



Kimberly Hoelsing (CCLk) <kimberly.hoelsing@cityofomaha.org>

188 Unit Project - 31st and Marcy/Mason

1 message

John Heine <john@oak-ire.com>

Sat, Jun 24, 2023 at 12:13 PM

To: "danny.begley@cityofomaha.org" <danny.begley@cityofomaha.org>, "pete.festersen@cityofomaha.org" <pete.festersen@cityofomaha.org>, "juanita.johnson@cityofomaha.org" <juanita.johnson@cityofomaha.org>, "don.rowe@cityofomaha.org" <don.rowe@cityofomaha.org>, "brinker.harding@cityofomaha.org" <brinker.harding@cityofomaha.org>, "aimee.melton@cityofomaha.org" <aimee.melton@cityofomaha.org>, "vinny.palermo@cityofomaha.org" <vinny.palermo@cityofomaha.org>
Cc: "cityclerk@cityofomaha.org" <cityclerk@cityofomaha.org>

Dear City Council Members-

I'm a writing regarding a project that is on the City Council Agenda - June 27, 20223, Case #C11-21-318, C10-21-228. This is the 188 unit (239 bedroom) apartment project located at 31st Street between Marcy Street and Mason Street. <https://planning.cityofomaha.org/images/PDFs/PlanningBoardApp/2023/March/20.pdf>

For the record, I am very pro-development and in favor of the resurgence and recapitalization of the Urban Core and our east Omaha neighborhoods. I am also a proponent of the future streetcar and density for our City and I have never opposed a project. I currently live at 912 S 31st Street, which is across the street from this project. And, as a disclosure, I have a financial interest in the neighborhood shopping center located at [3105 Leavenworth Street](#). The Mill Coffee and Tea and Galls Uniform are both tenants of this shopping center.

I am writing in opposition to this project based on no neighborhood notice/information from the developer and the required parking waiver.

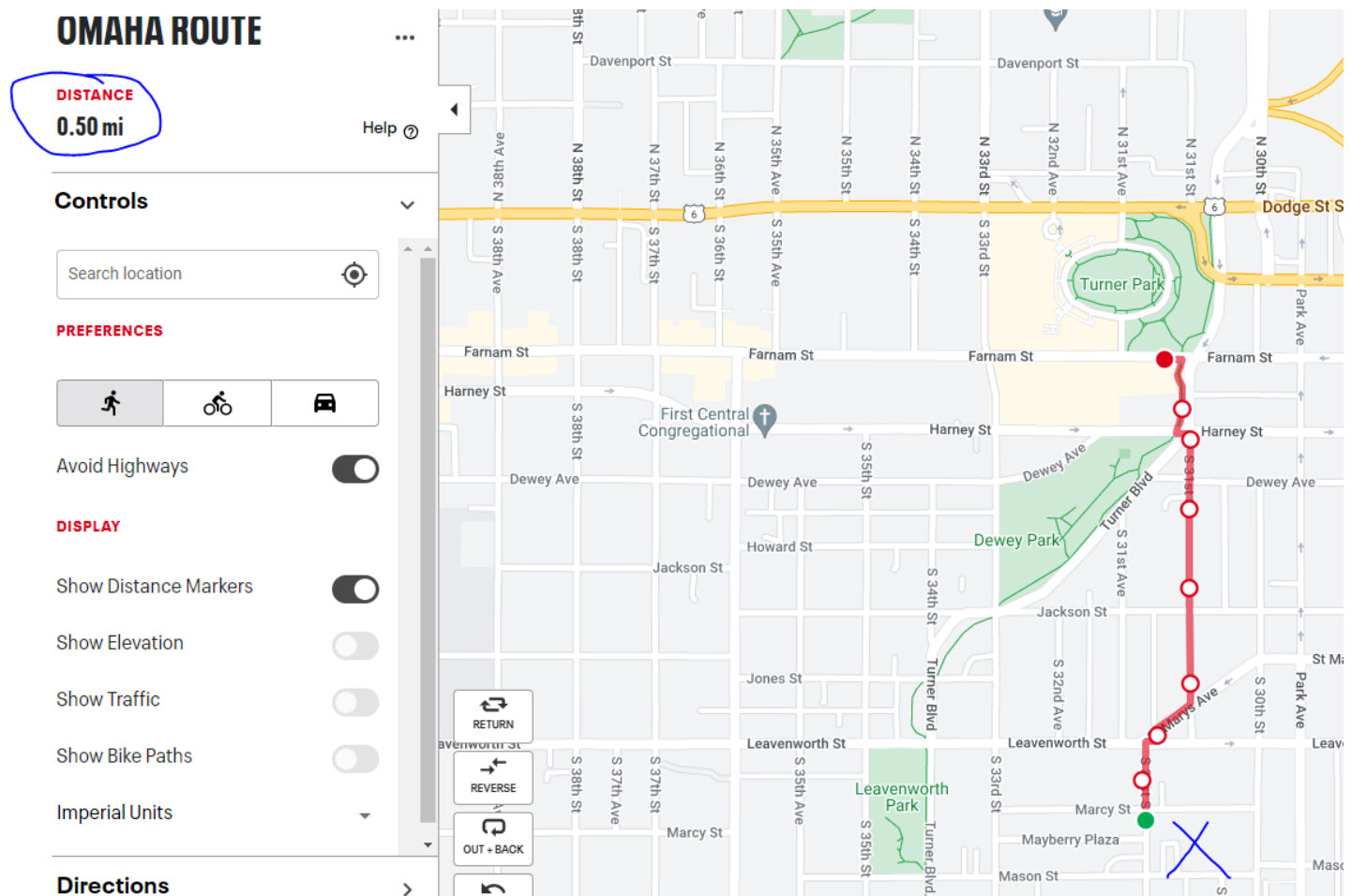
1. **Notice.** The developer never held a public meeting and didn't provide any materials about the project with the neighborhood and community. Many of the neighborhood folks (businesses and residents) that I talk with are not aware of the project.
2. **Parking Waiver.** Per the notes on page 5 or the Planning Dept Sheet, the planning department states..... *Parking: Based on the number and type of units proposed, a minimum of 282 off-street parking spaces are required. Submitted plans show a maximum of 147 parking spaces located on or adjacent to the site (52% of required). The applicant has requested an exception reducing the required number of off-street parking spaces, citing the 50 percent standard for offstreet parking typical to Transit Oriented Development. Based on the unique location of the site within proximity to the pending streetcar route, similar reductions in parking through the PUR process can be supported. The proposed parking plan is acceptable.*
 - Of these 147 stalls, 18 of the street stalls are being counted. This calculates to 129 dedicated off-street parking spaces compared to the required 282. Many of the houses, and smaller multifamily dwellings in the neighborhood do not have garages or driveways on their properties. Cars are already pushed onto the streets. In the evenings, Marcy, Mason and 31st Streets are already full of cars.
 - The Planning Department notes say the waiver from 282 units is acceptable due to proximity of the pending streetcar. The closest planned streetcar stop is at a minimum five blocks away given the shortest walking route from this project. Add another block or two from the southeast corner of the project. See map below. I'd respectfully disagree with the idea that people in Omaha will not need a car if the streetcar is a half mile away.
 - In other areas, like Blackstone or the new Brickline apartments, there are neighboring parking solutions for the apartment tenants. Many of the Blackstone residential tenants utilize UMMC garages and Mutual of Omaha surface lots for spillover parking. Additionally, the City is building a large garage at 37th and Farnam to help address parking demand in Blackstone. The City built a \$15M, 700 unit parking garage adjacent to the Brickline Apartments. The location around 31st and Marcy/Leavenworth doesn't have the benefit of large City or Civic garages or corporate surface lots to address spillover of parking load.

- As a comparison project, the Square Apartments located at 30th and Leavenworth, was approved in fall of 2022. This project will have 73 apartments units with approximately 130 dedicated parking stalls. The developer of the Square currently owns The Triangle apartments, located across the street from the Square, and they recognize the limited capacity of parking in the neighborhood. Note, the developer of The Square had neighborhood meetings to share their plans.

Selfishly, this project adds an abundance of coffee drinkers and consumers to the neighborhood, which helps the financial success of my tenant, The Mill Coffee and Tea. However, I believe it is a poor decision to approve the parking waiver based on the negative impact this project will have on the neighborhood for years to come. If you would like a walking tour of the site and neighborhood, please let me know as I can accommodate prior to Tuesday's vote.

Thanks for your consideration and listening.

Project is located with the blue X on the map. Planned streetcar stop is the red dot.



John Heine (Citizen)

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Kimberly Hoelsing (CClk) <kimberly.hoelsing@cityofomaha.org>

Agenda Items 22, 23, 24 for June 27, 2023: 31st & Marcy

1 message

JD Thompson <jdthompson1001@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 26, 2023 at 12:35 PM

To: Pete.Festersen@cityofomaha.org, "Aimee S. Melton (CCou)" <Aimee.Melton@cityofomaha.org>, Danny.Begley@cityofomaha.org, Don.Rowe@cityofomaha.org, Juanita.Johnson@cityofomaha.org, Brinker Harding <Brinker.Harding@cityofomaha.org>, cityclerk@cityofomaha.org

SUBJ: Agenda Items 22, 23, 24 for June 27, 2023: 31st & Marcy

Although these agenda items are separate actions please consider this response addressing the project as a whole.

Very simply, this project needs to be disapproved and sent back to the drawing board. By supporting this ill-conceived plan the action becomes a detriment to the neighborhood, not an improvement. It is too clear that the developer has ignored what a neighborhood is all about and is attempting to jam too many living units in a space that cannot absorb them. Allowing this action to occur would be catastrophic to an already congested living situation.

My neighbor Pat O'Donnell did a thorough job of analyzing the number of vehicle spaces that are truly needed for the area so I will not repeat his numbers. Suffice it to say that allowing the congestion is NOT welcome for this neighborhood. The fact that the developer did not have a true neighborhood meeting is evidence that their intentions were to slide this through unnoticed. The record shows there was a neighborhood meeting on February 21, 2023 "with 6 people in attendance". Who were these people and why would decision makers assume that they represented the entire neighborhood? Due diligence for a project with this impact would demand that a true neighborhood meeting with sufficient feedback be set.

In my opinion the change is zoning from R-6 to R-7 is probably warranted as indicated in the justification for such. What bothers me is when this project was first proposed, the developer did not own the four houses that were planned for demolition. In fact, a visit to one of those homeowners revealed that he had not even heard that he was slated to be bought out! He did not want to move with four kids in schools in the area and the investment he made in making his property look good. Has the developer acquired all the property now or is he waiting to make the four existing property owners an offer they can't refuse?

In addition to the lack of on-site parking, the inordinate number of waivers to code reveals a total lack of concern for the neighborhood. Set-backs from 35 feet to 4?? Jam those small apartments in the space because the developers must make the numbers work. But shouldn't there be concern for what that really does to a neighborhood? This same developer, on a project at 33rd and Mason, had the audacity to plan for parking where there is currently no parking on the west side of 33rd. How does the Planning Department even allow this to be brought forward? And the 8 on-street parking suggested in this current include existing no parking areas?

This site is situated right in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Other projects such as those created by Urban Village have been very successful in adapting to critical parking needs of the tenants. IF the City fully endorses less than 1 to 1 parking, please have these developers state publicly that "Tenants are expected to not have motor vehicles". Ridiculous, right? We are not Brooklyn, N.Y., nor will it ever be. The Transit Oriented Development is fine, but I suggest, as the Planning Board seems to continually recommend, that a better analysis takes into account what we all desire is a real neighborhood. Boxes of living spaces in a tall rectangle is NOT a neighborhood unless it's a retirement home where the residents cannot drive. I understand the goal that the City wants better utilization of mass transit opportunities, but my experience of living here for over 40 years reveals better alternatives need to be added to the equation rather than forcing the lack of parking. Does the goal of providing a quality neighborhood for residents not be taken into account as we build those neighborhoods? Or is it strictly number driven, as developers and accounts ALWAYS look at first?

The Planning Board in their recommendation states that this project is a "Critical component of the Downtown Development Core". I agree that infill is needed in various locations, but jamming this many living units into this space under the conditions drawn out does NOT contribute to a positive core. Envision the day-to-day fight for parking, the transient nature of these small boxes (how many tenants stay beyond their 1-year lease?), and the inability to simply interact with neighbors does nothing for the quality of a neighborhood. THAT needs to be fixed and thus, re-drawn in this particular project. The single sentence in the Planning document states that the "Proposed parking plan is acceptable" is questionable and should not give developers carte blanche freedom to attack the streets of a neighborhood so their numbers work.

Furthermore, bringing the streetcar proposal into this project is downright silly. The plan to mess up our neighborhood from 7 blocks away for a project that has yet to be designed, is putting the cart before the horse. Adopting this mentality will imply that anyone within 7 blocks of the proposed streetcar line will never get the authority to build a two-car garage on their property because the streetcar is available. Sure, that sounds silly too, but please get real in suggesting that loose justification for such projects.

I have lived in this neighborhood for 42 years and have worked continuously towards a quality living situation for those who live and work in the area. I have witnessed many positive development projects, the most notable was Midtown Crossing, and welcome the upgrade to deteriorated properties. This particular project needs to be rejected as it does not fit the "quality" test, especially in regards to exasperating an existing parking headache in the neighborhood.

Jim Thompson

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Kimberly Hoelsing (CClk) <kimberly.hoelsing@cityofomaha.org>

Fwd: Reference: Agenda for 27th of June, 2023 - 31st and Marcy Development

1 message

Jack <jack.austin.henry@gmail.com>
To: cityclerk@cityofomaha.org

Tue, Jun 27, 2023 at 7:18 AM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jack Henry <jack.austin.henry@gmail.com>
Date: June 26, 2023 at 7:14:12 PM CDT
To: danny.begley@cityofomaha.org
Cc: amee.melton@cityofomaha.org, Pete.Festersen@cityofomaha.org, don.rowe@cityofomaha.org, brinker.harding@cityofomaha.com, juanita.johnson@cityofomaha.com, cityclerk@cityofomaha.org
Subject: Reference: Agenda for 27th of June, 2023 - 31st and Marcy Development

Hi Danny and your fellow City Council Members:

As my Civic Leaders, please deny this project. Per City requirements, a minimum of 282 off-street parking spaces are required for a project of this size. However, the City of Omaha Planning Department and Planning Board is recommending approval of 147 parking spaces of which 18 are street stalls located on Marcy/Mason/31st Street. The City cites the future Streetcar as a reason for the variance from the required 282 off street parking space requirement.

The streetcar will be **seven blocks away** from the project with a stop at Turner Boulevard & Farnam Street. There is not a single grocery store along the proposed Streetcar Route. Be honest with yourself, if you walked seven blocks from this proposed development to the Streetcar, would you not walk **two more blocks** to Wholner's Grocery in Midtown Crossing? The Streetcar rationale is laughable. My Dad would say to me as a teen, 'When you rationalize with me, you know something is wrong.' And this is very wrong. Density in Middle America does not equal density in New England or New York; we all have vehicles. Every resident of this proposed project will have a vehicle because the Omaha Streetcar doesn't allow them to be vehicle-free.

The development will contribute to congestion and traffic hazards for our neighborhood. I've lived in this area for nearly 15 years; in this time the Leavenworth Corridor has changed immensely. Much has been gentrified, or 'developed'. It has been done so pragmatically with neighborhood input. Urban Village and Green Slate have millions of dollars invested in rehabilitated structures and/or new-builds in Leavenworth. Not every project could be amicably agreed between Neighbors and the Developers but both of these Developers have always been accessible for neighborhood meetings and concerns. The Developer of this particular project did not hold a single neighborhood meeting. Perhaps it's because his last project was denied for the very same Neighborhood concerns?

I moved to Midtown and joined the Leavenworth Neighborhood Association whose motto can loosely be described as creating a space in which we can 'Live, Work and Play'. Social interaction is meaningful to the patchwork of our city - it's why I stayed in Midtown. I've enjoyed the development, even the new-build apartment units, over the years. However, this project doesn't blend into the fabric of our neighborhood. And, what's more, Planning has waived most of its own requirements - betraying longtime Citizens for a project spearheaded by a guy who does not even live in Midtown.

As our Civic Leaders, I ask for this project to be denied. Please have more consideration than the Planning Department and Mr. Held.

I appreciate your time and your consideration.

With Respect,

Jack Henry
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