

## AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** November 30, 2016

**TITLE:** 819 East Washington Avenue – New  
Development of an Entrepreneurial Hub,  
“Starting Block Madison (SBM)” Located  
in “The Spark” in UDD No. 8. 6<sup>th</sup> Ald.  
Dist. (43555)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** November 30, 2016

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart\*, Tom DeChant, Lois Braun-Oddo, John Harrington, Michael Rosenblum, Dawn O’Kroy, Rafeeq Asad, Richard Slayton and Sheri Carter.

\*Goodhart recused himself on this item.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of November 30, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of “Starting Block Madison (SMB)” located in “The Spark” at 819 East Washington Avenue in UDD No. 8. Appearing on behalf of the project were LeeAnn Glover, Alex King and Shayna Hetzel, all representing American Family Insurance; Jeff Vercauteren, representing Gebhardt Development/American Family; Tom Stacey, Garret Perry, representing Design Studio, Etc.; George Austin, representing Starting Block Madison; and Eric Romano.

Romano presented the revised plans for the 8-story building with a 9<sup>th</sup> story terrace. The project focuses to activate the space with a lot of glass (up to 40%). Darker material will be used at the base with variations lightening as it goes up. Sustainable goals include 50% energy savings compared to a typical Midwestern office building with their use of glass, sun shading, insulation, mechanical systems, sustainable regional building materials, green roof and LEED certification.

Tim Parks of the Planning Division reviewed the staff report. There are 80 bike parking stalls proposed (30 inside, 50 outside) including amenities. A clear determination by the Urban Design Commission is necessary on the setbacks meeting UDD No. 8. Bonus stories will require more clarity and details.

Parks noted that the Spark has narrow windows for aerial apparatus access, how does that interface with required tree planting both on the site and in the terrace? The existing street trees on East Main Street have been permitted removal by Forestry but removal of the trees on the terrace on East Washington Avenue are not anticipated. Due to the narrowness of the site, most of that building perimeter is not going to be accessible by public street, which is why they have the fire lane coming in off East Main Street, which could affect what kind of tree planting could occur in this location. There are differences between what UDD No. 8 requires and what the Fire Code requires; a clear determination from the Urban Design Commission is necessary regarding street trees, setback tree issues, allowing the project to meet the fire code. We are concerned with the eastern façade, given its high visibility for the long-term from East Washington Avenue, the approach being proposed recognizing that it is the necessary services of the building, the stair towers, restroom facilities, that it feels dark,

more cloistered, not patterned as well as the rest of the building, which is otherwise rather striking; we are hoping there is an opportunity to increase the window openings while maintaining the pattern already proposed. Bill Sullivan of the Fire Department commented on the balance between what can be accessed with a fire truck and providing street trees. The spacing of trees is important; to date discussions have been along East Washington Avenue where the current trees and spacing is OK, but there is a need to fill in between. Trees need to be a smaller type, not the larger canopy trees that the Commission usually requires. The Secretary noted that with other projects along the East Washington Avenue corridor, resolve of this issue has been provided on a project-specific basis with specific discussion between Engineering, Parks Forestry, Traffic and Fire that still requires further consideration.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- It sounds like there is enough detail for The Spark, that if it is Gold LEED certified it could qualify for bonus stories, but that's not necessarily true for the Cosmos?
  - Yes, it doesn't have to be the actual certification, it can be an equivalency.

The applicant inquired about how things like providing public open space and a mid-block connection play into the request for bonus stories. Tim Parks read from the code, responding that the first thing to consider would be the Urban Design Commission determining a public benefit for the additional height. Affordable housing and structured parking are not part of this proposal so they cannot be considered for the bonus stories. At the very least the project would need to verify that it's meeting the 1 to 5 square footage ratio; LEED Silver, accessible community room, 1 to 10 plaza ratio and midblock and through-block connections.

- How many stories is the proposed parking ramp?
  - We don't know that yet.
- I like the east façade on The Spark.
- I do too.
- Having small trees is better than having no trees.
- We need a condition that the issue about canopy trees in the public right-of-way, as well as in the private property be resolved with staff.

The Secretary noted that signage is being shown for illustrative purposes only and will have to return to the Commission for approval.

### **ACTION:**

On a motion by O'Kroley, seconded by Asad, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL**. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-1) with Carter abstaining. The motion found that the project adequately addressed the provisions of UDD No. 8 citing the following:

- Gold LEED certification or its equivalency meets the bonus story requirements.
- The massing on the two facades, the two-story height is appropriate with the 3-story criteria, and the solid mass facing East Washington Avenue is appropriate in the context of the overall composition because it's quality materials and still articulated.
- Because there is depth in the design of the façade, considering this building specifically, including the fin at 15-feet, is appropriate.
- The motion also required continued work with the adjacent neighbor on the fire lane design.