

Douglass Commons Neighborhood Meeting Started meeting at 7:04pm Tuesday, Aug 3, at Jewish Community Alliance

- **Welcome:** Carl Szanton & Amy Cullen from the Szanton Company, Liz Trice and Matt Peters from Maine Cooperative Development Partners

- **Introductions (17 participants)**

In person:

Lee & Kellen, 56 Douglass, renters

Jen Dubay, Bradley Street,

Francisco, Palisant Street

Damon, Bolton Street,

Jon Bradstreet, Abutter on Douglass with concrete driveway and apt above garage

Ward 20 year renter, has son that uses fields, prospective resident

Don Harder 81 Douglass

Celeste Douglass Abutter

Moureen Morse, 25 Whitney, LNA Chair

Jim Alberty, Windham, prospective resident

Kristin Robins, Forest Ave, prospective resident

online:

Emma Scudder 143 Bolton

Renee Goddess - works with evicted folks

Michael Chesna - Architect, interested in equality issues

Seth Moore, West End Clark Street, Renter,

Zack Barowitz, Huntress Street, former LNA Chair,

- **Presentation:** available at www.maine.cooperativehousing.com

Q: How many parking spaces will there be?

- During the competition phase, we said about 80 spaces total; we will figure out specifics during site design process.

When there is a concert at Thompson's Pt., the Parking situation is awful. Also when there is an athletic event on the park.

Concerns about congested parking

Q: Any 4- Bedrooms? A: Not currently planned

Q: Any business uses? A: Not currently planned but could be any business that's currently allowed on Douglass Street.

Reducing Number of cars-

We're negotiating with Metro on free/reduced passes for everyone in our neighborhood.

Hookups for electric cars? yes, we're investigating snow concerns

Snow bans-people cannot park on street. Can St-James Street or Water District be opened as snow ban parking.

Water District seems to have a lot of extra parking. There's actually much more transit

Intersection at Brighton and Douglass

- needs improving ~ needs sidewalks no crosswalk paint
- we'll want a seat at the table during those discussions as they improve the road there.

Street behind the houses

- Some don't mind it being there
- until recently, thought was public road
- very wet there -don't want water to be pushed onto their backyards
- the water got worse when they re-did the street (when the adult ed. was still there)
- Issue with Celeste having a small gravel parking space accessed from existing street behind house - we recommended she talk to the city about access.

How many cars will be there?

- saying there will be less cars isn't enough
- need to really incentivize people to not have cars
- Most people in the meeting indicate a job is necessary for their job. Assuming people wouldn't have cars is unrealistic.
- Safety issues regarding using transit and public streets (walking) to get home.
- Lighting on streets
- Need more walkable places-need light

- Things close early, not a lot of people on the street.

How to transition between now and when we can use less cars = Street parking

During athletic events there is limited parking available on Douglass.

Water district doesn't allow people to park on weekends.

What is unsafe is car infrastructure. To make an area more safe, build less car infrastructure.

Congress St. is a mess. We don't have control over that, but as a neighborhood, we can go to the city together.

How tall is the Szanton Bldg? Will it block some of the highway noise?

- 4 stories, hope it will block some noise

Will it have an elevator?

- The Stanton Company-yes
- The Co-op units- no - elevators are only cost effective in large buildings, coop is building small building to fit in with neighborhood.

Are you considering separating parking from rent?

- Yes. It's a consideration, more likely on Co-op side.

Removing the clover leaf:

- Went to the State, it wasn't voted out of Committee. The Maine DOT strongly opposes. It's a long, difficult process.

How many Coop owners? 1 owner per unit. Explain limited equity cooperative. (Liz explains) Are there rules to stop it from creating a frat house? The coop will make its own rules, but it's likely to have a diverse group of people.

Any way we can prod the playground along?

- Frustrating in the neighborhood that they haven't started that, yet.

Will there be solar?

Most likely on Co-op side, less likely on apartments due to Maine Housing rules.

Will there be Laundry-will there be on-site?

Yes; shared in apartments, townhomes will likely have in-unit laundry, coop flats not sure if will be shared or individual.

Zoning- what exactly is the change?

Allows us to go a little higher and build denser. Would allow up to about 180 units.

The zoning meets the comprehensive plan.

When will pre-sale begin?

- Probably by spring

Neighborhood meetings- will have more in late fall.

Compiled List of Desires by attendees:

EV Chargers

Carsharing

Use St James Street in addition to Douglass for street parking

Bikeshare

Water District has lots of parking - make a deal with them, especially for snow bans

Need to improve Brighton/Douglass Intersection - There's no curb cut currently for sidewalk, traffic comes fast down Brighton, then turns right Douglass too fast.

#4 Bus on Brighton is an asset - should show on maps. It goes all the way to Gorham and stops right at Douglass, and the Husky line stops at Crooked Mile coffee shop at Stevens and also at USM.

Would like trees or shrubs to separate existing backyards from new townhome backyards

Drainage - it's always wet right behind the backyards - make sure that not more water is flowing that way

"I would love to not have a car, but it's hard."

Exit 5/Douglass intersection is unsafe for pedestrians; woman told story of taking Amtrak to Boston for work and feeling threatened by a person in a vehicle while walking home. Sense that Metro is unsafe for women.

The bridge by St James/ Congress has become a place for transients

It's nice to see adults using fields at night

If we build more infrastructure for cars it will become even less safe for pedestrians

Promoting Toro car share makes sense.

The sidewalk on opposite side of Douglass ends abruptly

Congress is a really scary place to Bike and Walk, very difficult to get to the West End, Transportation Center, or Thompson's point.

Wants to see playground built sooner than later

Wants to see lots of solar panels

Decoupling parking from housing costs - opinions both ways, one person pointed out that parking can cost 25% of housing costs.

Worried about access/lack of elevators (only cost effective in biggest /Szanton building, all common spaces will be on first floor, and each flats building will have at least one ADA unit.)

One person prefers flats to multi floor housing (townhomes will be two story units)

Damon- Very interested in food forest and community gardens; there's a backlog of 700 people wanting gardens.

How do we sign up for housing? Szanton takes an interest list and let's people know 3 months in advance. www.maine.cooperativehousing.com has a signup survey.

Like the idea of the food forest

Community garden space