

5/26/2020

Attn: Urban Design Commission  
City of Madison Staff  
Alders  
Plan Commission  
Adjacent Neighbors of JMP Neighborhood  
Residents of JMP Neighborhood  
All other concerned citizens

Re: LZ Ventures 400 Block East Washington Proposed Re  
Development Project. For presentation as comments and  
input of findings of multiple neighborhood meetings in  
preparation for Urban Design meeting 6/27/20 and Public  
Hearing 6/8/20.

## JAMES MADISON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD (JMP) Comments / Recommendations/ Concerns and Requests of Conditions Prior to Approval

The JMP neighborhood committee prepared this summary of JMP's interests and are hereby submitted as comments, recommendations prior to approval, and concerns regarding the proposed LV Ventures re-development of the 400 block of East Washington Avenue. The comments enclosed within this document were compiled and reflect the current state of the concept drawings and discussion over multiple neighborhood meetings in person and over Zoom electronic meetings platform. The meetings were held with the inclusion of the development team from LV Ventures.

The intent of these comments is to inform the deciding bodies what issues were discussed by the neighbors, the responses given by the design LV Ventures design team and the overall recommendations and conflicts surrounding the project. Those that participated in the in person and zoom meetings were neighbors both property owners, renter's adjacent neighborhood concerned citizens.

## Issues Summary:

The major comments that continually surfaced on multiple occasions and in multiple meetings surrounding the project are condensed to the following major topics of concern and discussion.

- 1) The Downtown Plan, vs main stream development criteria.
- 2) Affordability of housing
- 3) Size / Mass / 8+2 stories. Set, backs and step downs of stories of the building
- 4) Clean up of contaminated soils specifically at the Klinke cleaner site
- 5) Interaction with adjacent homeless shelters and services
- 6) Traffic and pedestrian concerns

Comments Expanded / Discussion Reviewed with participants.

- 1) The Downtown Plan, existing buildings in the James Madison Park Neighborhood, The Madison Comprehensive Plan and Historic Preservation efforts by the Landmarks Commission are in the committee's opinion are in direct conflict with each other.
  - a. Current existing building height is 3 stories adjacent to the proposed re-development
  - b. The downtown plan shows adjacent future building heights as 6 stories
  - c. May 4<sup>th</sup> Landmarks Commission findings state that the buildings are of historic value(old) but no significant historical events happened at these properties.

**Discussion:** These points were passionately debated at each meeting. There was no clear consensus as it related to the overall final height of the building. And as to whether or not the additional bonus stories meet requirements. As items for and in discussion around the height of the building conflict by where the surrounding neighbors live in relationship to the project.

The Development team did show two attractive building designs. One with 8 stories and minimal setbacks. And One with more than the minimal setbacks and added the 2 bonus stories. There was significant discussion regarding the shadows cast by a building of the proposed scale even at 8 stories.

In comparison to the existing buildings a building of 6 stories does not currently "fit" the current character of the neighborhood using the typical design criteria. However, it could potentially "fit" in the future if neighboring properties were also allowed to be redeveloped to maximum heights. It all comes down to whether eh plan commission wants to follow the proposed downtown plan or not.

Further, there are two properties in the proposed redevelopment footprint that are not currently listed on the historic registry. The neighbors were also deadlocked on this point. And felt that the buildings should be preserved by relocation if possible, instead of demolition. The development team did offer to allow the buildings to be relocated instead of demolished if the relocation would not cause construction delay.

- 2) Affordability of new housing units
  - a) The current proposal put forth by the development team does not include use of special financing which would require the development to specifically include affordability or rent control requirements.
  - b) The development team claims that there will be 20-30% of the units which would meet the Dane county affordability standards with out the need for special loans.
- 3) Size / Mass / 8+2 stories. Setbacks and step downs of stories of the building:
  - a. The development team is currently requesting a maximum design of 8 +2 stories
  - b. The neighbors did not have enough information to understand the exact requirements of why the additional 2 bonus stories would meet or not meet the exceptional design requirement set forth in the language of the redevelopment plan for the neighborhood. The overall consensus is that what is proposed is a very large building comparable to existing structures currently on the property.
  - c. However, it was also pointed out by one of proponents of the project that someone must be first to start the redevelopment process.
- 4) Clean up of contaminated soils specifically at the Klinke cleaner site
  - a. There was consensus of the participants that chemical clean up cleanup of the site was a benefit to the neighborhood.
- 5) Interaction with adjacent homeless shelters and services
  - a. The adjacent homeless shelter at St Johns church was a concern
- 6) Traffic and pedestrian concerns
  - a. Additional pedestrians crossing east Washington was a concern
  - b. Traffic volume was claimed to be significantly reduced by the development team by placement of entrance on franklin and exit on N Hancock

## **JAMES MADISON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEE**

### **Proposed Conditions of approval / neighborhood recommendations & requests**

- 1) Request for operations and security plan specifically highlighting:
  - a. Swimming pool operation and adherence to noise ordinances
  - b. How potential new development will integrate / be good neighbors with 40-year-old St John's men's homeless and emergency mental health shelter.
  - c. Future TBS commercial spaces operation. Example: if there is a bar and restaurant planned how will bar hours / restaurant hours impact spill over into the neighborhood in regard to parking, and hours of operations? How will neighbors effect change /complain if things such as excessive noise or unruly patrons spill into the neighborhood? Who shall they contact etc?
- 2) Requested conditions to approval to have the developer pay for a traffic study to generate proper safety of pedestrians crossing East Washington Ave. Including recommendations to intersection improvements at East Washington and N Hancock And N Franklin, Specific concerns being pedestrian and increased Auto congestion. Also, to address off street parking specifically to commercial spaces. Where will patrons park? If there is a stop light to be installed. Will Developer assist or pay entire cost?
- 3) Request that all buildings identified by the landmarks commission in its final ruling to be relocated in lieu of demolition. Unless if ruling is for demolition.
- 4) Request that the new development provide a minimum of 3 dog waste stations for the property if it allows dogs. Significant pet waste will have an impact on the rest of the neighborhood as it relates to dog feces.
- 5) Requested that the development provide a B bike station
- 6) Requested that demolition of ANY of the buildings on the site not be started until the landmark commission finalizes its deliberations to their historical significance.
- 7) That noise from parking lot mechanical systems be vented toward East Washington and not into the neighborhood.
- 8) Requested: further study of shadowing from the proposed building in a 8 story configuration vs 10 story configuration.

#### **Conclusion:**

Foremost, the neighborhood is split in the support or opposition of the project, it has many significant concerns and recommendations, most of which have been addressed by the development team. But others are listed in this document above.

Secondly, the importance or significance of the historical value of the buildings on the site is a distractor for the neighborhood to reconcile. It is concerning to many neighbors that the landmarks commission

has not identified these buildings previously as worthy of being placed on the historic sites until a developer wants to develop the property under the guidelines of the Downtown plan of 2012.

The surrounding neighborhoods Tenney Lapham, and First Settlement do have some very loud voices opposing the project and their input was welcomed and noteworthy as to discovery and support of the preservation of the buildings.

The committee would like to give its support for the project as it follows the previously adopted 2012 Downtown plan redevelopment guidelines. The project is of above average design and the neighborhood can benefit from the additional commercial retail spaces, chemical remediation, and cleanup at the Klinke cleaner property, and property taxes collected would be largely increased compared to existing structures. It is my hope that the historical buildings can be relocated or that a compromise could be found for those buildings currently within the project footprint that have historical significance as designated by the landmarks commission. As for the bonus two stories, the criteria are vague and subjective at best.

Regards,

Joe Martino

Steering Committee Chair

James Madison Park Neighborhood