Grand.

Q: Lastly, in response to a question regarding the project’s schedule, Mr. Kaeding noted they would like to go to COW in Dec/Jan and the Full Council for Approval in Feb/Mar.

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END

Minutes prepared by John Wicks – send your comments or corrections to him at jonewix@aol.com

