

The plan for the Martin Tower property is in (8)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Martin Tower, Serious Issues April 8, 2019

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(8th in a series on Martin Tower)

Initial sketch plans for Martin Tower site at Planning Commission

4PM Thursday April 11 Town Hall

Martin Tower demolition May 19

Important week. The owners have submitted a plan for medical offices, retail stores, a gas station, a restaurant, and garden apartments for the 53-acre site. Time to spend several posts coming up to speed.

Let's start with the City:

April 2, 2019 12:03 PM

UPDATE on Martin Tower Demolition (Bethlehem, PA—April 2, 2019),
On May 19, 2019, Martin Tower will be taken down through a controlled demolition. Many steps have been taken by the contractor to get to this point. Asbestos remediation has been completed. The DEP will be involved in the controlled demolition of the building. While still a towering structure, the building is a shell of what it once was, comprised of concrete and steel. On the day of demolition, the DEP will be on site. The demolition time has yet to be determined, but will most likely take place during early morning day light hours. The property owners, City of Bethlehem and demolition experts, are working together on defining safe areas for viewing as well as restricted areas where no one shall be permitted. An area map will be provide at a later date and will include all street closures and restricted areas. Additional information will be released in mid-April. All necessary provisions to ensure the safety, health and welfare, of the public are being taken for this large undertaking. Check back with the City's website or www.martintowerbethlehem.com for updates.

Unfortunately, Gadfly will be away for the demolition. Granddaughter graduating from Notre Dame. Gadfly happy for her. And happy not to be downwind of demo-dust. But I guess if there's bad stuff, it will still be there to greet me on return.

Now let's catch up on the news:

Nicole Radzievich, "Bethlehem sets date for Martin Tower implosion." Morning Call, March 28, 2019.

Duane Wagner, the developer's representative, confirmed that timeline Thursday, saying the time would likely be early morning after sunrise. The mayor has said the implosion would be timed for a weekend morning — when there is as little traffic as possible to disrupt. The city is coordinating with various government agencies to ensure the implosion at 1170 Eighth Ave. goes smoothly. Roads will be closed and air quality monitored. Robert Novatnack, the city's emergency management director, has said the city will share a map with the public showing the hot zone (where the demolition is taking place), a warm zone (where emergency personnel and demolition contractors will be) and a cold zone (where the public can safely watch the demolition). The map will show which roads are closed and which areas are restricted around what has been a Lehigh Valley landmark for nearly 47 years. . . . The explosions bringing down the 332-foot building will be timed to drive the debris eastward where there is more land on the property for the debris to fall.

"Martin Tower implosion: What readers are saying about environmental damage, future plans, bad management." Morning Call, April 5, 2019.

As a lifetime resident of Bethlehem, I understand the sentimental desire to preserve and save Martin Tower. What I don't understand is why more residents and businesses have not been up in arms over the potential environmental damage to the surrounding medical facilities, hospital, Moravian College, brand new middle school, B. Braun, etc. and people. . . . I would appreciate an article from The Morning Call stating the effects of post demolition on the community because I am more concerned with

the environmental and health risks rather than the absence of a building.
(Heather Brennan)

A golden opportunity is emerging to make Bethlehem an even better city. My wife and I have lived many years in the Carolinas and Florida, where attractive, affordable, mixed-use communities are commonly seen. These planned communities look and feel good, serve a variety of residents, and enhance their cities. They attract working singles, families, and retirees. So naturally we were surprised and disappointed to read what seems to be an uninspiring plan for this important land. . . . Hundreds and hundreds of apartments as the project's dominant feature? The best we can do is more apartments? How about well-designed, architecturally appealing coach homes, condominiums, detached or paired villas? . . . Approving any plan for this special land whose central feature is hundreds of apartments would suggest the Planning Commission is losing faith in Bethlehem's future. (Dave Zakeski)

Martin Tower took away the beauty of the city's landscape. It did not represent the history of those workers who labored many hard years in a noisy, dangerous, and dirty steel plant or those workers who incurred chronic medical conditions. It did not represent the common working citizen. It only stood for the wealthy executives. (Sharon Johnson)
However, the majority of blue collar steel workers in the structural shipping yards of the now-deceased Bethlehem plant felt the money should have been spent on a continuous steel casting process and technology. They would have lowered cost, man-hours per ton and made the Bethlehem Steel plant a more competitive steel producer in a competitive marketplace. Instead we must look at a cold-looking tower of scrap waiting to be imploded. In fact, all Martin Tower means to me and many more plant workers is a lack of foresight, planning and poor judgement while fully lacking the right leadership. My reason for feeling this way is because I and many co-workers had a stake in the plant and expected to retire with dignity. We took great pride in producing quality structural beams. (Tim McNally)

Perhaps tricky stuff ahead — see next posts!

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