

LUDLOW SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

August 6, 2018

Mayor Kenneth Wynn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Laurie Sparks called the roll, which showed the following council members present: Bill Whiteley, Jordan Scheid, Josh Boone, Matt Williams, Tom Amann, and John Gaiser.

ALSO ATTENDING: City Attorney Fred Johnson, City Administrative Officer Elishia Chamberlain, City Clerk Laurie Sparks, Police Lt. Bart Beck

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Jeff Warman, 49 Kenner Street, inquired about the reason behind why the City needs the proposed building right now instead of building something with a design with charm and character that fits Ludlow better. Mayor Wynn advised that he had spoken to Lasserre Bradley of Pennrose about working on altering the design of the building façade. Mayor Wynn advised that the development would fill the need for those who aren't looking to buy a house or a condo. Mr. Warman advised that you can't underestimate the power of design at the entry to the downtown. Mr. Warman and expressed concern about whether the city needs a 70-unit apartment building and advised that he would like to see fewer units with more character.

Paula Graszus, 739 Oak Street, advised that she just received the action plan documents for the project and didn't have enough time to review it to ask questions. Mayor Wynn advised that the concept is the same as the sign on the site and that the design presented is only a starting point.

Sarah Hafley, 536 Church Street, advised that the original concept of the project was an amazing design, but the new design doesn't fit with the city and looks like every new apartment building in the area.

Julie Terry Navarre, 311 Stokesay Street, advised that many people aren't thrilled with the aesthetics, the number of units, and the increase in traffic in an already high traffic area.

Lefty Pegg, 468 Elm Street, advised that he owns four parcels of land in the project area. Discussion on his concern with wanting to protect the rights of his tenants on the property and that he reached an agreement with Mr. Bradley. Mr. Pegg thinks the project is good for the city.

Wes Dorger, 416 Closson Court, inquired how Council, in good confidence, could make a decision on such a significant project in less than two weeks of receiving the development plans. Mr. Dorger believes the City should focus on the Latta Row project, the Train Viewing Station, and development of Ernie's first. Mr. Dorger also advised that he believes

the city suffers greatly in code enforcement and it must be strictly enforced for property values to increase.

Connor Wall, 325 Highway Avenue, advised that he doesn't have an issue with rental units, but he does have an issue with the walkability of the city. Mr. Wall advised that the Underpass walkway is covered with graffiti and smells like urine and there is a need for public trash cans on the east side of Ludlow. Discussion on trying to get more unique businesses in Ludlow.

Cindy Powell, 624 Church Street, inquired about the tax benefit to the City. Jim Parsons advised that there are no specific numbers, but the City would receive revenue from insurance premium taxes, occupational licenses, rental licenses and also an increase in payroll taxes during construction of the project. Mr. Parsons advised that normally, the biggest impact to a community is the increase in spending in the local businesses by the residents. Discussion on the Industrial Revenue Bond process. Ms. Powell advised that she believes there are a lot of unfinished projects and expressed concern that 70 apartment units is too many.

Bruce Conley, 38 Ash Street, expressed concern on whether the sanitation system can handle the addition of 70 apartments. Mr. Conley also discussed an issue with a blighted property on Ash Street, the fact that Ash Street needs to be blacktopped, and advised that the City's lot at Ash and Traverse Streets is overgrown and has junk cars on the property.

Paula Graszus, 739 Oak Street, asked Mayor Wynn to read a section of the proposed development agreement to clarify its meaning. Ms. Chamberlain advised that any typos would be corrected before the agreement is posted on the City's website. Ms. Chamberlain advised that the developer would need to meet several levels of satisfaction before moving forward. Ms. Graszus advised that she believes 70 units is too many because traffic is already bad in the area and residents wouldn't be able to turn left from Traverse Street. If the developers are relying on parking in the municipal lot, there will also be foot traffic crossing the street.

Beth (?), 120 Ash Street, advised that she has noticed progress in the city and expressed concern about traffic. She asked what type of people the City is hoping to attract to the development and advised that there are a lot of vacant houses that still need work. Discussion on the garbage on the surrounding streets and concern that it would get worse.

Steve Chapman, 626 Elm Street, advised that code enforcement needs to clean up the city and expressed concern about adding to the rental stock in the city. Mr. Chapman was concerned that most of the residents in the apartment building would have one or two vehicles, which would create overflow for the amount of parking spaces allotted. Mr. Chapman also recommended that the City completed projects that have already been started, such as the Riverwalk, which is too overgrown to see a view of the river, before starting a new one. Once the City is cleaned up, it will spur other types of development.

Jene Galvin, 435 Pinnacle Way, stated that Ludlow is a fantastic place with a unique history and housing stock and an influx of creative people. Mr. Galvin believes that the City needs some rental units to compete with OTR, Covington, and Bellevue for those looking to rent and not buy a home. Mr. Galvin was concerned that 70 units seemed like too many for the space and believes the proposed development rendering is terrible and looks nothing like the edgy, aesthetic billboard rendering. Mr. Galvin advised that the proposed development would not appeal to the target audience.

Paul Miller, owner of the Ludlow Theatre, discussed work on the theater and the fact that the City's tax rate has increased in recent years. Mr. Miller advised that renovation of the former Duro Bag building will be his next project.

Joy Amann, 210 Adela Avenue, advised that she listened to all of the residents' comments and discussed concerns with the project, such as restricted rents on up to 70% of the units. Ms. Amann asked Council to become more informed on what the project will mean before voting to approve the development agreement. Ms. Amann suggested that if the City addresses the issues that were discussed, then there would be more options available for development.

Tom Amann read a letter from Scott Powers, 40 Kenner Street, who could not attend the meeting. Mr. Powers advised that Ludlow is different from every other river community and, from his perspective, the proposed development would not benefit the city. Mr. Powers inquired about whether a traffic study had been completed to see the impact of adding the apartment building. Mr. Powers advised that he is opposed to the development because he believes the City can and must do better.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and Voice Vote on Preferred Development Agreement for the Ludlow Yards Project

Motion by Mr. Amann, second by Mr. Boone, to vote on the Preferred Development Agreement for the Ludlow Yards Project as presented by Pennrose, LLC. Discussion on the project and, if approved by Council, how it would move forward and be approved by the school and county. Mr. Gaiser discussed the fact that there are 61 vacant properties in the city. Mr. Gaiser advised that he feels it is way too fast for him to vote on the project.

Mr. Amann thanked everyone for attending the meeting and expressing their opinion on the project. Mr. Amann discussed the concerns about increased traffic and stated that, to his knowledge, no traffic study was completed to see the impact of adding 72 units to the city. Mr. Amann expressed concern that the low-income tax credit is the only way to finish the project and that, once completed, it must remain affordable housing for the next 30 years. Discussion on concerns about the project, including parking. Mr. Amann advised that he would like to see several row houses constructed on the property with more character that would be a better fit for the historic housing stock and a freestanding building with a rooftop deck that could house Second Sight Spirits. Mr. Amann also agreed that there are a lot of unfinished projects in the City and issues that need to be addressed.

Mr. Amann advised that the City spent \$1 million on the train viewing station and should wait to see what interest it brings for surrounding development. Mr. Amann advised that he could not vote in favor of the agreement with the limited amount of information that had been provided.

Mr. Williams thanked everyone for attending the meeting and voicing their opinions. Mr. Williams advised that in the last 10 days, he's asked people in his shop whether they were opposed to the architecture or the project itself and nearly all were opposed to the project. Mr. Williams advised that, in the future, there needs to be a better process of engaging the citizens.

Mr. Boone advised that he is thrilled that people are commenting on the design for such a large project. Mr. Boone advised that he is concerned about the restricted rent requirement for a 30-year period.

Mr. Scheid thanked everyone who came to the meeting and advised that he came to the meeting thinking he was going to vote in favor of the project, but he could not vote in favor of the project if the community is opposed to it.

Mr. Whiteley reiterated the concerns that everyone else had expressed and could not support the project.

Lasserre Bradley of Pennrose asked to comment, but Mayor Wynn advised that he was not permitted to speak because it was a special meeting.

Mayor Wynn advised that he heard comments from the citizens and Council, had formed a committee to meet with the developers and they chose Pennrose. Mayor Wynn advised that everyone had been informed and, if the project was approved, it would have attracted more development, but he respects Council's decision.

Following a roll call vote, the motion to approve the development agreement with Pennrose, LLC for the Ludlow Yards project failed: all nays.

Motion by Mr. Amann, second by Mr. Boone, to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. Motion carried, all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Sparks, City Clerk

Attest: _____
Kenneth Wynn, Mayor