

Red Brick Development, Jason Gerstein, Stuart Kane, Tim Mulcahy

Seekers Church, Wednesday October 7, 2009, 7:30 pm

Sponsored by Old Town Residents' Association (OTRA), ANC 4B01, Historic Takoma

About 35 in attendance including Jim Slattery from Councilmember Muriel Bowser's office; Bill Brown from Councilmember Kwame Brown's office; Sara Green (ANC 4B01); Faith Wheeler (ANC 4B02); Takoma Park Councilmember Josh Wright.

Site clean-up

Jason: There were Sunoco and Gulf (now Chevron) stations at site. On the Sunoco side, have located 9 gas tanks, one full of gas, others with sand-petroleum slurry. Six tanks have been removed, three others are to be removed very soon, and there may be two other tanks. Have removed 500 tons of impacted soil, may do 400 additional tons. Contamination goes down 25 feet. Sunoco is paying. Removal of contaminated soil will continue during construction.

Think eastern-side (Chevron) is more contaminated; at least 7 tanks. Will be more difficult clean-up.

Do not see health issues.

Site plans

Red Brick has a contract and will take ownership after clean-up. Will substantially keep Sas Gharai's design with some changes. Currently have building permits. Will be rental, 84 units. Building would be condominium legally, but no plans to sell individual units.

Building will go down about 14 feet for underground parking, 20 feet for elevator pits. Six thousand sq ft ground-floor commercial space, four floors residential, one underground parking. There will be a leasing office on end closest to Metro. Current plan is 15-20 foot sidewalk, measured from the curb.

Stuart: Will be opportunity for outdoor seating – for restaurants and shops – especially at the corner.

Material is on the Web at RedBrickDevelopment.com under current projects.

Jason: Think will resolve documentary issues between Chevron-Sunoco-Dept of Environment by end of year, have submitted corrective action plan by end of year, expect 2 months approval, but will have been well vetted by then. Oil companies do remain liable for the clean-up. Would like to see under construction by end of February or March.

Stuart: Expect 16 months construction. Will take out all contamination, not just cap it off.

Current safety issues

Sara: Issues with fence: portions knocked over by wind, periodic problems in the past.

Jason: Need to be sure site is secure and safe. Tonight, Sunoco is sending someone to watch the site. Netting will not be put back. Expect to fence off Sunoco portions from Chevron portions given clean-up phases.

Design - commercial space -- construction

Jason: About the retail – really appreciate the enthusiasm – thoughts are (and they’ re premature until clean-up is done) to complement what’s done at the adult daycare site (8-10 thousand sq ft), which has a for-lease sign up. Don’t know if one larger retailer or two smaller. Don’t think there’s enough space, parking for a grocery.

Comment: Would like to see nice, high-end restaurant.

Jason: Want something that will contribute to residential use.

Jason: Will be LEED certified; keeping just about all the green features in the building.

Jason: Commercial tenants won’t be interested until much later in the development process.

Stuart: Part of plan is to redesign unit: layouts, kitchens, open them up, also common areas.

Jason: “Character of the neighborhood is one of the things that makes us so interested in the site.”

Jason: “We will make ourselves available” at the appropriate time to discuss retail. You guys are always welcome to e-mail me with ideas... We can certainly set up a time for discussion.”

In response to Nancy Cohen, Jason: Opening health center to the neighborhood is an interesting idea, also having meeting space, are great suggestions.

Jason: Will work with marketing and leasing specialists. Will be “dark space,” i.e., unfinished. If retail is a big restaurant and wants the whole 6,000 sq ft, we can entertain that. Will also consider smaller, pedestrian friendly retailers. We definitely want pedestrian friendly. Our tenants will be people using Metro, going along Carroll Street.

Stuart: Part of plan is bike parking in garage, lends points toward LEED certification, so does proximity to Metro station.

Jim Douglas: Would like to see discussion of traffic flow, at the appropriate time. Jason: Agreed. Will have loading dock, would be below ground. Back will be residential units.

Loretta Neumann: Takoma really is a destination shopping venue. Would support a specialty food store.

Jason: There’s nothing off the table.

In response to comment, Stuart: have started discussions with landscape companies. Would consider public benches.

Jason: Retail tenants will have own perspective on patron traffic patterns.

Stuart: There is a requirement for apartments to be adaptable, that is, to meet needs of persons with disabilities.

Project status

Stuart: During construction – depending on time in process – would involve hundreds of jobs. Any given day, could have 50-75 laborers. Will hire general contractors who will be responsible for subcontractors, laborers.

Jason: Will require fair-market wage scale for contractor employees. Requires legal employees, part of subcontractor selection.

Sara: Is there a possibility that you will walk away? Jason: Until you see concrete going down, that means the problem's not solved. When DC issues a no-action letter, that will be the last gate, meaning contamination is gone. Financing is subject to receipt of a no-action letter.

Sunoco and Chevron are submitting CAPs (clean-up (?) action plans).

Will see fits and spurts of activity over next few weeks, then stop for a month, Chevron pull "garbage" out of site, stop for a month....

Jim Slattery: "Absolutely" would look at paving stub of Maple Street when done.