

From: Jeff Levine
To: Helen Donaldson
Date: 1/15/2016 3:09 PM
Subject: Fwd: 65 Munjoy St - City Design, Review Process

>>> Matt Thayer <mthayer777@gmail.com> 1/15/2016 3:06 PM >>>

Hi Jeff –

Just left you a voicemail. I'm hoping we can connect at some point about this proposed development at 65 Munjoy St. My wife and I own a property across the street, at 62 Munjoy, and I am the former co-chair of the City's Adams School Re-use Committee, so we have a vested interest in whether the project across the street is well designed, or is just tossed up to fill the available void in the streetscape, as well as some background in the public expectations about redevelopment of this site. We also have a concern because we'd like to see a great design for the benefit of park users, and the future owners of those units, and not just the neighbors who will be looking at it out their windows all day, or the folks using Munjoy St on a regular basis. And unfortunately, based on our own design sense, and based on conversations we've had with a couple local design professionals, and a national affordable housing design professional, we remain very concerned about the proposed design, the lack of articulation to break up the three-story mass, the lack of features that reference the surrounding vernacular (no bay windows, no porches...), the lack of human scale, the "sheer wall" that fronts the park, etc. We have been told by local design professionals speaking "off the record" that the building "lacks life" and "lacks soul," and on and on.

We have tried engaging the developer since last spring, but we have not yet received any substantive response to our concerns about their design, or sensed any eagerness or willingness on their part to make any improvements. Of course, you never know..., but after nine months of waiting..., and with what you said in that promo on Channel 13 the other day that the rush is now on to break ground soon, we're feeling that we have been cut out of the process, that the design might well be all but a fait accompli at this point.

So what is the best way for us to engage with the City at this point to try to improve the design? In a quick conversation with Peter Bass today he seemed to be saying they would be taking their design cues from city design professionals, working with you all on the final design, so I'm hoping for some clarification on how this process actually works, and on whether the City is actually driving design like it sounds like you might be in this case. Also, how do we as citizens and property owners plug into this semi-private design process? By the way, we are temporarily living out of state, so we can't come to meetings on short notice, which is why we started to reach out to the developer early last year, VERY early in the design process, in the hopes they would be responsive to public concerns.

Any and all thoughts appreciated at this point, because we are feeling like we have nothing to show yet for all of our efforts to engage with and collaborate with the developer over the past nine months. I should add that we even reached out to the city last spring, you may remember, but were told to work with the developer... and you know how that's gone so far.

Thanks so much.
Matt and Margaret

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Matt Thayer and Margaret Hazlett
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-- Sent from my droid.