

# Martin Tower: the developer's presentation (14)

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

AUDIO RECORDINGS UNAVAILABLE IN THIS ARCHIVE



*Ok, so you have taken the “[Connecting Bethlehem](#)” survey, but have you forced others?*

*(14th in a series on Martin Tower)*

*Martin Tower demolition May 19*

*[www.martintowerbethlehem.com](http://www.martintowerbethlehem.com)*

*Eaton Ave. north*

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

*Rt. 378 south*

Gadfly's going to work through the Martin Tower meeting at the Planning Commission April 11 in several posts  
Beginning at the beginning.

Duane Wagner presented the developer Master Plan, taking about 1/2hr. We have the full audio of his presentation below.

Gadfly thought his presentation was clear and thorough.

But Gadfly particularly noted how in his prefatory remarks Wagner was careful to frame the presentation of the Master Plan squarely in the 2015 debates.

Listen to the deference to concerns about a “3rd downtown” and specific injunctions from 2015 City Council in this pertinent interchange between Wagner and PC Commissioner Malozi:

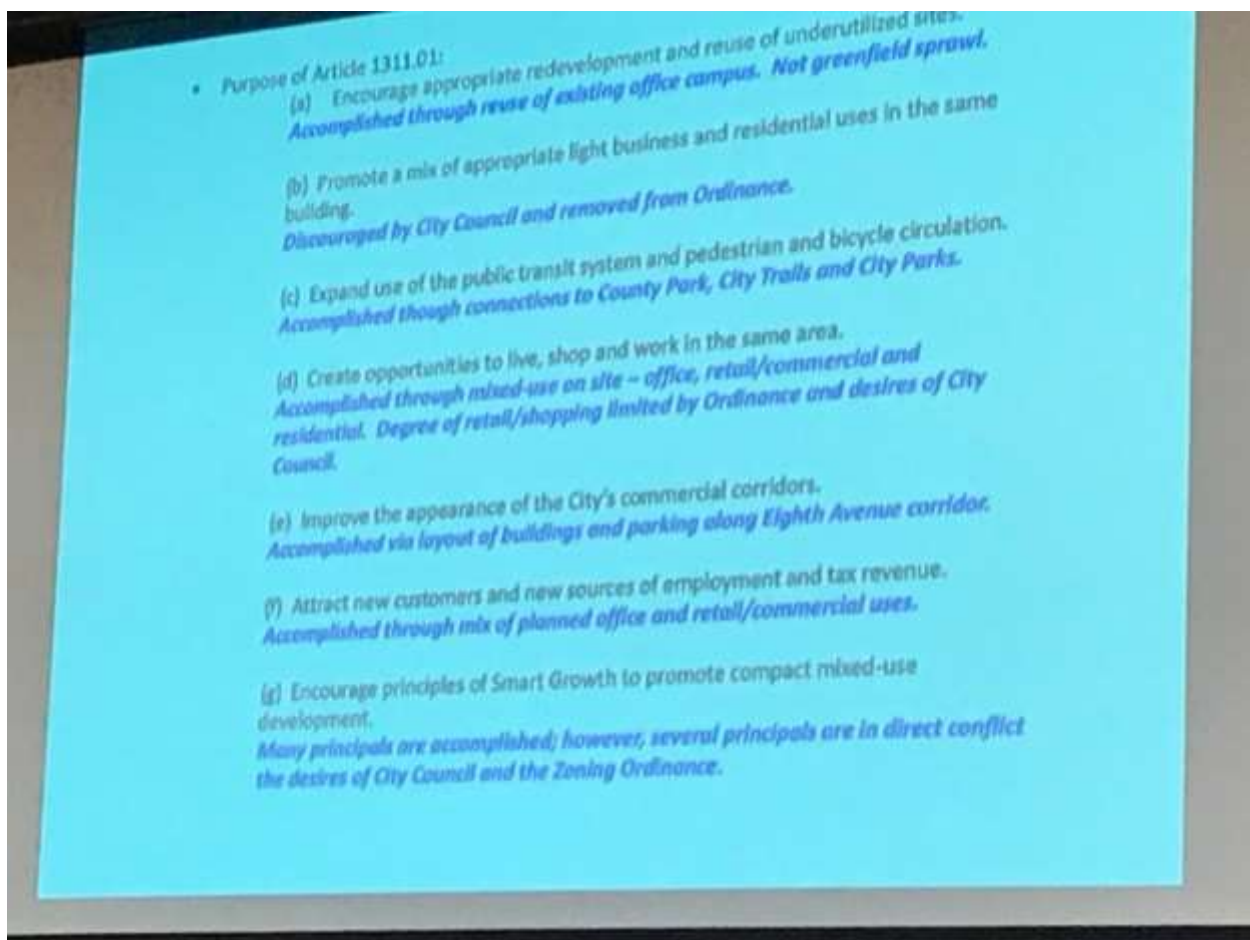
Mr. Malozi: “What was driving how you came up with those mixes, what’s shown on the plan, the different uses there?”

Mr. Wagner: “The biggest thing that drove us was the direction from the zoning ordinance, the City Council, what we heard from them. It was important to create some residences that support the downtown and create a base, find office type uses that create employees, and also to provide some retail on site to support both the employees and the residents. . . . We tried to be cognizant of all the comments and all the direction we got. . . . not to put too much there to drain the downtown or put forth fuel to the concern that that could happen. . . . We feel it’s a good mix that accomplishes what the ordinance wanted as well as what we heard from City Council.”

Wagner clearly lists and discusses the take-aways from the 2015 debates that were considered in the formulation of the Master Plan:

- Following considerations were derived from 2016 City Council meeting minutes:
  - Did not want creation of 3<sup>rd</sup> downtown, which could result in adverse impact to the existing northside and southside businesses.
  - Did not want ground floor retail under residential or office uses, which would contribute to the creation of a downtown / Main Street setting.
  - Did not want residential that would adversely impact the School District with large numbers of school-aged children.
  - Wanted limited retail to support the residents and employees within the development, but limited enough to encourage shopping and dining offsite in the northside and southside downtowns and the Westgate Mall.
  - Wanted residential that created the opportunity for more people to support the downtown and existing local businesses.
  - Wanted office and commercial development to create jobs and employees to support the downtown and existing local businesses.
  - Wanted development to increase the tax base and revenues to the City, County and School District.
  - Identified three uses to be included in the development of the property:
    - Office, Institutional, Light Industrial.
    - Retail, Restaurant, Entertainment.
    - Residential.

And he also clearly addresses where the Master Plan stands in relation to the operative zoning ordinance:



In short, Gadfly felt that Wagner was “politic” in the way he approached his presentation. Gadfly felt a direct connection between his review of 2-3 dozen documents from the hot mess in 2015 in Wagner’s opening words.

The developers were roundly criticized in 2015 for their silence. Wagner here tries to show that they were “listening.”

So let’s get into the details of Wagner’s presentation, though, except for this example of what the apartments might look like, my pictures of his additional slides of the site are not useful.



Ok, now here's the full audio of Wagner's presentation with some pertinent time marks.

14:10: parking

19:30: access

21:41: walkability

23:10: sidewalks

24:28: the pocket park

25:23: sightlines

27:10: employment

28:06: tax revenue

Lots to chew on here. Comments welcome. But Gadfly will continue on especially to public commentary.

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