

Martin Tower: “Ok, now we have something to talk about” (13)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Martin Tower, Serious Issues April 12, 2019

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(13th in a series on Martin Tower)
Martin Tower demolition May 19
www.martintowerbethlehem.com

As one of the participants at the Planning Commission meeting said today, “Ok, now we have something to talk about.”

The developers presented their “Master Plan.”

Gadfly may want to spend 3-4 posts on this PC meeting, but first let’s just report the news.

Here’s the Master plan from Herrick and Ronca or HRP Management – Gadfly is not sure by what name to call the developers.
Orient yourself to the geography of the image:

- that’s Schoenersville/Eaton Ave. running across the top of the property
- that’s 8th Avenue running down the left side
- across the bottom you can see the exit from Rt. 378 curling into 8th
- Eaton Ave. is on the north side (top), 8th on the west (left), Rt, 378 on the south (bottom)

Now let’s look inside the site at what the developers propose:
Eaton Ave. north



1 – medical	8 – Offices	
		9 –
2- medical	7 – Hotel (132 rooms)	528 apartments, 3 stories
		1-2 bedroom
3- retail	6 – Restaurant	pocket park at bottom
4- gas/convenience	5- Retail	

Rt. 378 south

The Master Plan was submitted March 12. The City responded with a 4-page detailed letter titled the “[Martin Tower Complex Master Plan Review](#)” dated April 5.

Duane Wagner, representing the developer walked through the Master Plan in about a 1/2hr presentation. The PC members engaged in

discussion, followed by comments from a dozen members of the attending public, before the PC engaged in discussion again and proceeded to a vote.

The PC chair framed the vote in terms of 4 options: 1) approve the Master Plan as is, 2) totally disapprove it, 3) approve it with suggestions and recommendations in the April 5 City letter, 4) ask for a total re-submission.

The choice narrowed to either #3 or #4.

The PC chair moved “to approve the Martin Tower Master Plan with the points highlighted in the April 5, 2019, letter [from the City], particularly under the ‘General’ comments #1, #5, #10, and in ‘Forestry,’ #2.” The motion passed 3-2.

This Master Plan was described as a “sketch plan,” and the PC chair said, “all will eventually come back” to the Planning Commission.

So, we should look in detail at the April 5 City letter titled the “[Martin Tower Complex Master Plan Review](#).”

Here are the 4 parts of that letter especially cited in the motion for developer attention:

General

1. Impervious coverage shall be minimized wherever possible. For example, opportunities for shared parking are encouraged in the Zoning Ordinance and should be explored. Opportunities for increased greening of the site should be maximized.
2. Each of the uses provides a significantly greater number of parking spaces than what are required by the Zoning Ordinance. Parking should be minimized provide a reduction of impervious coverage, allow for greater opportunity for greenspace and landscaping and to provide for greater opportunity for additional uses.
3. The plan shows the detention pond as a stormwater facility on a sloped and heavily wooded area of the site. We recommend

that the site include infiltration and other alternative measures for stormwater management other than a detention pond if at all possible. If a pond is necessary, it should not be located on sloped or wooded areas; it could be incorporated as an amenity at the interior of the site and could possibly be a focal point for passive recreation.

Forestry

2. Driving lanes, buildings, trees, and parking areas are all in repetitive, monotonous straight lines. Provide some relief from this dull predictability by creating more interest and variety with angled building/parking areas, curved or meandering driving lanes and accesses, and more natural and uncontrived landscaped areas.

Ok, “now we have something to talk about.” Gadfly wants to come back and spend 3-4 posts more on this topic. But the floor is open for your comments.

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