

CAMPBELL

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GROUP, LLC

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1801 East Washington Avenue (Marling Lumber Site)

Project Name: 1801 Washington

Applicant/Project Owner: MMP CCG Madison, LLC

December 10, 2015

Ald. Marsha Rummel
City of Madison Common Council
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Natalie Erdman, Director
Department of Planning, Community & Economic Development
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Ald. Rummel and Ms. Erdman:

We have appreciated the coordination with City staff and the neighborhood throughout the development process as we move forward with obtaining approvals for the redevelopment of the existing Marling Lumber Site at 1801 East Washington Avenue. On December 7th, the neighborhood steering committee provided its preliminary comments on the proposal and requested a delay in the consideration of this proposal by the City. The purpose of this letter is to respond to those preliminary comments and request the City to keep the project on the currently scheduled City meeting agendas for Landmarks, UDC, Plan Commission and Common Council.

As you are aware, we spent significant time obtaining neighborhood and staff input prior to submitting land use and related applications with the intention of avoiding delays in the anticipated meeting schedule. We do not have the ability to further extend the approval timeline based on our commitments to Marling Lumber. However, that does not present any issue in addressing the intent of the neighborhood letter—there will be adequate time and opportunity during the City approval process to continue the process with and receive input from the neighborhood. It is also critical that neighborhood feedback be considered in conjunction and coordination with the input, feedback and requirements of City staff, Landmarks, UDC and the Plan Commission.

We have been working collaboratively with the neighborhood over the past several months and have worked diligently to incorporate preliminary neighborhood comments into the plans that were submitted in November. Specifically, we formally notified the neighborhood about the proposal on August 14th. We held a large neighborhood meeting on September 30th, with meeting announcements sent by mail to area residents and with additional promotion of the meeting on neighborhood listserves. At that meeting, we spoke directly with representatives of both the Marquette Neighborhood and the Schenk Atwood Starkweather Yahara Neighborhood, and discussed further coordination through a joint steering committee of the neighborhoods. Following that, we met with the Marquette Neighborhood Preservation & Development Committee on October 13th and again indicated to neighborhood representatives that we were looking forward to meeting with their joint steering committee once formed. The steering committee held its initial meeting on November 24th, which we offered to attend. We are currently scheduled to meet with the steering committee on December 15th.

During that time, we have also had a number of meetings with City staff and provided a UDC informational presentation on October 7th, along with frequent communications regarding staff feedback and suggestions. We have worked to incorporate staff and UDC comments into the proposal and made considerable revisions to the initial plans in response to staff and UDC comments. The plans submitted as part of our land use application on November 23rd are a reflection of our efforts to meet with and receive feedback from the neighborhood, City staff and the UDC. We anticipate further modifying and refining the design and other elements of the project as we continue through the approval process, incorporating feedback and recommendations from City staff, the UDC and the neighborhood, and we remain open and willing to do so.

Overall, the proposal has been well received by the neighborhood. At the neighborhood meetings on September 30th and October 13th, neighbors stated that they appreciated that the height and massing of the proposal is sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood, and in particular that the proposed use was a good fit for the surrounding neighbors versus the higher density and more intensely commercial character reflected in the East Washington Corridor Plan. Neighbors also appreciated that the proposal improves the interaction with the adjacent Yahara River Parkway. Neighbors provided constructive feedback on the addition of entries on East Main Street, improvements to the corner of the building at East Washington Avenue and the Yahara River, and design elements of the three courtyards included in the plans. Neighbors did not express any serious concerns with the proposal or any interest in delaying the project approval timeline.

Similarly, the project was well received at the UDC informational hearing. The Commission suggested distinguishing building entrances through additional design elements, adding more entries on East Main Street, providing additional visual separation between the public plaza space and the private courtyard space, and including additional visual elements to blend the parking areas with the rest of the project. The revised plans carefully incorporate each of the comments from the Commission, which are included with the application submitted on November 23rd.

Given the positive feedback we have received during our work with the neighborhood and City staff over the past four months, we were surprised to receive the letter from the neighborhood steering

committee on December 7th requesting a delay in the approval process. We are continuing to work with the neighborhood and City staff on project details and believe that process can continue in tandem with and according to the current City meeting schedule, as we understand occurs with most City of Madison urban redevelopment projects.

The first two points in the neighborhood letter address the interaction of the project with the Yahara River Parkway. This issue has and will continue to be discussed with City staff and has been identified as a key element of the project by us and City staff from very early meetings that occurred during the summer. As City parkland, the Parkway is controlled by the City and any improvements in that area would need to be performed by the City. As we have discussed with City staff, this project will generate significant park fees that could be dedicated to improvements in the Parkway and we believe City staff has started this dialogue internally with the City parks department. We continue to be interested in working to coordinate improvements on the portion of the project site adjacent to the Parkway and encourage the neighborhood to reach out to the appropriate City departments regarding improvements in the Parkway.

The third, fourth and sixth points in the letter address design features that have been reviewed by City staff and the UDC and will continue to be subject to further discussion. Several adjustments have been made in the revised plans that were submitted on November 23rd to respond to and address preliminary comments from the UDC and City staff on design issues. We welcome additional feedback from the neighborhood on these points at the scheduled December 15th meeting and going forward through the approvals process. We look forward to continuing to work with the project team on the challenge and opportunity presented by coordinating and implementing a wide range of perspectives on design.

The seventh and eighth points in the letter relate to traffic and terrace trees. We have prepared and submitted to City staff with our application materials a detailed Traffic Impact Analysis with recommended improvements to the East Washington Avenue and East Main Street access points. We will continue to coordinate with City traffic engineering staff on the details of the project plans related to traffic matters. We also remain interested in working with the City to preserve terrace trees to the extent possible; more specific discussions on which trees can be preserved will need to be deferred until project plans are further developed and finalized.

The fifth point in the letter relates to affordable housing. Affordability is an important consideration overall in any municipal housing policy, but is not a condition that can be tied to any particular development. Decisions regarding affordable housing need to be made in the context of considering the market as a whole and by those who will be responsible to build, pay for and operate a particular project. A robust and diverse housing market helps improve affordability for the market as a whole and projects like this increase tax base which then fund programs such as the City's affordable housing fund. For example, property taxes generated by this project will help fund projects like the proposed Stone House development a few blocks down on East Washington Avenue, which we understand will seek City tax incremental financing and low income housing tax credits to provide affordable housing.

We have and continue to be committed to working with the neighborhood, City staff, and other interested parties through the development review and approval process. We will continue to strive to incorporate all feedback and recommendations as project design evolves to the extent possible and will continue to make ourselves and appropriate members of our project team available to meet with and continue the dialogue with the neighborhood. The current timeline for City meetings based on our November 23rd application date should be maintained and we appreciate your continuing to maintain the dates which have already been set for Landmarks Commission, Urban Design Commission, Plan Commission and Common Council.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Campbell

cc: Heather Stouder, City of Madison
Al Martin, City of Madison
Amy Scanlon, City of Madison
Jesse Pycha-Holst, Marquette Neighborhood
Brad Hinkfuss, SASY Neighborhood