

Greater Goethe Neighborhood Association

Zoning and Planning Committee

Committee Members

May 6, 2022

José L Espejo
Chairman

Alderman Daniel LaSpata
First Ward
1958 North Milwaukee Avenue
Chicago, IL

Taurus Bublys
Vice-Chairman

Re: 2354 & 2355 North Washtenaw Ave_ 1st Review

Bryna Pascoe
Secretary

Dear Alderman Daniel LaSpata,

Rachel Cherny

The GGNA Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAPC) held a meeting with the project team for 2354 & 2355 N Washtenaw on April 11, 2022 to review a proposal for two (2) new mixed use commercial/residential buildings and the request to change zoning from the current B3-1 Business District to either B2-3 or B2-5 Business District.

Paul Christianson

Rebecca Gemperle

The drawings presented are for two (2) five (5) story buildings on the east and west sides of Washtenaw with Fullerton Ave on the north. 2 proposals were presented.

Lindsay Semph

Mike Shively

One proposal includes 12 dwelling units on the 2nd-5th floors with 15 parking spaces and commercial space on the 1st floor for 2355 Washtenaw and 15 units with 15 proposed parking spaces and commercial space on the 1st floor for 2354 Washtenaw.

The other proposal includes 20 dwelling units on the 2nd-5th floors with 11 parking spaces and commercial on the 1st floor for 2355 Washtenaw and 28 dwelling units on the 2nd-5th floors with 14 parking spaces and commercial on the 1st floor for 2354 Washtenaw.

The proposed development requires the demolition of an existing credit union and parking lot.

After reviewing the proposed plans, the ZAPC has the following concerns and recommendations:

1. Density - The higher density B2-5 zoning proposal is too large for both sites. B2-5 allows a floor area ratio (FAR) of 5 times the land area. The B2-3 proposal would be consistent with other projects approved on Fullerton in the past few years. B2-3 allows a FAR of 3 times the land area. ZAPC doesn't see any reason for this site to be an exception from previous projects for density along Fullerton.
2. Setback - The higher density proposal has 3 foot rear setback at all floors which would require a zoning variance on the residential floors even with B2-5 zoning. The smaller density proposal has a 30 foot rear setback above the 1st floor. The ZAPC is opposed to reducing the setback to less than 30 feet. Without the setback neighboring residents would be denied their right to natural light and space the code provides for.
3. Height - The ZAPC would prefer 4 stories but if 5 stories, provide a setback on the 5th floor of 10 feet on both the Washtenaw and.
4. Unit type - The ZAPC likes that all the proposed units are 2 and 3 bedrooms as those are the type of units needed in the community. But units 202,302,402 on the 2354 building 15 unit plan don't have a good layout. Condominiums would be preferred over rental apartments.

5. Open space - there is a lack of green/open space at grade. Although developer mentioned adding trees in parkway the ZAPC would like to see some open space on the property by providing setback areas on the 1st floor along Fullerton for standing, seating and bike parking.
6. Parking - The ZAPC would like one space per unit similar to the smaller density proposal. Even though the Blue Line is only 2 blocks away and Fullerton has bus route it is likely that 2/3 bedroom unit occupants are likely to own at least one car. The ZAPC would like to see at least 2 bike parking spots provided for each unit.
7. Exterior design - The area now consists of a mix of newer contemporary, transitional and older traditional style buildings. The ZAPC would like to honor a traditional style but also include a few contemporary updates in the design. We would also prefer to coordinate with the coloring of Haas as it'd directly across the street and will have higher visibility comparably. A nicely detailed, thoughtful design that is highly regarded by the community.
8. Balconies - the proposals have exterior balconies on the Fullerton and Washtenaw facades. The proposals show railings on all balconies but the developer offered to replace with solid brick in lieu of the railings on the street sides. But the ZAPC also has concerns about the arrangement of them in the design, especially on the 2354 building.
9. Rooftop - The ZAPC recommends a green roof be installed in all areas not required for mechanical equipment and access. Solar panels could be provided instead. Also recommend a roof deck for residents not exceeding 500 square feet in lieu of balconies on the street sides.
10. Exterior lighting - The public and private sidewalks and all paved areas should be well lit for visibility and safety.
11. Affordable units - the project would include 20% affordable units as required.
12. Commercial space - the ZAPC is agreeable with the developer's plan not to have a restaurant in the commercial space. He believes it would be too disruptive to the residents. He prefers small businesses and may divide the space.

When the committee has received the updated design as requested, including a revised set of drawings with required information, a 2nd ZAPC review will be scheduled.

The GGNA ZAPC kindly requests that the Alderman not move forward with this project until a final recommendation is provided and a community meeting is held.

Feel free to contact me with concerns.

Cordially,

Jose Espejo
Chairman
GGNA Zoning and Planning Committee

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