Update, letter in support of 563 New Scotland variance

JE Julie Elson
Today, 2:47 PM

Reply all |

attached is a letter signed by homeowners on W. Lawrence St. expressing support for the 563 New Scotland 5 story variance because it is more tolerable than the alternative plan presented to the Planning Board and the Board of Zoning Appeals.

I don't know whether the Planning Board, if the zoning variance is denied, would ultimately approve the addition of the 5th four story building or the addition of the third story to building D, but from statements by members of both boards at the meetings, the disparaging remarks about public commenters and what is clearly allowed in the USDO, I could not take the chance of leaving those residents of W. Lawrence most directly impacted by this development literally in the dark. I therefore shared with them the shadow studies which had been displayed at the BZA meeting showing afternoon light at different times of day and year. Many were appalled that the city would allow a 4 story building to be built so close (50 ft) that it would loom over their homes depriving them of afternoon sunlight throughout the year.

There are currently many battles being fought by residents against the city and developers over individual projects and I don't see residents winning at all. Our options are working through the Common Council to get meaningful revisions to the USDO and voting out the current administration and the appointees who got us into this mess.

Julie Elson

From West Lawrence Street Concerned Residents

TO:

Mayor Kathy Sheehan
Albany City Hall
24 Eagle Street
Albany, NY 12207

Christopher Spencer, Commissioner
Department of Planning & Development
200 Henry Johnson Blvd
First Floor Suite #3
Albany, NY 12210

Albert DeSalvo, Planning Board Director
Department of Planning & Development
200 Henry Johnson Blvd First Floor Suite #3
Albany, NY 12210

Richard Berkley, Chair
Board of Zoning Appeals
Department of Planning and Development
200 Henry Johnson Blvd First Floor Suite #3
Albany, NY 12210

Joseph Igoe,
Member of the Common Council Ward 14
62 Aspen Circle
Albany, NY 12208

RE: APPLICATION AV #044, 563 New Scotland Avenue, Area Variance - §375-5(E)(21)

Jankow Companies, Daniel Hershberg, Hershberg & Hershberg MU-NC (Mixed-Use, Neighborhood Center) & R-M (Residential, Multi-Family) Area Variance - §375-5(E)(21)

Area Variance to allow for the construction of a five (5)-story mixed-use building, where the maximum permitted height for principal buildings is 4.5 stories with a low impact development incentive.

CONCERNS:

We, the undersigned residents of W Lawrence Street will be directly impacted by the 563 New Scotland project. As such, we are writing to support a variance to add ½ story to Building A, for a total of 5 stories, as described in the original planning documents.

The original plan for the 5-story Building A, includes desirable, affordable, space for the Academy Station Post Office. Three additional buildings of lower height complete a complex containing 188 living units, with a parking lot buffer between the buildings and neighboring West Lawrence. We support this plan.

An alternative project design that has been put forth contains five buildings of lower height containing a projected 208-220 living units, lacking affordable space for the New Scotland Branch Post Office. Two of these buildings (3-stories and 4-stories) would tower over the abutting West Lawrence homes, depriving these homes and yards of afternoon sunlight all year long.

Since denial of the variance application, and subsequent approval by the Planning Board of the alternative would severely negatively impact the enjoyment and values of our properties, we support the original building configuration.

Sincerely,

Letter Re: Application AV #044 From Concerned West Lawrence Home Owners Signed by

Diane Malecki
501 W. Lawrence St.

Barry Koblenz
500 W. Lawrence St.

Colleen Russell
500 W. Lawrence St.

Elena Oliver
11 Harvard Ave

Ian Bethea
503 W. Lawrence St.

Sandra Driscoll
544 W. Lawrence St.

Gilbert Cruz
546 W. Lawrence St.

Frank Voce
550 W. Lawrence St.

Brian Bennett
550 W. Lawrence St.

Agim Miftari
529 W. Lawrence St.

Charles Touhey
509 W. Lawrence St.

Yefim Baskin
512 W. Lawrence St.

Julie Elson
510 W. Lawrence St.

Amarit Rosin
524 W. Lawrence St.