



Q 17-3

DEC 4, 2012
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The Board Statement regarding the proposed Marina Lofts Project to our east has generated positive responses among Esplanade residents as well as various city authorities and civic groups. Our purpose in drawing up the Statement was to define and itemize our own individual concerns regarding the Marina Lofts Projects and to incorporate any additional concerns generated by other Esplanade residents in order to present a single Esplanade position to the public at large. At the same time, the Board intended through its statement to reach out to the Developer in order to initiate a dialog leading to modifications in the Project design to bring it into closer alignment with what we believe to be the best interests of the Esplanade and its owners and residents.

As a prelude to our regular Board meeting, we have individually met with Mr. Asi Cymbal, the developer, and have encouraged him as well to meet with core group members who have played an active role in publicizing their own concerns regarding the Marina Lofts Project.

Board members are pleased with the flexibility they have found in Mr. Cymbal's response to the Board Statement. On what we broadly consider to be the most significant issue of concern, the height and massiveness of the two buildings essentially adjacent to the Esplanade, Mr. Cymbal has said he can reduce the height of that complex from the originally planned 36 stories to 28, compensating for the lost number of units by increasing the height of the most easterly building's planned 25 stories to 33. This important concession also essentially adopts our request for a shift in the progression of the Project buildings' heights from west to east, the lower ones closest to the Esplanade, the highest further away towards the city. In our judgment this change meets our most critical concern.

But this change also involves a number of related improvements meeting additional concerns in our Statement: it significantly relieves the traffic congestion problem closest to the Esplanade garage by the simple expedient of reducing the number of living units in the building nearest us from 350 to approximately 260, and by extension, of course, a reduction of the required parking spaces across from our garage entrance. It also relieves the problem of the increased population density of the Project by reducing the number of units from 1074 to between 900 and 1000. That decrease will further positively impact our traffic and parking concerns.

Mr. Cymbal addressed the planned length of time for project completion by pointing out that of the indicated eight year period, the first one and a half to two years are required to get all of the necessary authorizations and preliminary work done before initial groundbreaking. This reduces the actual construction time to six and a half years. Mr. Cymbal also explained that for reasons of financing, it is desirable to complete the first two buildings before starting on the third and final building. In any case, he added, to attempt to do the entire project--all three buildings--simultaneously could lead to a period of inadequate occupancy for available units and empty commercial spaces, a more undesirable situation in terms of the human environment than an orderly progression of completing the first two buildings, filling them both residentially and commercially, and then moving on to completion of the final part of the project. Mr. Cymbal was reassuring as well in response to our expressed concern about an uncompleted and deserted building site: no construction would be commenced for the third building until after completion of the first two. In the meantime, the site of the third building would remain as is. In any case, Mr. Cymbal stressed, the architectural integrity of the overall project requires completion in total; as does, Mr. Cymbal stated, his own financial and emotional investment in the complete project.

This immediate area's flooding problem following heavy rains, i.e., the "drainage" problem, would be corrected by the construction requirements of the project, since appropriate drainage for an area is simply an integral part, required by municipal ordinances, for any construction project. The neighborhood and streets now have a drainage problem. After the project, they wouldn't.

Traffic flow problems and street access are being addressed by the developer in conjunction with city planning authorities. Garage and off-street parking will have to be certified as adequate by city authorities, whether or not a reduction in parking space/unit ratio from 1.8 to 1.5 is granted (Marina Loft units average much smaller than normal condo projects; hence, a smaller resident to unit ratio, hence fewer automobiles per unit. Free-floating parking likewise requires fewer parking spaces per vehicle.)

Mr. Cymbal has no objection to having other experts consulted regarding the relocation of the rain tree. He did point out that it was a Texas firm specializing in large tree removal and relocation (e.g., both at Fairchild and at Ground 9/11) that will be commissioned to do the job under the overall supervision of the Fairchild chief arborist.

Finally, Mr. Cymbal says he is open to additional cosmetic concerns, such as brick walkways and increased greenery along the river bank, though noting that artists' renderings of the Project tend not fully to capture the amount of green space built into the project, not including topographical landscaping of the buildings' roofs.

The Board expresses satisfaction thus far with the interchanges we individually have had with Mr. Cymbal. We look forward to his presentation at the Board meeting of November 14th and to further discussions with him. As a result of the Board's efforts and Mr. Cymbal's cooperative response, we anticipate an improved Marina Lofts Project more in keeping with our concerns as residents of the Esplanade.

Board members will be meeting with city and community leaders within the immediate future to express the Esplanade Board's general support for the Project as it has evolved in part in response to the concerns the Board and others have raised. The Board understands that the final form of the Project has not been fully and finally determined. We will therefore continue meeting with the developer and city officials as the Project further evolves in order to address any remaining concerns, particularly traffic patterns, access, and congestion, and street design and configuration.

Esplanade Board of Directors,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marion L. Radeer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Marion Radeer, Secretary