

February 20, 2016

Re: Fisher Development, 119-121 North Butler & 120-124 North Hancock Street

To: Urban Design Commission

The James- Madison Park District (JMP) of Capital Neighbors Inc. (CNI) , along with a few members of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association (TNLA) formed a steering committee (JMP Steering Committee) to consider the proposal by the Fisher Development. The JMP Steering Committee voted unanimously to support the proposal, although detailed below are several items of concern that the JMP Steering Committee prefers to be addressed as the proposal moves forward.

JMP Steering Committee hopes the readers will investigate and appreciate the opinions of all involved, including other neighborhood input.

We appreciate the willingness of the development team to meet multiple times with the JMP Steering Committee. Their willingness to listen and address neighborhood input was helpful. Throughout the process, they produced building renderings and perspectives as requested by those involved in the conversations.

Following are aspects of the proposal that the JMP steering committee and neighborhood find favorable to the neighborhood:

Aspects of the proposal and process that is favorable to the neighborhood:

- Development team favorably altered exterior features in response to committee members' concerns, including adding differentiated building cladding and adding some window lintels on the sides.
- The replacement of standard doors on balconies with sliding glass was very well received.
- Added some units with showers rather than bathtubs to provide increased accessibility.
- The front facade was well received and the side facades are much improved from the initial renderings.
- Ample bicycle parking in the parking level and some provisions for exterior bike parking (need to make sure there are plenty of exterior spots).
- Underground parking, while limited, should help relieve street parking pressure in the neighborhood.
- Meets city zoning regulations concerning setbacks on all sides of the building, providing good green space and separation with adjacent buildings.
- Development will preserve and renovate two existing multi-unit buildings on Hancock.
- Development team indicates that rents for the units will be somewhat below market rate for new, similarly sized units, perhaps providing housing opportunities for middle income tenants.

Aspects of the proposal and process that are potentially unfavorable to the neighborhood:

- The height of the building is larger than nearby housing units and the overall scale and depth are significantly larger than nearby housing units, perhaps looking out of proportion with the rest of the housing stock in the neighborhood.

- While this development itself replaces two older multi-unit buildings of little aesthetic value, the size and density of the proposed building will potentially raise land prices in the surrounding area, provide incentive for developers to take on similar replacements of older, affordable housing stock, and potentially create a cascade of similar demolition and replacement of affordable, vernacular housing stock. This could take place not only the James Madison Park neighborhood, but also in Tenney-Lapham, Mansion Hill and sections of downtown and near-downtown neighborhoods that are not part of local historic districts.
- While anticipated to have somewhat lower rents than market rate, the units are likely to have higher rents per square foot than the existing apartments they are replacing, which provides more momentum to escalating rents in this part of the City.