

URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

The purpose of this email is to voice my concern to this committee and the First Settlement District residents with statements made by Alder Marsha Rummel at the Landmarks Committee meeting held Monday May 6, 2019.

At the May 6th Landmarks presentation, Alder Marsha Rummel stated that because developer Lance McGrath brought the project to her 1st and then followed through with all neighborhood meetings and appropriate steps she was in support of the project. The neighborhood has numerous serious concerns that are not being addressed and for their alderperson to insinuate at a public meeting that she has already made up her mind that she will sign off on the project is disheartening. These issues have been raised at numerous neighborhood meeting and it appears that Alder Rummel is aware of them but does not deem them serious enough to not sign off on the project.

I'm not asking that this project be stopped but I do believe time line needs to be slowed down and the start date extended past October 1st date previously given so that the district residents have a chance to outline their concerns and have them addressed with project plan specifics and detailed drawings that thus far have not been provided by the developer or his architects.

Issues raised include (but not limited to):

Project mass / density

Commercial space

Parking

Traffic impact

Shading impact

Project Mass / Density

Too much for view from E Wilson Street. View is that of a solid barrier wall similar to the government buildings or factories. Need to see more detailed plans/drawings to prove this will be an aesthetically pleasing view and not a square box of apartments.

Current plan/drawing is not complimentary to the historic buildings on either end of the project making the historic buildings look out of place – this is contrary to the historic district the project is in. There is no depth or character to the façade.

Effect is not a “gateway to Madison” but rather a negative impact.

Need more time to work together to make this a spectacular view.

Commercial Space

HRM needs easy access to drop off and parking for hotel guests (not shown on current plan)

Commercial development needs to compliment both the hotel and neighborhood – lack of parking for commercial customers and hotel guests and access hinders both as it will severely limit the type of commercial renters.

Question putting commercial on S Blair Street. This street has become a main artery for traffic so: 1) commercial business won't be obvious to the driver, 2) traffic stoppage for the commercial business will create issues. Drivers don't see MG&E now.

There are several options to consider making this workable but we need more time to research and implement them.

Parking

Current revised plan removed the entire lower level parking in the original plan. There is no parking for commercial customers and no parking to be rented to downtown workers. Over 120 stalls rented to downtown employees now. The parking availability downtown is severely lacking with most city lots having long waiting lists, these employees are still going to be working downtown and needing parking – they will fill in any neighborhood streets available.

Options are available to address this issue – need more time to consider them.

Traffic impact

No study has been made available to address this – the neighborhood will be directly impacted by this. More time will allow this to be study to be considered by the neighborhood so they can get behind the project.

Shading impact

No study results have been presented – this too directly impacts the neighborhood and they should have more time to receive and interpret such a study.