

Media Town Talk > News

Media gets first look at West End Flats project

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

By Susan L. Serbin
DCNN Correspondent

The Media Planning Commission had their first look at a major project proposed for the western gateway of the borough. West End Flats is one of two developments near the borough's border with a cooperative effort of two different companies.

The West End Flats is a project by David Della Porta, founder and president of Cornerstone Communities. The company has a robust portfolio of luxury mid-rise rentals around the region including Terrazza in Newtown Square. Cornerstone is currently building a more urban-inspired project in West Chester.

West End Flats at Baltimore Avenue and Brooke Street is configured as approximately 160 one and two bedroom apartments in a five-story building. Architect Bob Linn is preparing the land development and site plan for the parcel of just over two acres. While he is generating some early images, Linn said Cornerstone will have a different architect.

The highlights of the first look were increased green space, access to underground parking on both Baltimore Avenue and Brooke Street, and redesign of the roadway at the intersections which include West State Street.

Chris Williams, of McMahon Traffic Engineers and Planners, said several configurations and options are being explored, but are being coordinated with West End Walk. That project of about 23 townhouses by Arcadia Land Company was seen in April by planners. Arcadia President Jason Duckworth and Della Porta, as well as borough officials, see the value in the projects being considered separately, but in concert as anticipated by the Gateway Overlay District ordinance.

In framing the importance of West End Flats, Linn said the 98 one-bedroom and 63 two-bedroom apartments could see as many as 240 new residents.

"That could be 5 percent of the entire borough population, making it a big, important project," said Linn, noting it could positively impact currently vacant retail spaces in the business district.

Land planner Thomas Comitta, a borough consultant on the developments, is initially interested in design, given its size and presence coming into the borough.

"What is the building style? How does it speak to us when we see it?" Comitta asked the applicant. "How can we add some domesticity to the design?" he said, noting there are few similar projects as precedent.

Planning Commissioner Emily Miller, who chaired the meeting in the absence of Michael Kinsley, agreed with Comitta about wanting to see some options on elevations (or design).

Both West End Walk and Flats will continue through what is expected to be a carefully considered process, but Linn said they likely will not both come before planners in the same meeting.

URL: http://www.delconewsnetwork.com/articles/2015/05/12/media_town_talk/news/doc555210bd842bb071292332.prt

© 2015 Delco News Network, a **21st Century Media** Property