

The developer plans for Garrison St.

The Bethlehem Gadfly 11 and 15 West Garrison St., Neighborhoods, Northside, Serious Issues
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Festival UnBound

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October 4-13

(2nd in a series of posts about 11 and 15 W. Garrison St.)



The developer seeks rezoning of two residences on Garrison St. as part of a proposal for a 5-floor mixed use building with first-floor commercial + 70-some apartments along New St. between Garrison and North.

Gadfly likes to have an image of the developer (a devil with horns?). The developer's name is not familiar, but he must have been "at work" for a good while to accumulate that concentrated block of properties. Let's take a look as he makes his brief presentation at Tuesday night's Council hearing: <https://youtu.be/J2R0f1AQ2kY>

The developer owns the entire 700 block (sigh! makes you feel insignificant, doesn't it? Gadfly's house is 20ft. wide) of west New St and the two houses 11 and 15 W. Garrison.

The houses on New are zoned Central Business District, the Garrison houses residential.

The Garrison houses were CB but changed to residential in 2005. The developer's asking to change them back.

Most of us have not witnessed a public hearing on a Zoning proposal, so let's take a look at the interaction between Council and the developer to get a sense of the kind of questions that are asked and the kind of concerns there might be.

Especially regarding impact on the existing neighborhood:

<https://youtu.be/FP9CImXXyzg>

We learn that the first floor must be “retail, restaurant, or personal services.”

Though there is the rendering of the project shown above, no specific plan has yet been officially submitted.

As the developer says, he is “early on” in a project — a “journey” — of many steps. He's at “the very first step.”

So he was a bit vague about some details. For instance, the height of the building.

Parking (a reasonable amount of parking as a convenience) and a certain type of construction (reasonable cost) will limit the height, he said in response to concerns.

He has looked at the City Comprehensive Plan (nice!) and is following a desired use found there in the Center City area: high-density residential.

What kind of tenants does he seek? He's working with a marketing and financing group doing a demographic study, but he did mention the possibility of federal government programs for veteran housing (some visible signs of sympathy for that).

See approx. minute 10 for Councilwoman Van Wirt raising concern for the integrity of the Garrison St. block.

Yes, that's what we should think about next.

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