



313 East Main Street • Newark, Delaware 19711 • Telephone/TDD 302-366-0826 • Fax 302-366-8212

**Newark Housing Authority  
Board of Commissioners  
Special Meeting  
Wednesday, October 4, 2023**

**Summary of Virtual Zoom Meeting Minutes**

**Opening:**

The Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:09 PM by the Chairperson, Nikki Lane.

**I. Roll Call:**

A request for Roll Call was made. Board of Commissioners present: Nikki Lane, Paul Tillman, Kelly Thompkins and Abeo Lucas. Marene Jordan (Executive Director), was also present along with guest Neil Carlson from Vandemark & Lynch, Inc. and Toren Williams from Architectural Alliance, Inc.

Absent: Jerry Clifton, Keith Moone Sr. and Emile Brown

**II. Business by the Commissioners – Action Items:**

**A). Review, discuss and approve the redevelopment plans for George Reed Village.**

The Chairperson of the Board opened the floor to Marene Jordan, Executive Director.

The director informed all in attendance that this Special Meeting was called because there were concerns expressed by the City of Newark's Planning Department regarding our timeline for approvals of the building permits, planning commission approval and getting on council's agenda as the holidays approach. After that brief introduction, the director turned the meeting over to our guest Neil Carlson from Vandemark & Lynch, Inc. and Toren Williams from Architectural Alliance, Inc.

**Presenter #1-Neil Carlson: Site Plan Presentation:**

Neil Carlson began the presentation by screen sharing the revised site plans for George Reed Village. He shared the following:

“The layout was generally the same in that the cottages were centrally located in a loop and the mid-rise was centered near Main Street. The uncertainty of whether we will have full access to Main Street is no longer an issue. We will have **INS and OUTS** off Main Street which means people will be able to go through the site if they choose to. In resolving some of the fire marshal's related comments, we lost some of the parking around the loop. The fire lane curves with the road, but the buildings do not. I have to have a certain percentage of the buildings within 40ft. of the fire lane. So, I had to move the buildings closer to the road which we ended up losing some parking. We have recovered more parking than we lost by adding eleven spaces by building #2 and eight spaces by building #6. We were able to salvage some of the parking in the loop. In the upper left corner of the mid-rise in the open white space, we have added a dog park with a fence. We have a monument

sign off Main Street to display “Newark Housing Authority” and another in the rear of the development “George Reed Village”. The playground will be fenced and handicapped accessible. There were some concerns with traffic calming (vehicle movement around the loop) to protect the people crossing the street to the playground. The plans show two raised crosswalks. In addition, we added two rumble strips/cobble stone finish around the park area. The city also had some concerns with traffic coming off Main Street not noticing that they must make a turn and possibly crashing into the playground, so we added another raised cross walk/speed bump and added a timber guard rail.”

Chairperson Lane asked, “What type of fencing will be around the playground?”

Neil responded, “Fencing will be like a black iron fence at least 6 feet tall which was agreeable to Marene, the City and Ingerman. I want to have some flexibility in the type of fence due to the manufacturer’s availability.”

Chairperson Lane asked, “Marene, do you allow pets?”

Response: “Yes. And we cannot exclude service animals.”

Neil mentioned that there will be a retaining wall on the left side of the development that will have a different elevation, but it will be fenced with a guard rail to protect the vehicles. “We switched the walking trail around the site. It’s asphalt now instead of that packed stone we were talking about. The asphalt is really for maintenance, but the city wanted to make sure it is ADA accessible. Although stone trails can be ADA accessible, it’s often more maintenance intensive for long term use.”

Neil recapped that the main change is the full 24 ft. access all the way through. The fire code requires a 24 ft. fire lane around 75% of the building which is provided.

Neil asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

Marene asked if the monument sign off Main Street would be the Newark Housing Authority sign.

Neil confirmed that it would be.

Marene asked if the monument sign in the rear of the development would say George Reed Village II.

Neil stated, “It can say whatever you want. I don’t have a design for the sign yet, but I added that sign to let everyone know a sign will be placed there.”

Marene commented, “I only asked if the plans show a sign on the mid-rise as “George Reed Village II”. Will that sign remain there?”

Neil & Toren both confirmed, “The sign on the mid-rise will remain as stated.”

Marene commented, "So we have confirmation from the city that we can have two signs, one off Main Street and the other in the rear?"

Neil confirmed that we could.

Marene commented that she is concerned about the loss of parking space between buildings #5, #4 and #3.

Neil mentioned that we have parking by building #6, and the overflow parking along with parking by building #2.

Neil also mentioned having EV stations located at three different locations throughout the development.

Toren asked if we wanted them more centralized (together) or spread out. "I'm thinking about the underground power and getting everything to it."

Neil commented that his thought was that he did not want to "exile" all the EV owners in one location.

Marene commented that she liked the idea that EV stations are spread out.

Toren mentioned, "Having them spread out will add more cost to the project."

Chairperson Lane commented, "For us, it will come down to cost before we can make a sound decision."

Neil commented, "It will be cheaper if we have them all in one spot."

Toren stated, "For now, let's leave the EV stations spread out until we get a number from Ingerman to see what the cost would be."

Marene commented, "I thought today we were going to review, discuss and approve the actual plans. So, I really don't think we have any time to get Ingerman's feedback. On the call, I made it clear that we wanted to review the final plans that are being submitted to the city. If we are in agreement that EV stations will be located throughout the development, then let's submit the plan as is."

Toren commented, "This will not hold up the process at all. Once we get all the drawings completed including mechanical, plumbing, electrical, architectural, and civil engineering, at the point where we are submitting for permitting solar on the roof top getting actual numbers. There will be changes."

Neil commented, "The site plans I am presenting today are the plans I will be submitting to the city unless there are some quick changes."

Toren commented, "This is a process. The city will have additional comments. However, the project needs to encompass everything we want and based on numbers we scale back."

Toren clarified as to what changes can and cannot be made (i.e., adding an additional building, or adding 10 more units). These are considered major changes that will not be made.

Marene asked about the number of and the location for the dumpsters.

Neil confirmed, "We have two dumpsters onsite. The draft plan we discussed regarding the location of the dumpster that will service the cottages had the dumpster by building #2. We thought that was an inconvenient location for the other cottages. That dumpster was moved and relocated between buildings #4 and #3. Reasonably located for buildings #5, #4, #3 and #2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> dumpster is located on the opposite side, typically used for the mid-rise but accessible for building #6.

Marene commented, "Is there any way the dumpster between buildings #4 and #3 can be moved? Coming into the development, it's right in your face. An eye sore. I'm just concerned about how the trash will be disposed of."

Neil commented, "We do not have a lot of options. Where we have it now is reasonably located."

Chairperson Lane asked, "Will the dumpster have a corral?"

Neil responded, "Yes. I did get a detail from Toren. It will have brick or cinder block encasing with an enclosure."

Toren added, "We have done it a couple ways, some with a brick face. It will have a gate with a 6 ft. brick wall. We can add some character."

Commissioner Tillman asked if the big trucks that need to pick up the trash can make the turn.

Neil responded, "Yes."

Chairperson Lane asked, "How much green space (grass, trees, benches) do we have?"

Neil responded that we currently have sitting areas in the dog park and by the playground.

Toren added, "We will have some benches in the back half of the mid-rise building to allow for some activities for the seniors and the families in the development."

Chairperson Lane requested confirmation of there being areas that will have grass, trees, benches, etc.

Neil confirmed. He added that the landscaper is working on a plan that will include shrubbery around the walking trail.

Commissioner Tillman suggested adding a bench along the walking trail just in case someone wants to stop and rest or read a book.

Neil thought that was a great idea.

Toren added, "As we get into the details, we can discuss where the bushes will be located, maybe add some bar-b-que pits. Where we are now is getting us to the point where we submit to the city a plan that includes 6 buildings, so many units, the traffic pattern, and the parking. We are starting to set the perimeter for the project. Later we will discuss specifics like location, colors, cobble stone (size). We will continue to entertain meetings with the board as we fine tune the final plan before we get into construction."

Commissioner Tillman asked about the run-off. "It seems like we have more paved space and less permeable space. Can you talk a little bit about that."

Neil responded, "We will be managing storm water according to the City of Newark regulations which is equivalent to the state. The storm drain is not fully designed yet."

Commissioner Thompkins asked if there will be a fence along the walkway.

Neil responded, "The city has asked for a fence along the perimeter of the property."

The chairperson asked if there were any more questions. Since there were none, she moved onto the 2<sup>nd</sup> presenter.

**Presenter #2-Toren Williams: 2-bedroom Floor Plan Presentation:**

"Based on the comments we received, we added a powder room to all the 2-bedroom units. This is our standard plan for our cottages that includes a powder room. We did not lose the pantry or the closet space. We changed the door of the powder room that was opening into a great room. The powder room door now opens into a hallway. Originally, we had the whole powder room & closet eating up the space which killed the area for a table (family of 4). By doing this, we maximize the great room and the little dining area where we have it now. We added a powder room while keeping the closet and pantry. We also flipped the mechanical closet to the rear and relocated the laundry towards the front. The mechanical closet will have a deadbolt and only management will have access."

"For the ADA units it's a very similar approach. Fully accessible. I had to move the HVAC system to the rear exterior space. I split up the HVAC and the water heater to get side-by-side laundry (only for the ADA units). We kept the closet and powder room. I think we captured everything that was needed from the last meeting as far as we need to have this but not lose this as well. No other changes were made."

Chairperson Lane asked if there were any other questions. Since there were none, she turned the meeting over to Marene.

Marene restated the importance of having the plans approved with specifics. She stated, "The Housing Authority has a history with Ingerman and in the past if wants and desires are not approved during the planning process, no changes can be made." She understood that we are still in the preliminary planning stages, but emphasized the importance of having solar as part of this redevelopment. She mentioned the

marketing plans called for solar panels at Alder Creek and it did not happen. Ingerman cited solar wasn't in the budget.

Toren commented as to having a conversation with team members and solar panels on the mid-rise is included in the plan. He was given the approval to start that process. He mentioned conveying to the team that solar panels are a must have and it's not negotiable. He must hire a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to determine what space is needed for the mechanical equipment for the roof top. That does not include the design. The design will come later, and we need to prepare a proposal.

Chairperson Lane commented, "What I am hearing is the ball is in your court. I understand you have a process for design and procurement. How do we implement or add to whatever you are submitting to the city to let them know that solar panels are going here even though you do not have the design for them?"

Toren commented, "There is a description that talks about energy conservation measures that we plan to implement and incorporate into this project. We can easily add that language. We can document it."

Chairperson Lane stated, "We want that document in the description, so it is in black and white."

Toren responded, "It's a done deal."

Commissioner Tillman asked, "Are we sharing the roof tops with lots of HVAC equipment that will constrain some of the space for solar panels or, can solar panels go on top of the whole thing?"

Toren responded, "We are concentrating on the top floor of the senior building as to where the solar panels will be. Once it's known how much equipment is needed (space) we start to coordinate with the 3<sup>rd</sup> party, whoever that may be, to determine what is needed. If there is enough room, we're good to go. If not, we will have to start making some sacrifices."

Chairperson Lane restated, "I want confirmation that the submission that is due to the city on Friday **MUST** have solar panels included in the submission."

Toren responded, "Yes, that language will be included."

Marene asked, "Will the exterior design of the mid-rise change?" She mentioned loving the design of the glass elevators.

Toren commented that the glass does go all the way up with the elevator in the back, but he cannot say with certainty if there will be no changes. He received comments from the city regarding the front facade (the massing) on Main Street and they are working through those comments.

The Chairperson asked if there were any more questions. There were none. She turned the meeting over to Marene.

Marene commented that since the plans are subject to change (minor changes) with feedback from the city, she did not think the Board of Commissioners needed to make a motion to approve what was presented. Instead, the Board accepted the revisions to the site and 2-bedroom floor plans as presented.

**III. Visitors or Petitions:**

N/A

**IV. Adjournment:**

The Chairperson asked for a motion for the meeting to adjourn. A motion was made by Commissioner Tillman. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tompkins.

**Aye 4 (Lane, Tillman, Lucas and Tompkins)**

**Nay 0**

**Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:53 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director

APPROVED