

Carrie Myers

From: JEFFREY KANNEGIESSER
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 9:11 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: Railroad square housing project

Categories: Needs Action Soon

To Whom it May Concern,

Regarding the proposed housing project. I find it curious that this has jumped to the front of the line ahead of major infrastructure issues. Pushing this project before dealing with the water situation seems to me like a betrayal of the public trust. Furthermore, housing projects of this kind come with their own drawbacks and unpredictable expenses. Please do not move forward with this project.

Sent from my iPhone

Carrie Myers

From:
Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 9:38 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: Railroad Square project

Categories: Needs Action Soon

ATTN: Mayor Brown and Council

I urge you NOT to send a letter of support for the Railroad Square project that is being proposed for historic downtown Brunswick.
Please consider alternatives that would restore the existing buildings and revitalize downtown. Brunswick is a historical town and needs to be kept that way. Our heritage is very important to most Brunswick residents, especially those that grew up in this town and had family that helped build this town. The Railroad Square project as proposed does not meet any type of standards in keeping our history alive and well for others to see and experience.

Thank you,
Linda Henson
3839 Burkittsville Road
Knoxville, MD 21758

Carrie Myers

From: Nathan Brown
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2020 10:08 AM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: FW: RR Square Letter

Categories: Needs Action Soon

Nathan Brown
Mayor, City of Brunswick
301-834-7500 (City Hall)
240-529-4425 (Cell)
www.BrunswickMD.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: James R. Castle
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2020 10:01 AM
To: Nathan Brown <nbrown@brunswickmd.gov>
Subject: RR Square Letter

Hi Nathan.

I would like to take this moment to state that if a letter is drafted relating to Railroad Square, this is the time for the Mayor and Council to request the State and the developer take historical preservation into account if the project is to move forward.

I hope you take this concept into consideration if a letter is to be sent.

Jim Castle
(Representing only Jim Castle)

Carrie Myers

From: Amber Greer
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2020 12:53 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: Downtown project

Categories: Needs Action Soon

I do NOT support this. This only rewards a deadbeat landlord who has allowed the properties in question to rot for almost two years to get this. What does the city get? Can I expect clean drinking water? Can I expect safe sidewalks that are not eaten through by erosion? Can I expect safety after sunset because the druggies that are allowed to congregate in the park after dark are gone? Can I expect that there can be some rules on property ownership with respect to code enforcement? Will you enact legislation to stop the apparent hatred shown by allowing the confederate flag to fly proudly? The elected officials should work on getting the damn fire hydrant on West B repaired. It's been covered by a trash bag since this summer. If you think doing this will make things better for Brunswick, it must be because each and everyone one of you expect kickbacks.

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Carrie Myers

From: Lacey Anne
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 4:17 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: Comments toward railroad square

I am opposed to this project and would like to see the mayor and council send a letter of opposition.
Thank you,
Lacey Abshire
Galyn Manor

Carrie Myers

From: Johnson, Jennifer L
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 4:24 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: Public Comment for Meeting on 10/13

I urge the mayor and council to NOT send the proposed letter of support for the Residences at Railroad Square. Affordable housing is vital for our community, but it should NOT be built in the center of our small downtown that is the economic heart of the city. There are far more suitable areas of Brunswick to build workforce housing. Allowing catastrophic changes to downtown before the proposed conservation area has been finalized is short-term thinking that will have far-reaching effects. The ability for our town to attract tourists depends on conserving the original architecture and feel of downtown. As a historic Maryland town, we should proudly protect Brunswick's unique and ineffable charm for future generations.

Thank you.

Jennifer Johnson
12 South Virginia Ave
Brunswick, MD

Carrie Myers

From: Sunshinesray
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 4:28 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: Railroad Square

Mayor Brown and City Council:

I urge you NOT to send a letter of support for the Railroad Square project that is being proposed for historic downtown Brunswick. Please consider alternatives that would restore the existing buildings and revitalize downtown.

Thank you,
Dawn Penny
1201 Maple Terrace Lane
Brunswick MD

Carrie Myers

From: Karin Tome
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 6:11 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: Letter of support for the Residences at Railroad Square project
Attachments: LTE; support letter.pdf

Hi Carrie,

Please distribute this letter to the Mayor and Council to add to the record for tonight's discussion regarding the letter of support for the Residences at Railroad Square Project. I wholeheartedly support this project and appreciate that the Mayor and Council have composed a draft letter to Mr. Gregory Hare of DHCD stating that they appreciate their continued support and partnership with the City.

As a former Mayor, I have written a personal letter of support for several years in a row. Last year, I decided to write as a small business owner; I collected signatures from my downtown business colleagues last year and have attached it, along with a letter to the Editor that was printed in the Brunswick Citizen in March 2020.

Thank you for the work you do in supporting ALL of Brunswick's assets - its historical significance, its connection to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal NHP, its economy, its traditions, and most importantly, its people, both present and future.

Sincerely,
Karin Tome
206 4th Avenue
Brunswick, MD 21716

5 March 2020

Dear Editor,

For the past 2 years, as a former Mayor for the City of Brunswick, I have written a strong letter of support to Secretary Kenneth Holt in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the award of LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credits) to the development team of Verdant, Taft-Mills, and IHA to construct affordable apartments in our downtown core. THIS year, I decided to write to him as a small business owner who is trying to create a successful business in Brunswick's downtown. There have been quite a few discussions on one of the Brunswick Facebook pages about everyone else's thoughts about this project and I felt it was time for the business owners to have a voice. After speaking with a couple of my downtown business colleagues, I decided to ask some of the other owners if they would be interested in signing the letter of support, too. I carried it around town during daylight hours over a 2-day period, visiting businesses when they were in operation. Out of 15 businesses that I visited, 12 were willing to sign; the others wanted more information before they felt comfortable signing it. After submitting the letter via email to Secretary Holt (copying Mayor Jeff Snoots, County Executive Jan Gardner, and Verdant President T. Wesley Poss), I emailed a copy of my cover letter, the support letter, and the signature page to each of the businesses who signed the letter. I then emailed a copy of my cover letter and the support letter (without the signatures, but openly copying Mayor Snoots and T. Wesley Poss, since they are both willing to speak with anyone about this project) to each of the businesses who either were hesitant to sign it yet or who I had missed during those 2 days. I'm attaching the support letter here so that readers of this paper can see what was actually submitted, just in case rumors are flying around (I know - NOT in Brunswick!).

Sincerely,

Karin B. Tome
206 4th Avenue
Brunswick, MD. 21716

Dear Secretary Holt,

We, the undersigned downtown Brunswick business owners, support the LIHTC award funding for the development of The Railroad Square Project (proposed by Verdant Development Group,

in partnership with the Taft-Mills Group and the Interfaith Housing Alliance) in downtown Brunswick, Maryland for several reasons:

1. By encouraging additional private financial investment, we believe that it will bring a much-needed stimulus to the revitalization of the downtown. Existing property owners will be much more likely to improve their properties in order to attract residential and business opportunities which, in turn, will increase the property tax income to the City.
2. With the creation of new, clean, and attractive retail space square footage in this project, additional businesses will begin to locate here and the existing businesses will have the ability to expand.
3. With the rise in the number of downtown residents, we believe that it will increase foot-traffic to our businesses both from those new residents as well as additional visitors who will be more attracted to the City's growing, vibrant, and revitalized downtown.
4. We understand that clean, safe, and affordable housing is needed in Brunswick and we feel that locating it in the TOD Zone (transit-oriented development zone) is important to be able to give these citizens the opportunity to improve their financial security, while at the same time locating them in an area where they will be more likely to use public transportation for their current job or for a future promotion.

Thank you for your support of our City (especially) this past year through grant money you have provided to us for the Small Area Plan, the possible purchase of a historic downtown building through an acquisition program, and the renovation of an additional historic building that houses a successful and growing Brunswick business, Smoketown Brewing Station.

We look forward to welcoming this project to our downtown.

Sincerely,

The Downtown Brunswick businesses listed on the following page

Carrie Myers

From: Cynthia Haggerty
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 7:42 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: My statement

Hi Carrie,
I heard you request someone elses statement. Here is mine.

Mayor and Council, I am Cynthia Haggerty of East F Street,

In February of 2018 I spoke to the Mayor and Council about a Vision for the City of Brunswick. A Vision for our City would demonstrate the leadership of the Mayor and Council. Without it, I feel you aren't giving us anything to follow. What do you want to see for our City?

If you stand by and permit the Virginia Snoots building at 9 S Maple Ave and the other building on South Maple (5 S Maple Ave) that will need to be removed for the Railroad Square Project, you will be responsible for destroying two of only twelve of the "Old Berlin" structures. These two and the JP Karns building are listed in the National Registry of Historic Buildings as part of the Brunswick Historic District. These three are part of the mere 100 buildings in the proposed Brunswick Conservation District.

Our City's history matters. What heritage will you leave our City?

I believe our Mayor and Council should be enforcing code on the BLIGHTED buildings on West Potomac Street. Guess what? Low Income Housing cannot be built next to BLIGHT. Guess what's coming down first? I think, the burnt out buildings on West Potomac. Guess what? They aren't building the commercial buildings until someone wants it. Guess what's cheaper to build than commercial space? More parking for the Low Income Housing, which is currently slim at one car per unit. Guess who needs a car to get groceries? People who would live in the low income housing units.

Our City's history matters. What heritage will you leave our City?

Did you know that the publicly available plans for the Railroad Square on the Verdant website place "Open space" right where the Caboose C1926 sits. Did you know the public plans on the Verdant site show there will be three housing units in the Mommer's building, yet the narrative submitted to the state indicates two units. This developer demonstrates their lack of care for their plans and our City.

I believe our Mayor and Council should be actively pursuing alternatives to the Railroad Square Project. For example, I don't pretend to understand grants to rehabilitate historic structures for revitalization, but I know that they are out there. A simple Google search of "Historic revitalization Grants" found The Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program. Perhaps the City could discuss with Mr Lesslor the possibilities of applying as a subgrantee to revitalize his buildings for reuse if the City or another qualified Non-profit can obtain the grant.

Our City's history matters. What heritage will you leave our City?

This is the opportunity for the City's Mayor and Council to LEAD and comment on the project and represent her divided people. I appreciate the addition of the sentence "As City officials, we are committed to the redevelopment and revitalization of our downtown corridor," but it's not enough. The letter to Mr Hare of the Department of Housing and Community Development, merely abdicates the responsibility of the Mayor and Council to comment. The Maryland Historic Trust will be able to make the final decision.

Is your bequest to our City negligence and destruction, by casually permitting the Maryland Historic Trust to decide the fate of these historic structures? They may decide that they are to be demolished or will you give us leadership? Will you stand for a Vision of Brunswick that embraces the historic nature of Brunswick and historic tourism? Will you stand for a Vision of Brunswick that embraces railroads and the enthusiasts who come for our trains and the railroad history surrounding our City? "The future of Brunswick is rooted deeply in our past" to quote one of our murals.

I urge the mayor and Council to write a letter condemning the project in the City of Brunswick's historic downtown area.

Because our City's history matters. What heritage will you leave our City?

Thank you.

Thanks,
Cynthia
Ms. Cynthia Haggerty

Carrie Myers

From: Kenneth Koll
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 7:50 PM
To: Carrie Myers
Subject: letter of non support for Railroad Square Project
Attachments: council meeting reading ref RR Square Project.odt

Here is the notes I read off of. Thank you.
Ken

Good evening council, my name is Ken Koll of East F street, Brunswick.

These past three years as a resident of Brunswick, I have tried to understand the positioning of a housing project in the middle of a historic business district.

The argument that this development fulfills a need of affordable housing does not address the placement. You have all heard me talk about Waynesboro PA numerous times in regards to downtown revitalization, let me share with you where the state and county officials put their affordable housing. The New Forge Crossing affordable housing project was planned right alongside Wal Mart, Lowes, two successful strip malls, a hotel, two mini marts all within eye sight of the housing complex as well as restaurants, and jobs. The other large affordable housing, is two blocks from Martins Grocery store and strip malls. Proper planning for the citizens of those developments to have their job and all of their needs met if for some reason they cannot afford a car or for simple accessibility.

I have heard numerous arguments in person and online of the money the housing investor is willing to put into his rentals in our historic downtown. The city and citizens seem to be jumping over themselves to make way for this intrusion in our historic downtown. A few years ago, the Governor of the state of MD offered to work with Brunswick, MD in our revitalization projects. Governor Hogan offered money and resources with the power of the state behind him to make a positive change with our revitalization efforts. How did we respond...crickets. We got a 400K grant to purchase a building and a few meetings out of it. The Governors office works in millions of dollars, not for a housing complex alone, but for revitalization efforts that are long term and bring jobs and tourism dollars. To revive a community to be self sustaining, increase tax revenue for that community and create a thriving economy for their

citizens. This is what revitalizing a community looks like, not building a single housing complex.

For the life of me, I could not figure out how this makes good business sense from a downtown management stance or NOT allowing citizens affordable housing within walking distance of basic needs, like a full size grocery store. This is a housing project, plain and simple for people trying to make ends meet. Frederick County and Brunswick places those citizens in an area that is over 2 miles from our only grocery store and in a community that walkscore.com states is car dependent. Once again the Railroad Square Plan does not address the needs of people that are financially strapped and in desire of affordable housing within walking distance of their basic needs.

This project is not a revitalization effort either as it does not address any of the issues that have created the blight downtown. One developer and a development will not fill the void of decades of declining infrastructure from water pressure issues, to cracked sidewalks, burned out buildings, lack of accessible parking, absentee landlords and a dated character.

I believe this project quenches ones guilt, a desire to do well at all cost. To do something, as Mayor Snoots and others have said, 'It is better than nothing'. Is that what we have to compare too...nothing...we got nothing.

Apparently so, you have heard me speak here before about a vision ...and I will keep saying it until someone leads from the front and calls on the citizens to unite behind a common vision.

DHCD has requested a letter of support for this project and the best we can do is say we will support your wishes? When asked to

represent your community by a state employee, I would pray you could answer the question with an answer and not a non committal statement for fear of a split vote where the citizens will actually be represented. Each one of you were voted in to represent all the citizens, locally, to the county and to the state. When asked a question it is only polite to give a direct answer and this letter does not do that.

This project does not resolve revitalization, other then a few buildings which for the most part, the developer has largely excluded in the latest proposal. I do not believe it is about the money as I stated we turned down the help of the Governor when he asked us to be one of his pet projects a few years ago. I do not believe it is proper placement as there are no amenities down there that people on a budget need. So, are we destroying buildings, the character of our historic downtown based on quenching ones guilt and a desire to do good no matter the cost.

Step back and look at this plan rationally...that is your job. The developer and others have turned this into an emotional decision and that is not what you were elected to do. We elected officials to make sound business decisions for our community.

I would ask that you do not send a letter of support. This is not a simple facade change, this will forever change our downtown and we all know the developer has plans to extend the development down the road. Your support for this letter will forever change the character of this historic downtown and the possibilities.

Brunswick has not even begun to start revitalization work downtown, give it a shot, you will be amazed at the change in time!

Thank you for your time and consideration.