

October 2021 FPSE Neighborhood Association Meeting with Lux Living Community Discussion

Starting at timestamp 1:41:03

Dan Doelling: Please raise your hand if you wish you speak, we will go person by person

1:42:21 Catherine Nolan : A lot of us expressed real concerns about the impact that this building would have on the community. I get the feeling that they (Lux Living) are just brushing that off. Getting rid of the blighted buildings is good, but there are real concerns about what the building would do for the neighborhood, and Lux Living doesn't seem to be giving those any concern

1:43:43 Julie B: Great job Dan! Question: Does Lux Living need anything from us to build this? Do we have any leverage?

Catherine N: No, is my understanding

Dan: Correct, they seem to be abiding by the form based code. The only thing stopping them at the moment is review with CRO for demolition. We are in contact with Meg from CRO who is listening to these meetings and taking our feedback into account. The demo permit was applied for in early September, and they have 45 (business) days to approve or deny

1:46:00 Julie B: Follow-up question: Is there a public process, or public input in the demo permit process?

Alderwoman Pihl: I can look into it. Your voices need to be vocal on what your needs are and the community input can be brought to the attention of the developers, and taking all of this information in is a lot and synthesizing that

1:47:00 Dan D: Question from the chat, can our blocks be made into residential parking only, would that fix the parking problem?

That's a Park Central question, but it doesn't quite solve the problem since there is no enforcement

1:47:42 Lucas G: Concern is that there are fewer parking spaces than beds, and no visitor parking. Suspects it will be on his block. It's hard enough to park as it is. Also, two-way traffic in the alley with increased traffic will be an issue, especially with the dumpsters

1:48:40 Catherine N: I thought they talked last time about making another alley.

Dan: Their original proposal called for changing the alley

1:49:50 Stephen Beghany: If there are no variances being requested, we don't have a lot of leverage. It seems that the biggest issue is the access to the building. Suggests that residents focus their feedback on this issue, try to get the access to be on Kingshighway instead of the alley

1:51:15 Tom: Why doesn't Lux look at one of their buildings for traffic patterns instead of relying on outdated and non-specific numbers?

Dan D: That's a reasonable ask

1:52:03 Michael Browning: Concerned about the quality of their buildings. Lux Living has a track record of cutting corners. Their new buildings are poor quality. In a few years, their building will be a detriment to the neighborhood, won't be that nice.

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Dan D: We tried asking for elaboration on the differences between the properties that they own under Asprient/CityWide and Lux Living and they didn't really answer it

Catherine N: Well they don't want to answer it. They already sold the Tribeca. It wasn't even a year old when they sold it. And that was supposed to be one of their big landmark properties and it's already unloaded

1:53:45 Mark Barnett: My concern is that we are dealing with a bad actor. We have heard that they are banned from buying at Home Depot because of bad practices. We've heard about their lawsuits. I have major concerns that they can present and talk nicely but I have a lack of trust

Dan D: Someone in the chat notes that they didn't deal with the current tenants (in the Oakland and Arco properties) either. They are in the process of selling them to someone but didn't take care of them for the longest time. Not to mention all of the other issues brought up with their tenants in their other properties, and they have sold two of their buildings so far

1:55:30 Alderwoman Pihl: In terms of Lux Living, when I was running for election, there were five individuals who approached me about an issue in their building. Their elevator wasn't working. I pointed them towards some resources but I wasn't an elected official at that time. I remember at the previous meeting, they haven't said anything about touring their older properties. They are saying that they take care of their newer properties, but those will eventually be older properties, and I'm concerned that they won't take care of them.

1:57:30: Question from Aaron Birch in the chat: What is the best use of these properties (pie in the sky) what would your dream be?

Ryan: wants an even denser development

Kerry: Affordable housing

Mary: A 3-story condo

1:59:00 Dan D: Lux Living is building a development in Kansas City along the riverfront and Kansas City passed an ordinance that required buildings of a certain size to have X number of affordable housing units. Affordable housing is definitely a larger concern that St. Louis needs to take up. Right now though, there's nothing holding Lux to do affordable housing.

Catherine: Green Space

Dan D: People have no issue with the development but have issue with the track record of the developer

Tracey: Prefers this building to Drury's plan, but the traffic impact is a concern

Dan D: Traffic in that section is a big concern of a lot of people. People see day-to-day the traffic build up on Taylor Ave. The traffic study they provided was a national study, but studies from cities that have better public transportation may not translate to this development. A more neighborhood specific study. I'm going to stop talking about let other people talk. It's not my meeting, it's yours.

2:03:13 Dan shows the original proposal for the alleyway, but that plan isn't in use anymore.

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Dan D: so we're all clear, the new proposal shows that the alley remains where it currently is. There is still concern about the bus stop located on Kingshighway. How would someone get off the bus? Then there are other concerns about a curbcut on Kingshighway, how that would effect pedestrian traffic

Catherine N: Basically it's a lot of people in cars in a pretty small space

2:05:29: Q from the chat: What does transit-oriented development mean for Lux?

Dan D: That's a great question to ask

2:06:02 Dan D: Tom had mentioned that the form-based code was supposed to reflect the neighborhood aesthetic, other people in the chat mentioned that it doesn't need to be brick but should compliment the neighborhood around it. Dan D is asking what do people prefer?

2:07:55: Andre lives on the 4400 bock of Gibson. Lux mentioned selling the property at around \$325,000 per unit, which would put the property around \$50 million dollars. I'm struggling with how it's not profitable to build something that is 30 or 40 units, which would still get you \$10 million. Going for the plan that they are with five stories of wood, it's basically a profit-maximizing approach where you don't have to spend much money to build higher. Jamming as much as possible into as small of a space as possible. This is just their way to make a lot of money

Catherine N: Yeah and then sell it off to make more money

2:09:27 Dan D: Anyone else have any thoughts on that or the design?

2:09:45: Alderwoman Pihl: saw a question about fire trucks coming in and out. This is a wood beam building. We have seen on Lindell a new building that went up in flames.

Catherine N: If they didn't have to get a variance for that, it must meet the requirements

2:11:00 Dan D checks the form-based code regarding podium buildings, brings up FBC on screen. Shows that this area is classified as Neighborhood Core. Building meets requirements

2:13:44: Percy Green III: Listening to a lot of the questions and comments about the building, wanted to say that these are good concerns. The big thing is the traffic, and the maintenance and upkeep of this building. Our weapon, if this thing should go through, is our alderperson. These people don't uphold their promises, Sweet-T is the person that can address it and get it under control. That's what we elect the alderperson for. We have a mechanism to keep these people in check if they don't uphold what they said they were going to do.

2:16:09: Alderwoman Pihl: What Percy said is a good statement. As a community, you need to come to me. I can't track everything. But in terms of construction, I think that things need to be outlined in detail before construction starts

2:16:55: Mark ? At this phase that we're in now, what leverage, if any at all, does the community have on the design element, the number of units? Outside of the form-based code, is there something more that can be asked in this first phase?

Dan D: At the end of the meeting, it sounded like Vic wanted to hear from us: requests on how to change the proposal. Obviously there are limitations to what he can and can't do.

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Mark: It's socially responsible, but there's nothing there that holds them to anything.

Dan D: In the past, under Park Central Development, any developer that goes through them has to sign a good neighbor agreement. I've never seen what that document holds or how it's enforced, but I think the bigger issue is things that the city need to consider. Alderpeople need to come together and agree on things like a tenant's rights bill.

Mark: Having community and municipal oversight on development is beneficial. A Park Central-like group that could inform all of us

2:21:55 Alderwoman Pihl: Everything that they put into a plan for a development needs to be detailed and put into an agreement with the city and the community, and there are city staff that can be helpful in making some of these things compliant. If you see something that isn't compliant, then that's something that needs to be brought up with myself.

But in terms of the first phase, the feedback we've gotten should be used to mitigate some of the issues. I will be advocating for the needs of the community there

Catherine N: We just need to keep bringing stuff up, that's all we can do

2:23:50: Richard Bose: I was trying to stay quiet because I don't live in the neighborhood, but I thought you all would want to hear about our experience in Skinker-Debalivere, their three buildings here. Their construction sites were extremely messy. Typically they haven't had much to demo, but in this case, these seven buildings, there is probably lead paint in those buildings. Stay on top of them, make sure they do it correctly. At some point, Lux had blocked the greenway, and someone raised a stink and we got a covered walkway. But I wonder if this proposal was in my neighborhood, would I be supportive? And I just don't think so, their track record...Chelsea looks pretty nice, I've been inside, but how's it going to age? I'm not sure. I'm not worried about traffic and parking, but with this developer in particular. Come over to Debalivere. What's really got in my craw is their lawsuit, the Expo, it's stalled the project which just means further delays and the sidewalks being closed. It's negatively affecting our quality of life.

2:26:34 Catherine N: That's a little discouraging

2:27:13: Dan D asks JC Fink if he is able to expand on that question about abatement

JC: More in regards to asbestos, when they are demo'ing, are they spraying down to make sure dust and debris are not a problem?

Alderwoman Pihl: There are laws about what they need to do.

2:28:19: Catherine N: Maybe we should end so that Dan can relax from this whole ordeal

Dan D: I want you all to have a chance to be heard. I feel awful that we had to turn people away from the door at Hot Java. Not in our control at all, but we tried to make this successful. I do need to walk my dog, but I will stay on as long as there are questions

CatherineN : I think it's impressive that 70 people were logged in at one point, that shows that people are interested

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Alderwoman Pihl: I want to thank the Neighborhood Association in terms of notifying residents about these meetings. This is a miraculous number of people. Really good community engagement. Thank you to the neighborhood association. Great job!

2:30:30 Dan D: There's a link to a form in the chat, that survey goes directly to Sweet-T, so if you have any remaining question you can use that. We will do our best to consolidate the feedback from tonight. We will have recordings on our website.

Next meeting is November 16th, we're having our elections.