

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: February 13, 2019

TITLE: 4002 Evan Acres Road – PD, Ho-Chunk Casino/Hotel/Convention Center Campus and Heritage Center. 16th Ald. Dist. (54472)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

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ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: February 13, 2019

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Cliff Goodhart, Lois Braun-Oddo, Rafeeq Asad, Tom DeChant, Craig Weisensel, Jessica Klehr and Christian Harper.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 13, 2019, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a PD, Ho-Chunk casino/hotel/convention center campus and heritage center located at 4002 Evan Acres Road. Registered in support of the project were Daniel Brown and Peter Tan, both representing Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison. Registered and speaking in opposition was Jorge Franco, representing the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The focal point of the development will be the heritage center, with the design being Ho-Chunk inspired with a nod to the City of Madison. Circles are important to Ho-Chunk culture. Ho-Chunk is also known as DeJope, which means Four Lakes. They want to make a statement at the entrance to the City on the Interstate, to tell the Ho-Chunk story with something modern and sustainable while collaborating with the community. Tan reviewed the site context, aerial views and neighboring sites, noting that part of the site is existing wetlands, and they are dealing with the challenges of the adjacent highway as a gateway into the City that needs shelter from the noise. He walked through different site buildings/elements and their relationship to the site. There is an existing gas line running through the site, hence there is a gap through the site that will be leveraged as an outdoor space with a bridge. The entry sequence and floor plans/programming were reviewed. They are intentionally adding windows in the casino so that people can have daylight. Screening walls and fins will screen the parking and operations/utility center. Outdoor dining and gaming areas are proposed. Images were shown of the entry sequencing showing the arc canopy/walkway drop-off area, the bioretention basins restored to prairie, and landscaping concepts.

Jorge Franco spoke in opposition to the project on behalf of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The chamber represents the interests of over 500,000 Hispanic-American and more than 10,000 Hispanic owned businesses in Wisconsin. They also recognize and celebrate the 11,000 years of Ho-Chunk history. The chamber and Ho-Chunk Nation have worked together on workforce development training over the course of more than a year. Regardless of specific architectural style, the expansion is massive, including 7 new or expanded buildings. That resulting expansion means they will require hundreds of new employees. They have demonstrated that they will not be able to fill these positions. This will at a minimum result in poor customer experiences and degrading facilities, and at worse lack security when combined with the relatively isolated location of the

gaming complex. The chamber learned that the Ho-Chunk workforce is in such disarray that they are having to bus employees from location to location. The tribe's training programs are insufficient. The chamber has learned that the Nation has done internal workforce audits that acknowledge the tribe's various shortcomings. This body should demand to see those audits, only then can this proceed with a full picture of what this expansion and its design mean for this area of the City and the impact on surrounding property values.

The Commission discussed the following:

- The previous project I complained about because it didn't present itself to the real public way. In this case it's the Interstate, you don't have that problem. The one thing I'm a little concerned about are the two organizing elements: the pond and the big green circle. It seems that the people-activated buildings are furthest away from the circle, but I see the parking ramp right up against the circle, and hotel in the back. Maybe it should be shifted, move some of the buildings so it's right out your front door or your balcony. There's room on the site to tweak things a bit.
- A very ambitious project. Will this be done in stages?
 - Yes, with the first thing being the hotel along with the second story of the casino.
- For something like that phasing information would be useful.
- Each phase should almost be stand alone in case something happens and the rest of it takes a decade to catch up. Is that a fire lane going all the way around the facilities? Your barrier flag is on the outside of the fire lane? What is your easement distance? Rather than built structures maybe there's a green alternative for screening. Something that is grown rather than constructed.
 - We could have a green wall. What happens in the winter, right? And the desire to do a photovoltaic expression as well.
- The driftless concept looks a little too much like the south Mexican border. Think about how that design looks.
- Would Phase 1 include the second level outdoor curved terrace space? That's quite a signature piece.
 - Yes, we'll show a phasing plan with a scheduled timeline.
- The images shown really helped to communicate the project message, very strong. This will be a beautiful and unifying project.

ACTION:

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