

Broad Ripple Village Association Special Public Meeting

Regarding the Proposed Development at 6349 College Avenue

Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

Broad Ripple United Methodist Church

Meeting Notes by Elaine Zukerman, BRVA Land Use & Development Committee

I. Welcome & Opening Remarks—Jay Wetzel, BRVA President

- Jay Wetzel called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and explained that the BRVA has not taken a position on this issue. Asked everyone to keep an open mind and take the on line survey regarding this issue.
- Mark Wolf, past president of the BRVA explained the process of the special meeting and mentioned the people on the agenda. Asked that everyone share the microphones as have five but only three are working. Thanked the Broad Ripple United Methodist Church for hosting this meeting.

II. Background—Tom Healy, BRVA Director

- Tom Healy explained the Envision Broad Ripple Plan adoption by the City and how the Land Use and Development Committee uses this guide in its decisions on issues. Showed a slide show of the plan recommendations showing
 1. Critical Area
 2. Neighborhood Village Mixed Use
 3. Three Typologies-- North Village Local, College Avenue, Canal AreaSuggested going on the BRVA website to check out this plan.

Broad Ripple would not exist without the Canal. Starting in 1836 with the canal being established to what it is today plus what the canal provides as an historic waterway. In 1987 the BRVA began looking into how to make the canal more attractive and in 1994 they looked into transforming the canal for when the parking deck would be removed in 1997. In 2000, a portion of the north side of the canal was transformed and the pedestrian bridge at College was established. In 2011 the Broad Ripple Alliance for Progress (BRAP), the BRVA's fundraising arm, funded an urban design for the canal area for more and better pedestrian use. In 2012 there was a proposal to make areas of Broad Ripple along the canal to have higher density. There is also an initiative to connect the waterways of the City to create attractive spaces for human contact called Reconnecting Our Waterways (ROW).

III. Midtown Economic District and TIF—Elizabeth Marshall, Midtown Economic Council Member

- Elizabeth Marshall explained her commitment to the BRVA and Midtown. Expressed the conversation between both groups is to help people. Mentioned the TIF initiative includes only commercial properties and that the hope is that when used, it spurs investment in the area for both residential and commercial. The City would be asking for TIF and then the City County Council makes the final decision. Tonight's meeting should be focused on discussing the development and not TIF.

IV. Presentation of Proposed Development—Joe Scimia with Faegre Baker Daniels

- Joe Scimia introduced the panelists:
 - Jamie Browning, Browning Investments, Inc.
 - Greg Jacoby, Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf Architects
 - Bryan Chandler, Eclipse Real Estate who represents Whole Foods

- Jimmy Curtis, Sheehan Development
- Joe Scimia explained they have filed with the Department of Metropolitan Development for the rezoning of 1.9 acres from the C-2 classification to a C-3C classification to provide for retail commercial and residential uses. And a variance of development standards to provide for a grocery store with 35,000 square feet and a mixed use structure with a height of 85 feet.
- The Shell Station was zoned C-2 which permits primarily office and residential uses. There is a restrictive covenant on the Shell property that prohibits residential use. They have been unsuccessful in removing this. The apartments were built in 1930 and are zoned C-2.
- The proposal is for a 5-story building with about 90 apartments over a 35,000 square foot grocery store. If there were no grocery, they would break up the size of the space into smaller (no single retail space larger than) 12,000 square feet for retail space.
- This development team was formed in response to the RFP for the parking garage. They were not awarded that project but the team was approached by the City to encourage and continue efforts to develop the site. The development team met with the City and BRVA to discuss components of this project. The City would not provide assistance for apartments only. The project must contain significant retail components.
- The Broad Ripple Plan asked for vision statements:
 1. **Increase density**—Village is short of full time residents to be self sustaining-more critical mass-more day time hours for goods and services and “live, work, play, gather” theme.
 2. **Seek ways to develop key projects**—funding options as TIF.
 3. **Maintain mixed income diversity**—housing opportunities for all ages
 4. **Respect Central Canal**—this is a key piece
 5. **Increase trees and open space**—especially along the canal and will include lighting
 6. **Honor historic aspects of Broad Ripple**—Shell Gas Station and apartments are not historic in Broad Ripple
 7. **Improve the image of the Village**—art and friendly public spaces—gateway
 8. **Foster and improve sustainability**—green initiatives possible for the project
 9. **Improve transportation and infrastructure**—not a lot to add or subtract to this plan.
- Joe Scimia explained before starting they looked at other cities. Feel their plan does meet most of the above points. They do have:
 1. An established track record of locating urban redevelopment
 2. A strong interest in Broad Ripple
 3. Will provide services and products not currently in Broad Ripple
 4. Appeal to residents and surrounding areas
 5. Will have both interior and exterior components
 6. An established track record
 7. Financially sound and credit worthy
 8. Willing to make long term commitment

For game change for Broad Ripple looked for something used in day time hours. Looked at healthy life style and something organic as that is not in Broad Ripple.

(Disturbance in audience at the mention of no organic place—shouts for Good Earth). Joe Scimia explained there are components that will compete with businesses in the Village.

- Greg Jacoby, architect on the project, explained working with the BRVA in 2011 and also with the Water Company on the canal in Broad Ripple.
 1. The first floor will be the grocery store set back 20 feet to allow for pedestrian use, tables, and walkways.

2. Parking will be behind Johnny's Market in a 3-story garage for use by the apartments, grocery store and visitors. Grocery store parking spaces may be open to the public when store is closed.
3. Apartments will be on top of the grocery store. Have a connection from the parking garage to the apartments. Cannot have housing on the Shell Station site. Apartment entrances will face the canal.
4. Would like for the canal to become an urban walkway. The Water Co. is considering putting a harder edge along the canal.
5. Would like to create a plaza and bridge area for public and civic uses.
6. Will have trees and green space around the entire site.

V. Q & A Panel—Jim Holland, Moderator/BRVA Director

- Jim Holland explained being a long time friend of the late Bob Landman and asked for a low key, rational discussion in Bob's memory. Jim Holland opened the questioning.

Q. Why does the height of the building need to be 85 feet?

A. Need 2 stairwells on the roof and an elevator shaft, thus the 85 feet. The rest of the height will be 70 to 75 feet.

Q. Area resident mentioned the 1991 levy project that is still not done and how is this going to affect this project? Also questioned the traffic issue on College Ave.

A. Greg Jacoby explained they need to handle the 100 year flood plan and will be building up for the site. The garage does not need to be raised. A traffic study will be done to time the stoplights, turning lanes, and anything else affecting vehicular traffic. All the studies will be done by the City of Indianapolis.

Q. A resident of 50 years suggested taking this project to an area that needs redevelopment like around 38th Street.

- Jim Holland requested that questions be asked rather than statements.

A. Joe Scimia explained this project could not go to 38th Street, as there is not enough density there or the real need for a project of this size. If the project is completed it will help fund other projects in the area by providing TIF funds.

Q. How much damage to the Village?

A. Will be replacing a closed gas station, old apartments and enhancing the canal.

Q. Concerned for safety in this area, a resident explained being hit by a car crossing College Ave. and asked if the apartments will be open to people of any income level and feels the building site plan does not reflect the look of Broad Ripple.

A. There will be studio, 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. Price will be determined by the size of the apartment. There will be no subsidy (Section 8, etc.) for rents.

Q. Will Whole Foods be competition for Johnny's Market?

A. Joe Scimia explained they have talked to the owner of Johnny's and he feels this is a good project and will help his business. Johnny's Market leases from the American Legion.

Q. Will fire trucks be able to get to the building?

A. All necessary setbacks and emergency access will need to be approved by the Fire Department and Marshall before starting the construction process.

Q. Will number of apartments be for seniors and how many apartments will be handicapped accessible?

A. Federal law dictates how many units will have amenities for seniors and handicapped. Will probably be a combination of bath and showers in the units.

Q. Diana expressed that Whole Foods is just 2 miles from Broad Ripple and read a statement by Whole Foods that they support small and local produce sellers. Fresh Market is just down the street. Why have a Whole Foods here?

A. Brian Chandler explained entering a market with other groceries is what Fresh Market did and the CEO for Whole Foods has wanted to come to Broad Ripple for 20 years. Whole Foods approached the developer.

Q. Resident explained Fresh Market received 5-year tax abatement and now Whole Foods is asking for a TIF. Feel this is transferring the wealth from the other facilities and why should this be supported if it destroys local stores?

A. Joe Scimia explained that the addition of Fresh Market did not close any other stores. TIF dollars can only be used for certain things, for this project it will go towards:

1. acquisitions and demolition
2. relocation and extension of utility lines
3. vacation of alleys and streets
4. cost of flood proofing lower floors
5. canal path, streetscapes and lighting
6. gathering area
7. parking structure

- Jim Holland explained Citizens Energy Group owns the canal.
- Joe Scimia explained Citizens is looking into what they can do to improve the canal that would be consistent with this project. They are working with all the stake holders in this project. This plan is conceptual. Need zoning first.

Q. Regarding the apartment structure, why not refurbish what is already there and have future rendering look more like Broad Ripple?

A. Joe Scimia explained the current owners of the apartments are present and that although in livable condition, the units are at the end of their lifecycle. They have no historical significance to Broad Ripple. As far as the present drawings, they are just renderings and nowhere near what the end design will be. Mentioned that without zoning they do not want to put too much into this. Will engage further in architecture if they get the zoning.

Q. A resident who lives near the canal feels the improvements and safety of canal is a plus and questions why the density?

A. Elizabeth Marshall explained that currently Broad Ripple is a destination neighborhood and that it sees most of its visitation on weekends and weekend evenings. Broad Ripple needs more daytime, weekday density to support the businesses that are here. It needs more people walking to storefronts. BRVA wants to bring people to daytime Broad Ripple not just the bars at night and this project could be a way to bring density to the area.

Q. Adam Hill commended this group for a new development and asked Browning if they could do the development without Whole Foods?

A. Jamie Browning explained they could not do this without the TIF and need the commercial use.

Q. With commercial density could they break up the 35,000 square feet and still do the project?

A. Joe Scimia, yes, this could be done but this would cause more competition for businesses already in Broad Ripple. This is an issue but right now do not have a demand for smaller spaces. Feel this is a good catalyst and mentioned other areas that are successful like Chelsea Village and places in Chicago.

Q. Asked Whole Foods to commit to no alcoholic beverage sales.

A. Brian Chandler explained that Whole Foods sells beer and wine and feel what they are proposing is consistent with Whole Foods does in other areas. Whole Foods is a family-friendly store.

Q. Would they commit to no bars or liquor permits in this development?

A. No.

Q. Has Whole Foods considered that Sunflower Market could not survive?

A. Brian Chandler explained that Super Foods owned Sunflower Market and they lost interest in organics. We know our competition.

Q. Has anyone on the panel been on the Metropolitan Zoning Board?

A. No.

Q. Have any of their attorneys been on the Midtown, Inc. or Midtown Economic Council (MEC) board?

A. There was one who excused himself from that issue.

Q. Is this going to be approved and awarded without remonstrations? Has anyone been involved with the 49th Street revitalization?

A. Joe Scimia stated they would follow all the legal processes.

- Jim Holland explained anyone could go the Metropolitan Development Board hearing on June 13, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. at the City County Building. The BRVA only sends recommendations; its decision is not binding.

Q. Mark Small, a resident, questioned voting against this project.

A. Elizabeth Marshall explained TIF needs to go through the City County Council and there will be future discussions and opportunities to weigh in on that.

Q. Will there be other retail shops or is Whole Foods the only one?

A. Greg Jacoby explained the first floor is only Whole Foods and they have cafes and deli's and people can eat inside or out.

Q. A landscape designer asked about buffering the area with landscaping as he lives across the street and has a pool that the upper floor apartments might be able to look down on.

A. Greg Jacoby suggested planting trees around the pool and they will be planning trees along the east side of College Ave. and the canal.

Q. Does the height of the building follow the Envision Broad Ripple master plan?

A. Greg Jacoby explained they need the height for the density and this does meet the height for along College Ave.

Q. Will Whole Foods vacate Nora if this is approved for Broad Ripple?

A. Brian Chandler stated Whole Foods just signed a 20-year lease for Nora.

Q. Has Whole Foods ever closed a store?

A. Brian Chandler was not sure but did not think so. If they did it was because of a merger of some sort.

Q. Traffic on Broad Ripple Ave. is terrible and this could soon happen on College Ave. Asked about the City taking out the parking meters to open those lanes.

A. Joe Scimia explained knowing of no plan to redo College Ave. They are looking at Carrollton Ave. and 64th Street. Agreed there is a traffic issue and they will conduct a traffic study.

- Elizabeth Marshall explained that the BRVA was integral in reducing the number of lanes on Broad Ripple Ave because we want a walking, biking community and less vehicles. Thinks 4 traffic lanes on Broad Ripple Ave would increase the speed on Broad Ripple Ave making it dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Q. A Nora resident explained when Whole Foods wanted to go there they opposed and lost in every avenue they pursued. Asked when you shop in the grocery, where do you park and how do you get groceries from the store to your car?

A. Joe Scimia explained there would be parking in the garage. Each floor has 90 to 100 spaces and an elevator. Use the elevator with your cart and leave cart in designated space.

Q. Does the Whole Foods representative (Brian Chandler) work for Whole Foods?

A. Have worked for many of their stores.

Q. How many places have stores this close?

A. Illinois has some 1-mile to 1 block from each other. Also were involved when Target added a grocery in Nora.

Q. Is it a good idea to have a grocery store over a brown field?

A. Joe Scimia explained the area meets standards for a grocery store use. The concern is contamination of the water table for wells. However, this is not applicable to urban environments. We are on city water, not wells. They have tried to remove the covenants but have been unsuccessful.

Q. Kathy Andry stated feeling they will be successful in getting their zoning and asked for a commitment about the building architecture and would they come back to the BRVA and the community on how this building will look?

A. Yes, they will come and work with the BRVA before the final design.

- Jim Holland expressed between now and June 13th there is time to work on some areas of the development and even narrow down some of the issues.

Q. Why are the hearings during the day and not at night?

A. Suggested talking to the City County Council representatives present tonight about how daytime meetings are difficult for community members to attend.

Q. Concerned about the parking garage and can it not look like a garage, be more attractive and compliment the area?

A. Joe Scimia explained working with local artist for murals.

Q. Have something more residential looking?

A. Greg Jacoby explained they will try to make this look good and are thinking of landscaping.

Q. What about the vacation of streets and alleys?

A. Joe Scimia explained they would go through the vacation process on Laverock Road and the alley south of 63rd Street.

- Jim Holland thanked everyone for attending. If there are more questions and concerns they could fill out the survey or contact the BRVA.

VI. Closing

- President of the BRVA, Jay Wetzel adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.