
From: Chris Rockwood <christopher.b.rockwood@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 1:55 AM
To: Andrew Meindl; James Moldenhauer; Margaret Arney; Brad Foley; Robin Brannin; Joseph Makhoul II; Ernst-Ulrich Franzen; David Lewis; Sean Lowe; Rob Gustafson; achampine@wauwtosa.net; Joe Phillips; Amanda Fuerst; Mike Morgan; Melissa Dolan; Jason Wilke; Dennis McBride
Cc: tclerk
Subject: [External] Public comment: Harlow & Hem project should NOT be approved without 20% affordable housing
Attachments: Joint Housing Coalition comments on Harlow & Hem 5-13-2024.pdf

Dear Community Affairs Committee members (and all other Common Council members),

I would like to submit a comment for the July 9 Community Affairs Committee meeting in which approval of plans for the Harlow & Hem apartment development will be considered.

I fully agree with the Wauwatosa Joint Housing Coalition's comments that were submitted on May 13 for consideration by the Plan Commission. I have attached a copy of those comments.

Like the members of the Joint Housing Coalition, I understand that economic conditions have changed drastically since the previous Harlow & Hem proposal, which included 130 units with 26 of them (20%) being affordable units, was approved. Mandel Group has since modified its proposal for the project to include 157 units, with a mix skewed more heavily toward studios and one-bedroom apartments (112 of 157 units).

The increase in the number of units is understandable because more revenue from apartment rentals is necessary to offset increased construction costs and interest rates, but the complete elimination of affordable housing in the current proposal makes it unacceptable. As the Joint Housing Coalition stated, "the city needs affordable housing now, not at some undetermined future time," and the city should not accept a payment to the Housing Fund in lieu of affordable units in this project.

I would like to join the Wauwatosa Joint Housing Coalition in urging the Community Affairs Committee, the Common Council, and the Design Review Board "to require that the Mandel Group honor the affordable housing requirement in the original RFP for the Blanchard site." That would require 32 affordable units (20% of 157) in the current proposal. I agree with the members of the Coalition that an increase in TIF would be appropriate to ensure the inclusion of 20% affordable units in the project.

It has become commonplace to see fellow Wauwatosa residents attacked and called NIMBYs for raising any concerns about approval of large apartment projects. I am not a NIMBY. Wauwatosa needs more housing. Our entire country needs more housing. I have no problem with apartments on the Blanchard site, but proposals that do not address the city's top three housing needs (affordable units, more large rental units for families with schoolchildren, and condos/townhomes) should not receive height limit exemptions and should not be subsidized by city taxpayers. As the Joint Housing Coalition's comments pointed out, "New city policy allows for height variances only for buildings which include affordable housing."

If Mandel Group (or any other developer) wants to build an entirely market-rate apartment development on the Blanchard site that will not provide any affordable housing, will not include a significant number of larger two- and three-bedroom units for families who will send their children to our schools, and will not include any units for sale (as in the original Harlow & Hem proposal with 89 apartments and four townhomes), the project should not receive an exemption from the C1 height limit and the Blanchard St. parking lot should not be sold to the developer for the bargain

price of \$200,000. The long-term economic value of that parking lot (with approximately 100 spaces) to the city and its businesses is much higher than \$200,000.

When you vote on the current Harlow & Hem proposal, please withhold approval unless/until the 20% affordable housing component is restored.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,
Chris Rockwood
2448 N. 73rd St.

From: Jennifer Neideen <jeneideen@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 4:27 PM
To: tclerk
Subject: [External] Community Comment Re: Rezoning Request for Harlow and Hem Apartments

7/9/2024

Dear City of Wauwatosa and Community Affairs Committee,

This is the second letter we have written in the last three months regarding potential development in the Village area of Wauwatosa. As stated in our previous letter, we have owned a home in the Olde Hillcrest neighborhood of Wauwatosa since 2003 and have witnessed many changes to the Village and other nearby areas over the years. Much of the change has been positive, with many wonderful business and green space additions. The growth and change have, for the most part, been thoughtful and in keeping with the character and charm that draws so many to the Village area. However, today we are writing to voice concerns regarding the potential Harlow and Hem development and its impact on this unique area of our city.

This new structure will be part of the Village area of our city for many years to come, and we have concerns with the current attempt by the developer to have the parcel rezoned. We feel that a building greater than 40 feet in height is not appropriate for this area, nor would a development larger than that fit in with the surrounding structures.

In addition, it is already difficult to drive in this highly trafficked area of the Village at certain times of the day, and turns from Blanchard Street onto Wauwatosa Avenue can be nearly impossible. It often feels treacherous attempting to cross Wauwatosa Avenue on foot heading to and from the Village shops and restaurants. We recently witnessed a child nearly struck by a vehicle that was cutting around another car allowing the child to traverse the crosswalk. We fear that an addition of 157+ apartments on this site will increase traffic to the extent that it is no longer safe for people to travel by foot in that area. If the zoning is held at a structure height of 40 feet or less, the developer will be more likely to scale down the number of apartments and reduce the impact on traffic and local infrastructure.

It is our understanding that rezoning this parcel will also adversely affect parking lot requirements. Giving the developer the option to possibly make parking more difficult will negatively impact the businesses in the area.

The parcel is already being sold to the developer at a steal, considering its prime, desirable location. The developer was well aware of the zoning of the parcel when the purchase agreement occurred, and they should be held to the limits of current zoning. Instead, the developer is now coming back to the city asking for changes that are going to adversely affect the Village area, neighboring residents, nearby businesses, and people from other communities who come to visit the area.

We urge you to reject the rezone request and insist that the developer honor the current zoning that was in place when the purchase agreement was signed. Please consider and respect the concerns of community members who call this area of the city home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer and Todd Neideen

From: Randall, Brian C. <brandall@amundsendavislaw.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 6:51 PM
To: Randall, Brian C.
Cc: tclerks
Subject: [External] Support for Harlow & Hem

Dear Community Affairs Committee:

This is to share my strong support for appropriate and positive development in our City. Due to a conflict where I'm appearing at a hearing with a client in another municipality, I will not be able to attend tonight's meeting so please allow me to share my feedback by email and copy to the City Clerk for the file.

I support the design of this new multi-family development in the Village with relatively nominal deviations to various standard zoning district elements. Such an approach is exactly what the planned development process is for. There is no question that the site is unique so unique modifications to the base zoning code standards are appropriate to produce a unique development. There is also no question that the existing surface parking lot is not the highest and best use of a property located in the heart of our Village.

When the significant improvements in the Village were planned and constructed by the City several years ago, I monitored and supported the activation and place-making direction for the Village. The Harlow & Hem design will add to the vibrancy of the area and provide a type of housing that is still very much in demand.

My request is that you recommend approval of the agenda items before you add tonight's meeting.

Thanks,
Brian Randall
204 N. 86th Street
414.333.0663

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