

THE PROPOSED RE-DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR THE WATER STREET DISTRICT AND THE NAHC'S PUBLIC STAND

A large re-development project is now being proposed for a key area in Naperville's Downtown area that is recognized as ripe for re-development. The proposal calls for several 5-story buildings over 60 feet in height in a very confined area, including two such tall buildings along the Du Page River, across from the Dandelion Fountain and the most heavily visited parts of the Riverwalk. This project will create, as the developer states, a radical change to this somewhat separate section of Downtown Naperville. In addition to certain zoning variances, the developer also seeks a TIF, which would provide considerable relief from local taxes for a specified period of years, helping the developer fund the project. Most of those taxes would normally go to School District 203, Naperville Township, and other local taxing bodies.

The NAHC's Role

Our Charter and By-Laws compel the NAHC to advocate for the interests of Naperville Homeowners on matters of public policy. The Confederation recognizes that an attractive, vibrant and economically successful Downtown is an important Community asset. Its re-development is therefore of large significance to Naperville Homeowners.

What the NAHC Has Done

Under the direction of the NAHC Board, the Confederation's Zoning and Land Use Committee, chaired by Patricia Meyer, studied all the pertinent documents publicly available, met with the developers and their attorney, and presented their preliminary findings to the Board. Acting under a further Board directive, Committee members appeared before the Plan Commission to express certain concerns the NAHC Board developed in response to the Committee's findings. The Board then directed the Committee to prepare a Report, which was posted on the NAHC's website in late August, along with various architectural renderings put forth by the developer.

The Pluses of This Proposed Project

The Water Street District presents several challenges to would-be re-developers. The proposed project attempts to answer several of these, offering at least the following important positives:

- The opportunity for the City to manage most of the District's re-development with a single and local property owner/developer, rather than piecemeal, by parcel;
- Creative and generally attractive architecture, with a signature feature of a plaza between the two buildings along the River that will have a circular water fountain;
- A large parking garage at least initially funded by the developer, with at least some spaces available for general public use;
- Developer-fronted funding for improvements to the Riverwalk and needed infrastructure in the area.

Why the NAHC' Committee Concludes That the Project Doesn't Fit As Proposed

The Committee concluded that the project, *as proposed*, doesn't "fit" with our Downtown, or with the Water Street Vision Statement, because:

- The 5-story, 60-foot tall buildings, directly along the River, will substantially detract from the Riverwalk;
- The project will create an extremely intense use of space because of its narrow sidewalks on a narrowed Water Street, all dominated by 60-foot tall buildings;
- The project will create additional traffic problems at one of Naperville's most congested Downtown intersections, in part *because* of the high-rise, intense use;
- The project fails to create a "pedestrian friendly" environment, with adequate consideration for open spaces (other than the plaza, alone);
- The precedent for future Downtown re-development this project will create.

The Recommendations of the NAHC Committee in General

In light of the foregoing, the Committee recommends that:

- The height of all the buildings be reduced, with a special emphasis on those buildings adjacent to the River;
- The pedestrian and vehicular aspects of this project be further developed, with a focus on creating a "pedestrian friendly" environment and effective traffic management, retaining the full 66-foot right of way on Water Street;
- The City solicit additional public opinion from all stakeholder groups and residents to better advise the City Council;
- In the absence of a demonstrated general consensus of Community opinion in favor of this project, *as proposed*, the NAHC should exercise its leadership role and take a Public Stand that asks the City Council (and the developers) to reduce the height of the buildings to a maximum of 45 feet, to retain the current width of Water Street, and to create sidewalk streetscapes of the kind developed or being developed on the north side of Downtown..

Your Vote

The Motion will be: To accept the recommendations of the NAHC's Zoning and Planning Liaison Committee as the Public Stand of the Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation. Every Member Association has one vote. Ballots will be distributed, but no matter how many Association Member representatives are present, the rule is one Association = one vote. Our By-laws state that the results of the vote will be tabulated on the basis of those Member Associations who present for the vote today.