

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 12/20/2019)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: Bates Street Rowhouses Demolition / 3400 block of Bates Street	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): OPDC, South Oakland Neighborhood Group, Oakcliffe, residents, University of Pittsburgh (Pitt)
Parcel Number(s): 28-R-353, 28-R-354, 28-R-355, 28-R-356, 28-R-357, 28-R-358, 28-R-359, 28-R-360, 28-R-361, 28-R-362, 28-L-5, 28-L-7	
ZDR Application Number: DCP-ZDR-2021-06286	
Meeting Location: Zoom	
Date: 6/24/21	
Meeting Start Time: 6 p.m.	
Applicant: Walnut Capital	Approx. Number of Attendees: 28
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): Planning Commission	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

Property history of conservatorship. Seeking approval to demolish structures, replace with grass seeding so it becomes green space. Billboards will be removed. Will come back later with a development proposal, but currently only seeking demolition permit (this is what triggered DAM). Planning Commission near end of July (prior to August recess). Assuming approval in July, demolish in August.

Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
How will construction impact traffic in neighborhoods? What is square footage of site?	Plan to demolish in first or second week of August. Contractor will coordinate any closures with City and university. If can accomplish in first two weeks of August, demolition will not interact with students' return. May need one lane closed near row houses during construction. Not intending to close any parts of Zulema (perhaps close right turn from Zulema onto Bates during demolition of house on the corner, would be short). Approx 4/10 of an acre (maybe 18,484 square feet).
What's happening with the billboard?	Demolish. After close on property, rights will be secured to do this. Not sure when closing will happen. Hopefully first or second week of July.

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Is there any planning lighting? Who will cut the grass? Maintenance? At time of demolition and closing will you cut the grass and clean the litter?	No lighting planned. Maintenance done by Walnut Capital. All cleaning as is will take place during time of demolition. After closing we would cut the grass quickly.
How long has WC been planning acquisition and what is intent of client for acquiring?	Working on site for 6+ months. Not sure yet what the plans are for the site.
Does client plan to sell to the University of Pittsburgh? Can Pitt comment?	Yes, after we get title, demolish, and stabilize, we plan to sell to University. Expect to close on selling to Pitt sometime in the fall of 2021.
What is timeframe for proposals for future uses on the site?	Long-term discussion. Will involve university, no further information tonight.
What can you tell us about the court fines about the properties?	All outstanding fines (hundred of thousands of dollars in tax liens, others) all being paid at time of closing.
Will public utilities be impacted during demolition? Will there be lead testing?	No. Full environmental assessment done on site during Phase 1 by environmental engineer. Site sampled, tested, no issues identified regarding hazardous substances.
Why won't Pitt do demolition themselves? Whose idea was it for Walnut Capital to acquire? What did Walnut Capital pay?	Business decision. Knowledge of decision making was outside presenter's knowledge. Long known by both parties as problem site and seeking to improve it. Walnut Capital paid for property and clearing of liens: all in at ~\$5 million+. Pitt will reimburse Walnut Capital for all expenses. There is an agreement with Pitt but not able to comment on the terms.
Is this in Pitt IMP?	No.
Can you speak to stormwater management after demolition?	None planned because it will be grass. Water will infiltrate into ground and no runoff expected once stabilized. NO stormwater because there's no impervious being built on property.
Will contractor provide notice prior to start of demolition?	Will coordinate with Wanda at OPDC once date is finalized. OPDC can distribute. OPDC confirms they will do this.
Will demolition affect Zulema Parklet?	No.
Concern about buying speculatively with no plan.	This is a long-range, speculative plan. This is a "stay tuned" project, this is just step one in a multi-step journey.
What are plans for repairing or replacing sidewalks?	Any sidewalk damage or in unacceptable conditions will be repaired and/or replaced.

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
How does this parcel have relevance to Walnut Capital's properties on McKee Place?	None.
Can you speak to recycling building materials as part of demolition?	We explored this, but there's nothing salvageable in buildings. Many rotted, no utilities for years, floors missing.

Other Notes

OPDC notes that there will be, and needs to be, future meetings around development plans in the future. Pitt says there is no information currently about future plans, but that the university will work closely with the community when there are plans.

Planner completing report: Sophia Robison