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Sent: Thursday, December 23, 2010 1:28 PM
Cc: ALL ALDERS; Parks, Timothy
Subject: Comments missed

To: Honorable Madison Alders

Re: Jan 4, 2011 Council Meeting
Mullins Project/2500 block of University Ave.

I am enclosing documents collected at the last community meeting of the Mullins project regarding building proposal on 2500 block of U.Ave/Highland Ave. Apparently they were never forwarded to the Planning office for consideration.

It is with great regret unfortunately, that the process is being shoved through at this time. The questionable tactics of the developer and their "team" have chosen to come back to the neighborhood after being voted down 3 years ago regarding a 13 story building they wanted to build. At that meeting (meeting minutes are archived in Regent Neighborhood Association) over 300 people attended a packed room at the Inn Towner and voted in agreement to "4 stories and no more".

With that, the economic downturn occurred, nobody was doing any building projects and Mullins continued to do what they do best and that is let buildings and street-scape become blighted to the point that neighbors were making calls to police at night with young people hanging out and partying at their empty buildings, graffiti became the calling card on their buildings and letting the blight become the norm of the block.

Fortunately, the Regent Neighborhood Association is close to completing their neighborhood plan, and in the next year it will be done. Unfortunately, Mullins group found that to be a perfect way to jump at an opportunity and proceeded to send out messages of wanting to re-visit the "pie-shaped" property. So, in the summer of 2010, they proceeded when neighbors were gone on vacations, and not too many residents could come to meetings to express their concerns.

In addition, when they were reminded at these beginning stages regarding "4 stories and no more" stance of the neighborhood, they responded with "that was the past...we don't want to look back" To which they proceeded with trying to present a 8 STORY building to the neighborhood. Neighbors asked about seeing what a 4 story building could look like, but Mullins couldn't present that, because "that wouldn't be economically feasible for us." So they mildly threatened that they could only go higher.

The whole thing has been very suspicious in that the Mullins group has to move on this so quickly, without waiting for the neighborhood plan to be in place. They base it on the need to get the financing NOW. Indeed if they had to wait until the RNA completes the plans, it would not be very complimentary to their greedy project. The situation is that they have a bad piece of property that is really not able to be developed to get the most bang for their buck. It is "pie-shaped" and up against Lombardino's and Campus Drive and prior to their "booting" out the businesses that were there, it had a wonderful little quirky feel with coffee shop and candy store

and yarn shop. Many of these tenants would have worked with Mullins to stay and renew their leases. Mullins had to get them out in order to let the block run down for a few years to get the neighbors to beg to "do something." This is hardly good stewardship.

The height, mass, parking, traffic, materials and the attention to the neighborhood and homes that will lose all sky and light to this project are merely some of the issues. Other factors include that this is a heavily trafficked area, with buses, emergency vehicles, a hotel, and it's on the flight path with the U.W. Hospital emergency helicopter. Hardly a nice, sitting area where people will linger and talk amongst the exhaust fumes and noise. In addition, the Gold Leaf apartments on the 2400 block of University Ave. along with the apartments across the street have student move-outs in August that have created such a terrible traffic problem that U.Ave. has had to go to single lane during the week of August/ May each year. Of course the Mullins group are saying (with no research I might add) that they are not going to have students living in this new building, but the Gold Leaf owners said the same thing and they have now agreed that that's all they get as renters. I assume that there will be plans in place to shut down Highland and U.Ave when 300 additional people move in and out of this new building every year. (Note the plans submitted as to where traffic will come in and out of).

The neighborhood has reached and far-exceeded the density ratio already, and complies with the properties that are rentals vs. owner occupied. They will be adding at the very least an additional 300 people this mix. The neighborhood is one of the oldest in the city, in fact, the Madison newspapers have focused on an article regarding the "oldest homes in Madison" and found that two of them are right on the 2500 block of Kendall Ave.

In the end it's the fact that like a 800 pound guerrilla, the developer will get to do what they want, disregarding the wishes of the hard-working, long-standing neighbors who continually work on their homes to keep up with improvements and the fabric of the community. New Urbanism should not just work in favor of developers, certainly the neighbors who are most affected by this project should be factored in as well .

Attached you will find comments from a mere small percentage of the population who actually were involved with the original process. Please note that the comments that are in favor do not live near the project, nor will it affect their daily lives. This due to the timing of meetings and that many neighbors thought this was resolved 3 years ago at the meeting where it was voted on for "4 stories and no more" should also be brought to light.

Thanks for all your careful consideration on the matter,

M.L.Krase & Alan Michels
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