

Administrative Services Working Group on Elm Street Middle School Redevelopment

Thursday, April 10, 2025, 5:30 PM

City Hall Auditorium

Start Time: 5:33 pm

Opening remarks by the Mayor. The Mayor explained that a committee reviewed 4 proposals for the Elm Street Redevelopment project. The committee narrowed the selection to 2 developers who we will be hearing from tonight.

Administrative Services Director, Tim Cummings goes over some housekeeping items. The goal is to provide the community with the concepts and visions of the developers. Each developer will provide a presentation with a questions and answer session to follow.. At the end of the presentations the community will have the opportunity to vote and provide feedback on their priorities and which development they like. Translation services are also available in Portuguese and Spanish in the rear of the room.

Community Development Director, Matt Sullivan, explains how critical this process is to the community. The conversation is going to shape how this development moves forward. This is intended to be an engaging format that helps hone the vision for these two proposals. The visuals that you see tonight, this is an evolving design process. The developers may make changes to their proposal depending on the feedback that is given tonight.

LMG begins their presentation at 5:42 pm. The leadership team is introduced and they begin to discuss previous projects that they have worked on. Some of the recent projects LMG has been involved with are:

- The Flats on High Street, Nashua, NH
- Tru Manchester, Manchester, NH
- Kannapolis Master Plan, Kannapolis, NC
- Concord Master Plan, Concord, NC

The background and history of the project are discussed.

Site plans are presented explaining driving and walkability concepts and how they prioritize sun exposure, green space and the Keefe Auditorium is anchoring the design.

The site plan will involve townhomes, 3 and 4-story multifamily housing, a community pavilion, and resident amenities and community events. Also discusses is the opportunity to have a childcare center on site. Trees and pedestrian pathways will surround the community.

The housing mix and amenities are discussed. Townhomes will be for sale, market rate rentals, and affordable rentals will all be on site. A pavilion will be in the center of the development for a community gathering space.

Attendees are able to ask LMG questions and provide their feedback on the proposal.

At 7:15 pm Pennrose begins their presentation.

The school has long ties to the community and Pennrose understands the role that the building has played in the community. They want to preserve the historic part of the school. Pennrose is an expert at building affordable housing and converting historic buildings, specifically schools into housing.

Some of the recent projects Pennrose has been involved with are:

- Mary D Stone Apartments, Auburn, MA
- The Pryde, Boston, MA

Pennrose is “soup to nuts” developer, owner and operator of mixed income house. They are involved from the beginning, to design, financing, permitting, construction and leasing. Typically, they hold the projects and like to stay in the community long term.

Pennrose has completed more than 45 historic rehabilitations/ adaptive reuse projects and worked with more than 100 municipal and public partners.

They also have an affiliated property management company, Pennrose Management Company, that will manage the leases and the property.

In the Pryde project, they created a beautiful and functional spaces. While doing community outreach, they learned that there was a need for a lack of accessible community space. They addressed this need by the adaptive reuse of the former gymnasium and made a community center. The old auditorium was modernized and adopted into a resident community room to have meetings, eat and hangout.

Every unit in these historic units tends to be unique. They try to keep as much of the original character as possible, such as the hardwood floors, chalkboards, and terrazzo floors.

Pennrose is committed to its core values. The core values are to work with the community to determine your needs and desires, then work together with stakeholders to turn that shared vision into reality.

The design options are then discussed for the site. Two different schemes are presented. The Keefe Auditorium will be preserved. One option maintains the gymnasium and the other option allows for additional housing on the site.

Landscaping is discussed. The south common will be preserved in scheme A. The community will be able to use this space, and trees will be added. The internal courtyards will function as a backyard for the residents. 1.3 parking spaces will be available per unit in Scheme A.

Scheme B is then discussed. In this scheme, the gym is removed to allow for housing to be added. The historic south common will be preserved and the courtyards are larger. Additional parking is provided in this scheme of 1.42 parking spaces per unit.

A breakdown of each scheme is then provided.

Conceptual illustrations are then shared of what the property could look like.

Attendees are able to ask Pennrose questions and provide feedback on the proposal.

Director Cummings reminds everyone who attended that they can vote in the back of the room.

Meeting concludes at 8:16 pm.