



MORNINGSIDE LENOX PARK

ASSOCIATION

Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2024

Board members present: *(asterisk indicates not present)*

President – Donald Campbell
Vice President – Rob Schuler
Secretary – Brandon Dhande
Treasurer – Marc Tammes
Membership – Kristen Pollack
Security – Phyllis Wingo*
Parks – Micah Coleman
Marketing – Eric Lewis

Technology – Grant Davies*
Events – Ryan Murphy*
Zoning – Rebekah Falkler*
Legal – Josh Kirschner
Communications – Marla Johnson
Licensing – Ashley Milam
Public Affairs - Michael Parkerson
Business Liaison – Nick Vachon

Call to Order and Welcome

Don Campbell called the meeting to order and opened the floor to discussion topics.

Initial discussions included:

The minutes from the April meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

Amsterdam Walk Zoning Discussion:

Introduction by Brandon on moderation rules for the discussion of Amsterdam Walk.

- Overview by Camille Richardson and Aaron Fortner of feedback by MLPA Working Group, including a summary of past history and initial position of Portman.
 - Portman has offered a number of concessions
 - Lowered office building height
 - Limited uses (no self storage, gas stations)
 - Commentary about open spaces concessions
 - Traffic perspective – reductions to 150k square feet
 - Office reduction key because that space is big generator of peak hour car traffic
 - There is a private agreement with Highland Park neighbors and Portman, including compromises of buffer zones and stormwater retention zones between the development and Highland Park.
- Mike Green, on behalf of Portman: Explained that his personal opinion about light rail on the Beltline is not Portman's position.
- The Board held 30 minutes of open discussion with Association members, who presented their opinions on the proposed development:



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- Ben Terry: Comments regarding whether the agreement/compromises with Portman are legally binding. Developer cannot guarantee changes to Evelyn Street.
- Charlie Kaften: The scale and scope of this project is much different than other projects on the Beltline and will create a traffic nightmare on Monroe.
- Halley Blythe: Wants to share the neighborhood with all and appreciates the efforts of MLPA and Portman to compromise on the site plan.
- Hernan Bello: There should have been more meetings about this. The compromises by the developer are a drop in the bucket. Having more renters, instead of owners, is negative for the community. Many members have signed petitions and put up yard signs against this development.
- Paolo Palombo: We have objections about the scale of the project, not the nature of the potential new residents.
- Ryan Gentes: Wants to caution everyone that the next developer behind Portman may not have the same open greenspace, integration into Piedmont Park, and there is something worse that could happen than the development under consideration.
- Mark Smith: The concessions made by Portman are impressive and there are no current height restrictions in this zoning area.
- Further discussion by Association members who previously spoke during open discussion.
- Mike Green of Portman responded on impact of trees, impact to Clear Creek, building height concerns, and issues regarding Evelyn Street.
- MLPA Board members expressed their views on the vote and Member feedback.
 - Marla: This is a well-vetted project, it could be better but there are advantages to the development, and other developments that could happen with another developer group that would be worse than this proposal.
 - Don: Not concerned about some replacement project that would be terrible, but it is a logical reality worth considering. If we vote “no” we may not have a voice in the future, with the Zone C1 designation. It makes sense for us to continue to work with a developer who has shown interest in the community.
 - Josh: Discussion with Aaron regarding the binding nature of the zoning conditions.
 - Eric: Portman does great developments and this will be a catalyst for progress on the Beltline.
 - Marc: Portman has been very engaged with the neighborhood. Wishes it was less dense, but this is what we have to vote on.



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- Rob: In favor of the project; used to live near the Beltline at Greenwood. The development will be an important destination and Portman is working with the neighborhoods in good faith to make improvements to the community, in consideration of our Master Plan.
- Micah: Board members are working in the best interests of the neighborhood. We should be mindful of the growing and changing nature of the neighborhood, especially in the area of the Beltline.
- Brandon: Voting “no” based on Portman’s opposition to light rail transit on the Beltline, especially given the density that Portman wants to put on the Beltline.
- Don: Transit on the Beltline should still happen and can be considered independent of the rezoning application.
- Motion by Don to approve the rezoning application, taking into consideration the compromises made by Portman and specified by MLPA and the Virginia Highland Civic Association, specifically including Evelyn Street, which is an essential part of the motion and potential Board approval. Second motion to approve the CDP legislation by Marla, with a second.
- Board members voted on the motions for rezoning and CDP, with a vote 9 in favor and 2 voting against the Portman proposal with modifications agreed upon between Portman and MLPA.

Committee Updates and Discussion

Zoning Topics:

- 819 Sherwood Drive: Variance to build one story garage. Hardship is small lot and minimal tree impact. Recommendation of Zoning Committee to approve variance; Board approved by unanimous vote.
- 1753 Pine Ridge Drive: Special exception for pool being built in backyard; it is adjacent to driveway. Location of pool not visible from street, and they have committed to build a privacy gate. Zoning Committee recommended approval. Board approved by unanimous vote.
- 1807 Meadowdale Drive: Owner is seeking variance to remove side yard setback. Corner lot with a nontraditional shape. Resident has approval from all neighbors. Three large trees will come down, with approval from arborist. Zoning Committee recommend approval; unanimous vote in favor by Board.

Concluding notes:

- Board members provided brief wrap up comments. Don informed the Board that we



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have new revenues from filming donations in the neighborhood, including a recent donation of \$13k. Don thanked the meeting attendees and concluded the meeting.

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