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Mayor

City of New Haven
Office of the Economic Development Administrator
165 Church Street, 4R
New Haven, Connecticut 06510



Michael Piscitelli
Economic Development
Administrator

275 S. Orange Street Development Project (Former Coliseum Site)
Community Meeting - Thursday, September 10, 2020 - 6:00 PM

Present:

Frank Caico	Spinnaker Residential
Greg Fieber	The Fieber Group
Heather Wassell	Beinfield Architecture
Seelan Pather	Beinfield Architecture
Wes Stout	Wesley Stout
Tom Cross	Wesley Stout
Ted DeSantos	Fuss & O'Neill
Jen Svelnys	Housing Development Team
Carolyn Kone	Brenner Saltzman & Wallman
Mike Piscitelli	City of New Haven
Aicha Woods	City of New Haven
Steve Fontana	City of New Haven
Kathleen Krolak	City of New Haven

Meeting Notes

The Development and Design teams presented to the project program, affordable housing component as well as schematic design to date and public space programming to 50 Zoom and teleconference participants.

Frank Caico spoke at length about their work in engaging various local organizations to discuss the programming of the public space. Some ideas include; outdoor film screening capability; movies in the park, film festival, etc. Open public space programming ideas;

farmers markets, festivals, multi-generational activities, moveable panels for art display and community communication, street furniture to encourage community socialization, Iconic lighting - social equity is a goal.

After the presentation the public had an opportunity to react and ask questions.

Public Space:

Must be open and engaging, not empty and unused. A fuller tree line needed on N. Frontage Road is necessary.

Design team has discussed providing electrical service for outdoor programming. Conversations with TGSSD regarding planning for programming to maximize usage.

Affordable Housing:

Occupancy

Discussion ensued regarding the affordable housing component in the development and current affordability crisis in New Haven. It was noted New Haven's current housing (market) is occupied, occupancy remains in the 90+ percentile. Assuming meeting AMI or lower, the fair market units do not have to be occupied for the affordable units to be occupied as those units are not contingent on occupancy of Market units.

Area Median Income

Jen Svelnys explained the HUD designation for the geographic region known as New Haven. Many felt this calculation does not apply to the general population of New Haven. HUD guidelines require rent be based on 30% of income (with a utility cost consideration) as a baseline. In regard to a sliding scale for affordable units if an individual is below 50% AMI they would not be able to afford an "affordable" unit but could possibly secure Section 8 voucher. HANH is a good resource for those income levels. (Any Section 8 voucher can rent a unit.)

An important distinction was made as Area Median Income is not necessarily New Haven Median Income. The LDA stipulates AMI, it's not an election on the part of the developer to use AMI and not NHMI. AMI is a HUD guideline and a published standard. (In CT the organization CHFA publishes AMI standard, there is no published New Haven Median Income information.)

Determining Monthly Rent

How have market rents been determined? IE <400 sf unit \$1,500-\$1,800 – A concern was raised about microunits; apartments getting tinier and more expensive. Is size of unit relative to its cost? Frank Caico explained comparable rents were used in determining market rent. Jen Svelnys provided an example where at 50-60% AMI, roughly \$30,000 annual income, the prospective tenant the community is concerned about is accommodated in this project.

How affordable is the project for single individuals? The overall plan for Build 1 includes a mix of studios (size varies), one bedroom and two bedrooms. Frank Caico noted the mix may be adjusted and units are trending smaller. Greg Fieber explained the smaller units work well for single individual with a pet. These spaces are not designed for conventional furniture rather convertible spaces with built ins such as a desk/dining tables. A studio at 50% AMI is approximately \$750/m (rent).

Using the AMI index New Haven's hourly wage to affordable market unit is around \$54,000 annually when a typical income is more like \$34,000. Jen Svelnys explained that starting at 40 affordable units the AMI is unit of measure to determine rents but there is a problem matching to New Haven. The development team is looking at households in the range of concern and does not present \$1,500 as a deeply affordable rent. The 50-60% AMI = \$752/m - deeply affordable based on current market. Greg Fieber further explained with an example; of the 40 affordable, 12 (or higher) of the 40 would be designated as studios and potentially 6-10 would be deeply affordable.

Meeting LDLA Requirements

Frank Caico summarized the requirements in the Land Disposition Land Development Agreement. When the LDA was negotiated the assumption was "workforce housing". There is a challenge in providing affordable housing as the potential rent does not cover construction cost. Gap financing is necessary, or the project doesn't "pencil out" and nothing is built. The 20% is absolute and the development team is focusing on how deep (AMI) can be achieved. As developers Spinnaker Residential has made significant investments in the city. "Our involvement speaks volumes to our commitment to the city." Mike Piscitelli noted the city is confident the "ask" of affordability is within range but still short of inclusionary zoning.

It was also noted the proposal meets the LDA but AMI is not compatible with New Haven. "Affordable" units are not that affordable (for New Haven). Affordability in the development will remain in perpetuity. Term limits sometimes apply regarding funding sources. The funding source for the affordability component is not confirmed at this time.

Design & Construction

Sustainability

Development team has a history of exceeding energy code, exceeded by 20% in other New Haven projects and expects a similar condition in this project. Efficiency gained with the use of heat pumps and mini split systems. As in other developments the developer is considering charging stations, solar panels, etc. Additionally, reflective heat

requirements in pavement are energy efficient and storm water is handled through a bio infiltration system.

Traffic

Downtown Crossing work is improving bike experience as well. NB – sep bike lane at intersection in build 2. Street reconstruction. Addressing traffic to and from major adjacent roads. Bike Lane – It remains 5.5' w bike lane.

Discussion ensued with regard to the traffic report for Orange Street specifically moving a bike lane to expand vehicular travel lane near a retail lane. Ted DeSantos explained what's being presented is an interim condition for first build. However the team is being purposeful to strike slow mode character given the project's uses; using materials and engineering measures to ensure appropriate speed and pedestrian experience.

Workforce

Discussion ensued with regard to opportunities to be provided to local contractors, workers and laborers. Frank Caico explained the developer is in close communication with city depts regarding Workforce programs. It has not been decided whether coordination will be through a GC or in house construction management. Regardless there will be contact with those interested in bidding on work through an open bidding process. It was also noted the project's construction budget has not been finalized. When plans are finalized, the developer will determine the construction value of the development.