

McGraw House Proposed Expansion
Minutes – Public Meeting #1

Meeting Date: May 11, 2009
Date Minutes Prepared: May 18, 2009

Attendees: See attached sign-in sheet

1. Carol Mallision, Executive Director of McGraw House provided a brief history of McGraw House.
2. Joe Bowes, Senior Real Estate Developer, PathStone Corporation explained that PathStone is a non-profit organization headquartered in Rochester and is a development partner with McGraw House. Joe noted that he lives in Ithaca. He explained that PathStone and McGraw House have been working on the proposed expansion project for about nine months and developed an initial design for expansion on the adjacent property. He noted that the initial design was not well received by the community, so the developers have decided to go back to the drawing board and spend the next three months engaged in a community planning process. This is the first meeting which is a listening session.
3. A member of the audience asked what Joe meant by “the initial concept was not well received”? Joe explained that there were concerns regarding the demolition of the Minnick house (225 S. Geneva Street) and concern regarding the height, scale and length of the proposed new building. He emphasized that the developers have determined that the Minnick House will NOT be demolished.
4. Another member of the audience asked what the developers were planning to do with the Minnick House and whether McGraw House still has an option on the property? Joe explained that there is still an option in place and that there are still plans to include the property in the development, but a final use for the house has not yet been determined.
5. Peter Trowbridge, Principal, Trowbridge and Wolf Landscape Architects explained that the goal of the meeting was to go around the room and give each of those in attendance a few minutes to speak about the project. First he asked everyone to introduce themselves.
6. Following is a synopsis of the comments:
 - Minnick house will not be demolished.
 - There is a need for affordable housing for seniors.
 - Retain small downtown neighborhood feeling – encourage owner-occupied houses.
 - The scale of the proposed project is a concern.
 - Stepping a new building down toward Clinton Street is a good idea.
 - No change on Geneva Street.

- Look at enhancing the landscaping at the entry to the existing parking lot.
- Screen the parking lots around the existing building.
- Do not want to see more of the same going up.
- McGraw House is in an ideal location downtown.
- Concerned about the impact on the neighborhood – building massing and parking.
- Find alternate location for any additional parking.
- McGraw House is comfortable and convenient for seniors.
- Baby Boomers will need housing; McGraw House is ideal.
- Need more affordable housing in Ithaca.
- Make McGraw House more compatible with the neighborhood.
- Tear down cinder block box (LUBS Building); move Minnick House or house at 116 Clinton Street there??
- Could the Victorian for sale across the street be used instead of the expansion...for lease-up; office space; install an elevator and be used for housing?
- Consider rehabbing nine bedroom Italianate (116 Clinton Street) for McGraw House residents
- Changing the façade of the existing McGraw House to fit in with the neighborhood might attract more homeowners.
- Don't just look out from McGraw House property; also consider what it looks like from the other side of the street.
- Concern about whether the proposed expansion fits in with the housing needs in a responsible way.
- If McGraw is expanded too much, there might be a loss of community; quality of life may diminish.
- Expansion project should have low impact on the neighborhood.
- In favor of more senior housing.
- What would happen to 116 Clinton residents?
- The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan calls for more affordable senior housing, which is integral to the community as the population ages.
- I'm on the McGraw House waiting list and support expansion.
- Who is McGraw House? Are they concerned about quality of life in the neighborhood or just money?
- Ithaca is changing; need more McGraw Houses.
- Use existing houses.
- Consider smaller houses.
- Why does the larger community have the right to tell Southside what to do?
- Don't let a developer's dream become a senior citizens' nightmare.
- Should not become McGraw Towers.
- Want to be able to stay downtown when living in senior housing.
- IC students across street from McGraw House partying can be annoying.
- There are no absolutes; the right to expand does not come absolutely.
- There are protections in place with zoning.
- Don't want to see what happened in 1971; McGraw House cuts off the neighborhood from the city.
- Don't want to see expansion of same box; find a design that is more in scale with the neighborhood.

- Don't take down any more houses.
 - Get rid of some of the parking requirements.
 - Expansion will be environmentally friendly; LUBS will make sure expansion will fit into the neighborhood.
 - The expansion project needs to satisfy both sides.
 - The existing McGraw House building acts as a buffer between the neighborhood & the hotel, downtown traffic, etc. An expansion would extend buffer just a little more. Having a buffer is important.
 - Two great ideas - strong growing downtown neighborhood and need for senior housing. They are not mutually exclusive. Very hopeful that there will be development concept that can make both a reality.
 - Large scale expansion would be a terrible idea for the neighborhood; maybe some expansion would be OK, but not a lot.
 - Rather than put money in a new building, why not enhance the existing building and improve quality of life.
 - Cities are made for density; preserve green space by developing downtown; the location is ideal for people who walk; don't put seniors up on a hill out of town; doesn't make much sense.
 - A benefit of McGraw House is that it's all in one building; people don't feel cut off from the community.
 - Until there are other senior living facilities downtown, McGraw is it; some need to expand.
 - Places like Conifer Village are too remote; McGraw is convenient - downtown.
 - Like existing diversity of the current neighborhood.
 - The existing McGraw House is already out of scale with the neighborhood.
 - Make sure it doesn't become the senior citizen block.
 - Have other options been considered?
 - Make sure expansion is not out of scale with the neighborhood.
 - McGraw House is a vibrant part of the neighborhood.
 - McGraw House planning committee has spent time talking with residents and has a list of resident needs and concerns regarding the expansion.
7. Attendees were each given three colored stickers and asked to place a sticker next to the comment(s) they agree most with.

Prepared by,
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