

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: September 7, 2016

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

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: September 7, 2016

ID NUMBER:

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

*Goodhart recused himself on this item.

*Items No. 10 and 11 were presented together.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of September 7, 2016, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for new development of an entrepreneurial hub, “Starting Block Madison (SBM)” located in “The Spark” in UDD No. 8 at 819 East Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were LeeAnn Glover, Alex King, Betty Berquist, Shayna Hetzel, and Eric Romano, all representing American Family Insurance; Rick Gilberben, Jeff Vercauteren and Lee Christensen, representing Gebhardt Development, LLC; TC Lin, Scott Resnick and George Austin, representing Starting Block Madison, Inc.

The two separate projects are on similar tracks.

The building is 2-stories with an open joint plaza mid-block. The building will have view corridors to the Capitol, as well as north to Mendota and south to Monona to celebrate those views. This is a building focused on high performance and wellness. The main office bay is designed for flexibility to be able to change tenants and uses while still working with an open floor plan.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- The AmFam space will face a solid back of house wall of the theater? I’m curious about how that space is really going to feel, how successful it will be as feeling like public space. What are the key ingredients to make that sing? The other thing that intrigues me about that is the Spark is still so very rigid in its form, when now you have this free “air space.” I’m thinking how that can speak to why oriented west, anything to help with the solar gain before it gets to your glass.
- I would push to get as much retail, restaurant, coffee all along that stretch. That’s going to bring the activity and make it a vibrant space. Keep developing that because it’s something Madison needs more of.

- I would encourage your setbacks to go as far as you can. Some major cities are starting to actually create larger setbacks to accommodate larger walks and street trees.
- Could you look at more holistically as a composition, if there is a solid mass in a lovely material it could be great. It feels functional but I think there are some opportunities that your composition can relax a little bit.
 - Those back elevations with tying the anchor piece with that core, trying to get them to work better in that composition is something that's currently being studied and I think is the direction you're asking us to look at.
- Are you satisfied with your setback for the performance venue in terms of queuing, people coming out during intermission and gathering in the street, drop-offs, etc. Ten-feet sounds generous but I wonder if that's adequate front door space.
- You might want to have a right-turn only lane onto Livingston Street. How that ramp is going to empty out is a City issue, but it might impact your Livingston Street frontage.
- The energy you're going to bring to this site is fantastic.

ACTION:

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.