



Present:

Co-Chairs: Eric Hamilton, Cailey Jamison

Core Committee Members: Lynn Lee, Mike Tarby, Maryann McBride, Steve Ohlson

Community:

Guests: John Ford (Architect), Abby Haltman (Architect); Ryan Koglin (SASY P&D), Doug Johnson (SASY P&D), Bruce Boseman (Apex Properties), Randy Christenson (Development team)

Absent:

Core Committee Members: Ross Wuennenberg, Jessica Wartenweiler,

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- Discussion of Winnebago St Apartments (222 Merry, 230 Merry, 1626 & 1628 Winnebago)
 1. Apex historical business model has been purchasing existing buildings, rehabbing and renting them; now starting to redevelop them
 2. Design is in early scoping phase; there is an existing apartment building now and some single family homes
 3. Proposal is a 6 story building – 162 apartments, 180 parking stalls (1st and 2nd story & underground); The first and second stories are townhomes wrapping the parking.
 4. Concerns about water level in the river – building above the floodplane to alleviate that
 - a. Exceeding open space requirements for the city (69% lot coverage)
 - b. Plan to capture stormwater on grade and on roof of the building
 5. Parking will be accessed from Merry St
 - a. Driver for big amount of parking is to keep parking off Merry Street
 - b. This is a high ratio of parking on the site compared to other buildings in the neighborhood, especially with proximity to the bike path
 - c. Parking will be unbundled from rent
 6. Retail will be on the Winnebago side directly off the bike path (picturing cafe)
 7. Developer would like the aesthetic to blend into the Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood; Comparison in size is the Standard/Eastern Building
 - a. Developer Hoping for a more traditional appearance of the building – lots of brick

What can be done by right vs what needs variance

- 4 lots comprise the site – current building lot, vacant lot, 2 houses
 - Large and vacant lot are zoned for 6-story development by-right
 - The house lots are zoned for 4-story development
 - The developer would like to have the 4-story lots upzoned to 6-stories
- Proposal from 4 years ago was only on the smaller lots and keeping the existing apartment building
 - Concerns at the time over flooding & building height
- The Yahara river is a landmark, so Landmark Commission has an advisory role about the impact of the development
 - Apex has not yet spoken to Landmarks Commission

What is unit mix by bedrooms

- Developer goal to have 50% studios, 40% 1BR, 10% 2BR

Is there affordable housing in this project?

- Not seeking subsidies or tax credits; these are market rate units

What is the proposed timeline for the project?

- Would like to begin construction in about 1 year and finish in spring 2028
- City process will involve plan commission in about February or March
- Would submit plans to the city in January 2026 to start the official city process

Neighborhood engagement so far

- Postcards were not sent/large neighborhood meeting has not yet been held
- This is a first meeting with the neighborhood

North side will be further from the street; will be 20 feet setback from the property line (75 feet is minimum from the river, but they think 90-100 feet)

Could Merry Street side have setbacks or be a smaller scale?

- This has not been ruled out; it is expensive to build this way because you need additional load-bearing walls
- Townhouses on Merry Street would not step back because there are apartments above
- There is a 5 story setback on the north side closest to the neighboring

What would the facing look like?

- Developer would like it to be a masonry building as this is a long lasting material and prevalent in the neighborhood

Community feedback

- Merry street is a narrow cul de sac - concerns about emergency vehicles negotiating the existing street & general vehicle safety/congestion
 - o There will need to be a traffic study with city staff & city will tell them how to manage traffic
 - o It is unlikely that a driveway could face Winnebago due to bike path
 - o Need the parking to be at least 12 feet tall for delivery/moving/emergency vehicles
 - o There will be a meeting with the fire marshall to discuss the emergency plan
- How does the traffic work for construction? Not anticipating any street to be closed during construction because there is sufficient land for staging
- What about displacement of existing residents?
 - o There are 40-50 people who live here now in naturally occurring affordable housing
 - o Expecting studio rents would be 1100-1200 (currently 2 bedrooms 1400)
 - o Developer states they would help with relocating existing tenants and has done it in the past
- Feedback that the building is too large for the site/location and the street size
- This area is low-density residential on the comprehensive plan but the zoning is not consistent with that. Will need to follow comprehensive plan if re-zoning
- We don't have enough affordable housing in the neighborhood and we want to preserve what we have
- Would like to see more larger units for families
- There is a strong sense of community in these buildings and we want to preserve that sense; concerned this large building will not have the same feel and neighbor displacement will happen
- One of these houses is the Herd House and may be under consideration for landmarks

Motion: Request to Apex to provide a high level relocation plan in the event of the demolition of these properties. (Mike Motion, Lindsey Second) – motion passed