

Federal Hill Neighborhood Association
Special Meeting
Tuesday, November 2, 2021
(via Zoom)

CALL TO ORDER:

Beth Whitmer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
Approximately 44 participants were in attendance via Zoom

PURPOSE:

The Special Meeting of FHNA was called to discuss the “rehabilitation and renovation” of Harbor Hill Apartments

DISCUSSION:

Beth shared that on October 19th she received a message from the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) that the Harbor Hill apartment project has been revived.

Fran Landolf is the Chairman of the Federal Hill Architectural Review Committee (ARC). He shared that the purpose of ARC is to maintain the historical architectural fabric of the neighborhood and that the committee has no decision-making ability. It formulates a position for the neighborhood. Fran introduced Eric Holcomb, CHAP Executive Director, and Stacy Montgomery, Historic Preservation Planner for CHAP.

Eric shared that there is a hearing planned on November 9th to approve the renovations to Harbor Hill apartments. In 2017 the Commission approved the plan with conditions. The conditions were to:

- look at the connector of the school building with the new building
- look at the setbacks on Riverside Avenue
- look at setback on the 4th floor on Grindall Street

The height of the building has already been approved. The setbacks being addressed are not the street-level setbacks but the 4th floor setbacks. The committee did not approve the final details of the project but the developer is seeking final detail approval at the hearing on November 9th. The developer has addressed the three conditions identified.

- revisions to the connector have been provided
- the setback for the 4th floor on Riverside is 18”
- the setback on Grindall Street is 5 feet and 9 feet

CHAP will be looking at the revisions and the final details applying historical preservation guidelines. CHAP approval is separate but concurrent with other reviews. The developers need approval from the Zoning Board and from CHAP and the stricter requirements always govern.

Stacy shared that the Commission can accept public testimony up until November 8th at 5 p.m. Parking and occupancy issues are important but are not within the CHAP purview. Emails should be sent to Stacy and Eric. All written testimony will be shared with the Commissioner. In addition, residents can participate in the virtual hearing.

A FHNA member shared some concerns with the plans:

- The building is not historic in any way per the drawings
- The developer originally testified that the building would be no higher than 35 feet and lower than the school building
- The setback on the 4th floor does no good – need street-level setbacks

Eric stated that CHAP guidelines allow for contemporary architecture in historic districts as long as it complements the current structures. In 2017, the Commission approved everything except the three details discussed. The original plan is very similar to the current plan. The penthouse was approved in 2017. The height of the 4th floor cornice is 40 feet. The plan that was approved in 2017 has 40 foot building with two stair overruns and a penthouse. The definition of the height of the building does not include stair overruns or penthouses. The Commission won't contradict itself on parts of the plan that were already approved in 2017. The developer can't get a building permit without CHAP approval.

Stacy said that she would send the recording of the 2017 hearing and testimony.

Beth stated the next steps for the neighborhood to protest the building:

- A FHNA volunteered to help develop a template for people to use to write letters and an e-platform for petitions
- In order FHNA to write a letter protesting the project, there needs to be a vote. In order to vote, you must be a member of FHNA. Send an email supporting writing a letter to protest the project to ehillsider@gmail.com
- A Harbor Hill Apartments resident offered to work with other Harbor Hill residents to obtain a petition protesting the project
- ALL LETTERS AND EMAILS MUST BE RECEIVED BY CHAP BY NOVEMBER 8TH BY 5 p.m.

A FHNA member who was involved in the original protest of the building, stated that he can provide all documents related to the 2017 hearing and communications. His address is mbgterp@aol.com

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 p.m.