

West Central Neighborhood Association
Association Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2018, 7:00pm

Call To Order – 7:05pm, 42 attendees

Unfinished Business

- Last year, we voted to donate a bench in honor of long-time resident Joann Bruce
 - Ben read a thank you note from her family
- Katie from Spark Placemaking
 - They're starting to host and program different projects
 - Historic baseball walk
 - Community garden
 - Partnering with Broadway Street Stroll and Food Stock
 - Get in touch with her to get involved
- 801 West Berry
 - There were 3 proposals presented to the HANDS board in February
 - The HANDS board has an interest in WCNA's opinion
 - They will be making a decision at their March 6th meeting

Speaker – Ben Wahli, Wahli Enterprises LLC Proposal

- Wahli Enterprises specializes in historic homes
 - They have a general contractor's license and real estate license
 - They currently own 7 properties in West Central
- 3 Critical elements to success for 801 West Berry
 - Owner lives on the property
 - High quality restoration and renovation
 - Parking available on site
- Wahli will manage the construction project and manage the apartments
 - Ben's dad will live there
- The bulk of the work will be repairing walls and floors and replacing mechanicals, and update kitchen and bathrooms
- Aiming for large, high end apartments
 - The units will be up to 2000+ square feet with 3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms
 - 2 apartments on each of the first 2 floors (4 apartments total)
 - Owner's suite on the 3rd floor, 1 bedroom 2 bathrooms
- 2 parking spaces on the property for each apartment, and 1 for the owner's suite
 - 9 parking spaces total

- Some in the garage and some off the alley on the existing pavement
- Construction Timeline: 18 months total
- \$550,000 in costs with an annual profit of \$50,000 and payback of 11 years
- Questions and Comments
 - What will you do with the windows?
 - They'll keep them and restore them in their original size and location. They'll make sure they're functioning.
 - How long does it have to be owner occupied?
 - When Ben's dad passes away, the property will become Ben's.
 - Is there an egress from the 2nd floor apartment presently? Fire code requires this.
 - He thinks so, but isn't sure. It's something he'll look into.
 - Will the parking spaces in the garage be stacked (there's only 2 garage doors)?
 - They'll have to double check the size and make sure it works, but they're thinking it will be parking spots you pull into like a parking lot.
 - What will you do with the front door?
 - There will end up being 2 front doors – one into unit 1 and one into unit 2. There are currently 2 doors, so these will remain as is.
 - How long will your father want to go up 3 flights of stairs?
 - He's in his mid-70s and is physically fit, so they're not too worried about it any time soon.
 - Are there any plans to add an elevator?
 - Not at this time.
 - How do you prioritize all of the homes you own in the neighborhood?
 - They've bought 4 or 5 abandoned homes in the last 3 years. They're down to only 1 home now that needs to be started.
 - Attendee Comment: I think Wahli Enterprises is the best project. (Written comment from PJ Thuringer)

Speaker – Fort Wayne Housing Authority and the Center for Social Transformation, Van Buren House Proposal

- FWHA currently owns and manages over 800 properties in Fort Wayne
- Estimating \$3-\$5 million for development
 - They'll either pursue tax credits or conventional financing
- They're looking for a way to pool the energy and excitement of students to create change and benefit the city
 - Learning Community – students live and study together in one space

- Service Learning – on top of classes, students work on projects in their community
- They won't move forward with their project without approval from the neighborhood
- Students from IPFW, Saint Francis, and Ivy Tech
 - 18-20 students total plus 1 adult resident scholar
 - Each student will receive credit at their own school
- Affordable housing
 - Students will have to sign a 1 year lease
 - Background check
 - The resident scholar will live on the 3rd floor and will act as the site manager
- First Floor – community area, kitchen, and housing
 - The current garage space will be a community room
 - The community room will also be available to the neighborhood
 - The 2 existing front doors will be removed, and 1 main entrance will be added
- Second Floor – suite style units
 - All suites will have 1 common room, 3 bedrooms, and 1 shared bathroom
- Third Floor – suite style units and resident scholar
- Working with Saint Joseph to provide parking
- Questions and Comments
 - What happens to parking when Saint Joseph Hospital leaves?
 - The parking garage isn't owned by Saint Joseph, so it will remain owned by the current company. Students will also have the option to pay less to park at the Saint Francis lot.
 - Are the students paying for this using financial aid?
 - Yes.
 - Have you looked into zoning allowances?
 - It's currently R3. They were told it wouldn't need any variances. R3 allows multi-family.
 - I think it's a terrible idea to have that many units in one building. The kids aren't going to want to walk a block or more to their cars. Plus visitors will have to park somewhere. (Secretary note: There was a good number of attendees chiming in with "yeahs" and nodding along.)

- They don't yet have a solution to the potential parking problem, but would like to work with the neighborhood to solve it.
- How much of the original historical aspects of the home can be saved?
 - They're going to keep and restore everything they possibly can. Most of the historical aspects of the home have already been removed. Their budget is a little over \$3 million, so they can add character back into the home.
- Are all of the students the same major?
 - No, but they will all focus on the same social project.
- Wouldn't your project be better suited for something like the GE campus?
 - They like that it's unique because it's in a neighborhood and not on a college or other campus. It would take away from the idea of the project having it at GE.
- This is similar to the project that Brightpoint planned for Rudisill. Will there ever be a neighborhood that will allow a project like this that's more cutting edge and different? Will a neighborhood ever say yes?
 - They think so. They're currently doing a 60-unit project on Spy Run Extended. The neighborhood didn't originally support it, but eventually decided they wouldn't stop it.
- Your floor plans are not residential apartment building floor plans, but an institutional use, which will require special variances and allowances. I'd be surprised if it's zoned as a multi-unit residential building.
 - They have some give and take with their plans, and can only go off of what they've been told so far. They pointed out this is not a group home, but an affordable housing project with a large investment.
- Attendee Comment: I kind of like the idea of all these younger people moving in. None of our children stay here in the Midwest. If we bring these people in to live here and get invested in our neighborhood, it seems like a good thing. It's time we make young people part of our neighborhood.
- Attendee Comment: Which is in the best interest of the neighborhood? Our neighborhood plan is to move towards less density, increase the amount of homeowners who have a stake in the neighborhood, etc. In my mind, it clarifies which is in our best interest.
- Attendee Comment: I believe the neighborhood is being pressed from every side with innovative projects. Sooner or later, there may need to

be modification of our neighborhood plan. If this project doesn't go through, something else will come along shortly after.

Speaker – The Heffleys, Castle Restorations Proposal

- They have a long history of buying and renovating unwanted properties in West Central
 - Eric's dad bought 832 West Wayne after it was vacant for 13 years
 - He received the very first ARCH award in 1978 for this home
 - They currently own 7 out of the 12 buildings on that block
- They want to restore the exterior – get rid of the drive through and add the porch and railing back, restore the original door
- They want to add a third floor over the garage, and add more square footage on the back side of the garage (3 story carriage house where the current pavement is)
 - The 3rd floor above the garage would be set back from the edge of the building and provide balconies for the units
 - They would recreate some of the details of the existing house to make the entire building look more cohesive
 - The backside of the carriage house would have 4 single car garage doors and an entrance for the 2nd floor
- The units would be condos and would be sold (most will be 2 bedroom, 2.5 baths)
 - Includes HOA and maintenance fees
- First floor – 2 or 3 units, plus 1 parking space for each unit
- Second floor – first floor of six 2-story townhouses (living room, kitchen, half bath), open concept
- Third floor – second floor of six 2-story townhouses (bedrooms with their own full bathrooms)
- They would maintain ownership of the unit 3 on the first floor, and use it as a management office
- Questions and Comments
 - Do you have a timeline for completion?
 - About 12 months.
 - Code requires 1.5 parking spaces per unit.
 - They would get a standards variance to allow for only 1 space per unit.
 - What will you sell the units for?
 - Probably \$150,000-\$200,000+ each
 - Their demographic is the same people who live in Midtowne Crossing.

- How much will it cost, and do you have funding lined up yet?
 - \$1.2-\$1.5 million. They'll be putting in 1/4-1/3 of that themselves, and financing the rest.
- How do you prioritize all of the homes you own in the neighborhood?
 - They've bought and saved a lot of buildings over the years, mothballing a good number of them until the time was right and the demand existed. Now is that time. In the last year, they sold off 2 properties.
- Your price points suggest that younger people could afford these units.
 - The property was purchased with NSP funds. They've suggested the city use the \$120,000 of NSP funds for down payment assistance for people to buy the units. This might mean a \$30,000-\$40,000 credit for some of the units.
- Attendee Comment: It's my experience that the people who become owners and commit to the neighborhood end up being the best neighbors. I like the idea of smaller units that people own. I think we should all support this project.

Concluded - 8:31pm