

# URBAN DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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TO: **Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee**

SUBJECT: Minutes of May 8, 2013 Meeting

DATE: 08 May 2013

FINAL

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The Urban Design Advisory Committee convened for their quarterly meeting on Wednesday, May 8 at 9:00am in Room 2100 at City Hall. The following members were in attendance at the meeting:

Elisabeth Lardner  
Marie McKenney Tavernini  
Roger Waud  
Bruce Machanic, co-chair  
Daniel Straub, co-chair

The following City Staff, representatives for the Applicants, and citizen representatives were also in attendance:

Dirk Geratz	P&Z
Maya Contraras	P&Z
Karl Moritz	P&Z
Nancy Williams	P&Z
Gwen Wright	P&Z
Jeremy McPike	DGS
Michael Stewart	DGS
Christina Bartley	Y12 Investments LLC
Stewart Bartley	Y12 Investments LLC
Garrett Erdle	Y12 Investments LLC
Shawn Glerum	Heffner Architects
Matt Clark	LandDesign, Landscape Architects
Bud Hart	Attorney at Law
Mary Catherine Gibbs	Attorney at Law

## **INTRODUCTION**

- The meeting was called to order at 9:00am as the quarterly meeting for UDAC. The purpose of the meeting was to update the committee on existing and potential projects and the status of planning activity in OTN, and to review the streetscape elements of the project for 700-702 North Washington Street (incorporating the Travel Lodge Motel), which was previously presented in February.

## **NEW BUSINESS and UPDATES**

- The developer (Y12 Investments LLC) and architect (Heffner Architects), who were selected for the renovation of the Old Health Department Building gave a brief presentation of the proposed concept for this project. The concept is to preserve and renovate the entire building for 9 condominium units and 7 townhouse units. The Applicant will return to UDAC as the project proceeds.
- Planning Staff (KMoritz) gave a presentation on the status of Council action on the FY14 Agenda for planning activity. According to Staff, Council was very receptive to UDAC's formal letter requesting high priority for the upgrade of the SAP for OTN combined with the needed planning for the power plant site; and it was informally selected as the "frontrunner" until a later push for the Eisenhower West SAP. Unfortunately, Staff also indicated that there is only enough staff capacity to address one SAP at a time.
- Planning Staff (NWilliams) gave a presentation on the status of the planning activity associated with the power plant site. According to Staff, the City is concerned with two major issues: 1) the importance of keeping the site's new website up and open for communication, and 2) the new owner's timeline for re-purposing the site. Staff indicated that they have conference call with the new owner next week. Staff also indicated that NOTICE has been developing a visioning process for the power plant site. The visioning process is scheduled for May 16, and a walking tour of the site and other adjacent areas is scheduled for May 20.

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- Planning Staff (NWilliams) gave a presentation on the status of the renovation of the Sheetmetal Building (The Oronoco). Staff explained that the Waterfront Committee and the developer (EYA) have indicated that a tour of the building will be scheduled as soon as the building frame is encased. Discussion followed on the meaning and extent of the term “re-skinning” of an existing building and what leverage Staff has to bring such significant “by-right” projects to UDAC for review. UDAC proposed that it may be appropriate for the City to re-visit the determination process and perhaps establish a square footage threshold for small projects to proceed with current minimal P&Z review. UDAC also proposed that certain planning and engineering terms, i.e Grading Plan and Site Plan, can probably be used help establish a trigger for more formal review. Staff will discuss the possibility of proposing new zoning language with the City Attorney that would set a maximum square footage threshold before more formal review is required, and they will also discuss whether certain technical terms and requirements may be used to trigger a UDAC review. GWright offered to ask the City Attorney to attend the next UDAC meeting for a formal discussion of this issue.

### OLD BUSINESS

- **700-702 North Washington Street**

This project was re-presented to UDAC in February after being withdrawn in 2008 (see February minutes). Following the discussion and based upon the quality of the submission, UDAC unanimously voted to **recommend approval** and to **endorse the conceptual design** of this project. However, UDAC could **not endorse the streetscape design aspects** of the project. The committee also encouraged Staff to work with the Applicant with respect to possibly reducing the parking requirement for the retail aspect of the project, and making part of the residential aspect of the project meet ‘affordable housing’ criteria.

Following the February meeting, the Applicant submitted a “landscape concept” as part of the Completeness Review. This part of the submission was rejected by UDAC as inadequate to evaluate the appropriateness of the streetscape with respect to the Design Guidelines. In addition, Staff evaluated the overall submission as INCOMPLETE and requested several items from the Applicant including an appropriate Landscape Plan.

In response to the above, the Applicant’s representative (LandDesign) gave a presentation of the current landscape planting design for the project and described aspects of the paving and lighting design for the proposed streetscape. Discussion followed about:

1. the uniqueness of this project with respect to having both Residential and Retail uses front on Washington Street thereby encouraging different sidewalk widths;
2. the technical need for the planters that encroach into the public sidewalk space;
3. the need for additional lower level lighting in the Residential aspects of the project to highlight the public sidewalk changes, the encroachments, and for pedestrian safety;
4. the compatibility of the proposed shrub planting with the architecture;
5. the compatibility of the proposed paving with the proposed site grading;
6. the need for the preservation of the existing granite curb and how it will be addressed;
7. the need to meet the canopy crown coverage requirements as a modification and possible tree planting dedication; and
8. the importance of identifying how this proposed streetscape preserves, protects and improves the character of Washington Street as required in the adopted Washington Street Public Space Design Guidelines (WSPSDG).

After discussion with Staff, the Committee requested that the Applicant prepare a “final concept plan” submission that integrates all of the disparate design elements into one unified “urban design submission”. The final submission should address, and explain, how the basic design elements of building, architecture, site design, and landscape architecture are combined to meet the Design Guidelines. And just as the architectural submission explained how the project meets the standards of historic preservation, this submission should include an explanation/narrative of how this project meets the required standard of “...creating an attractive pedestrian environment and fostering a sense of place, arrival and community” (WSPSDG). The Committee expects that this submission will not require another meeting and presentation unless it does not include the integrated information to evaluate the overall appropriateness of the urban design proposal.

### ADJOURNMENT

- The Committee adjourned at approximately 10:30am.  
Please notify the author of any additions, deletions or mistakes in this report.
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