

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: April 10, 2008

Meeting No.: 79

Project: EBDI Revised Master Plan

Phase: Revisions to Master Plan

Location: New East Baltimore Community

PRESENTATION:

Peter Calkins, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Forest City, provided an overview of the current development in Phase 1 of the EBDI master plan. As part of the initial phase, Forest City needs to build a parking garage for the current and near future development.

The original master plan called for three parking garages. After discussions with the Baltimore City Parking Authority, as well as considering other economic and development issues, the decision was made to consolidate the three garages into two. Forest City is proposing to relocate an office building from the corner of Ashland and Washington to Monument Street and consolidating the garage at this location into a larger garage at Ashland and Washington. Because this revision results in changes to the PUD (use and height) a major amendment is needed.

Two options were shown. The first was a 65' high garage with retail on the first floor wrapping Ashland and the length of Washington. The second option was a grocery store on the first level, which results in a taller garage (85').

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel was generally favorable of relocating the office building to Madison Street. However, there were several concerns regarding the larger parking garage, specifically its location / configuration, height, and ground floor use.

1. Location / Configuration. The previous master plan concept located garages mid-block as background buildings. Several Panel members were concerned that the new garage was located on a corner, resulting in frontage on two streets. The Panel would like the design team to look at other configurations of the garage to minimize its street presence, and should include the student housing tower to the west. The Panel is open to a taller housing tower if this results in a better garage configuration.
2. Height. Panel members felt that the 85' height of option #2 was too tall in this location, especially given the uncertainty of future development across the street on Washington Street. The Panel would like the design team to explore options for lowering the height of the garage, including placing some of the parking below grade.

3. Ground Floor Use. The Panel supports the inclusion of ground floor uses that activate the street, in particular Ashland Street, and find the grocery store an appealing proposal. Several Panel members felt if a grocery store was the viable option that its entrance should be on Ashland or on the corner of Ashland and Washington. However, the Panel is concerned that retail in this location (it was not part of the original master plan) is not a viable option and would like more information about how retail fits into the larger context of EBDI and East Baltimore.

Finally, although Phase 2 is not under control of Forest City, the Panel feels that it is important to understand the current plans, especially for the blocks adjacent to Ashland and Washington. This context of use, height, and massing is important for reviewing garage options.

PANEL ACTION:

Given the number of concerns expressed, the Panel would like to see it presented again after the development and design team has had a chance to consider the recommendations of the Panel.

Attending:

Peter Calkins, John Lecker, Joe Welkie, Jr. – Forest City-New East Baltimore Partnership
John Sangley – Peter Fillat Architects
Faith Nevins – Marks Thomas Associates
Bill Bugg – Allen + O’Hara
Jay Brodie – BDC

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Schack, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Gary Cole, Natasha Poole, Thor Nelson, Laurie Feinberg, Bob Quilter - Planning