

Buckley Annex Makeover In The Making

New Lowry Neighborhood Group Formed; LRA Board To Consider Revised Plan January 29

The revolt by Lowry homeowners over plans for the Buckley Annex reported in the December issue of the *Chronicle* sent tremors into almost every corner of this award-winning community, the surrounding neighborhoods and all the way to city hall.

Discontent sparked by the November 14 meeting and subsequent article created a flurry of back pedaling and changes after homeowners got their backs up.

At a December 18 meeting in the Eisenhower Chapel at Lowry Town Center, the Planning-Disposition Subcommittee voted to send the Buckley proposal, as presented at the November 14 meeting, to the Lowry Redevelopment Authority (LRA) Board without approval. Sarah Rockwell, committee chair and a member of the LRA Board, told the crowd "the LRA Board cannot approve a plan with this amount of opposition."

The other subcommittee at the same meeting known as the Community Advisory Committee voted to forward the same plan while asking the LRA Board to address "density and adoption of Lowry's Design Guidelines (or similar guidelines)." The committee also said the Lowry community should be advised of the development process with the Air Force and how the agreement will be protective of the Lowry community.

Other Developments

Lowry residents — apparently concluding that the Lowry Community Master Association (LCMA) was not their voice — have formed a new Registered Neighborhood Organization — Lowry United Neighborhoods. Meeting at the Urban Harvest restaurant in



Buckley Annex Makeover: Two subcommittees meeting December 18 in the Eisenhower Chapel at the Lowry Town Center have voted to forward recommendations for development of the Buckley Annex to the Lowry Redevelopment Authority Board. The Planning-Disposition Subcommittee voted to send the plan originally presented at a November 14 meeting to the board without approval. The Community Advisory Committee forwarded the plan with specific recommendations.

Lowry, the group said their goal is "giving Lowry residents more of a voice than they have currently within the LCMA structure."

While residents said they gave LCMA the benefit of the doubt that the organization was the original Registered Neighborhood Organization, they added, "LCMA's own minutes show that the group has not functioned as a registered neighborhood organization."

The new group also asked: "What happened to LCMA's promise regarding future development?" In December of 2005 the group noted that LCMA stated that the Buckley property "is critically important and LCMA will be working closely with the LRA and others to ensure that those developments match the feel of Lowry and are followed."

Lower Heights

Councilwoman Marcia Johnson who spoke in support of a plan that included four seven-story, 100-foot buildings and two six story 90-foot buildings on the site at the November meeting, admitted "my comments were not persuasive. Clearly, a substantial majority of the 300-plus com-

munity members who attended desired a plan that follows design principals used in the rest of Lowry."

Following the meeting, Johnson said, "I made clear to the design team that the seven-story maximum would have to be lowered." She now says the proposal has morphed from a 12-story (180-foot) maximum, to a seven-story (180-foot) maximum, and now, finally to a 60 to 65-foot height maximum.

Johnson now says that as the Buckley Annex is redeveloped, "my responsibility as the councilperson will be the consideration for zoning, which legally binds a property owner to build within specific parameters." Johnson adds that any zoning applications which deviate from the height maximum (60 to 65-foot) will need to be justified before a Citizen Advisory Council that she will appoint to represent the neighborhoods adjacent to the Buckley Annex. She adds that, "only with community support could a height over 60 to 65-feet at the Buckley Annex again be considered."

More Concerns

While Lowry residents applauded the

decision by Councilwoman Johnson to lower building heights, they argued that many issues of concern to residents of Lowry and East Denver remained unchanged and unresolved. Specifically, homeowners were still concerned about the following:

- **Density:** The proposed 800 residential units far exceed the density of the surrounding neighborhoods. They believe the count should be in the range of 450 to 500. They also note that the plan has not delineated the type and capacity of commercial density.
- **Traffic, Noise and Pollution:** Residents believe traffic; noise and pollution will exceed acceptable standards. They also note that there have been no discussions about demolition noise, pollution and heavy truck traffic.
- **Zoning:** Citizens are also concerned that any planned development for the property will be subject to rezoning, and that any future developer of the property will not be bound by the plan. "These facts leave much to chance, and too many unknowns," citizens argue. "A developer will be free to build anything that complies to City of Denver zoning regulations," they conclude.
- **Environmental:** Residents fear many potential problems have yet to be discussed and addressed.

The two subcommittees at the December meeting, after hearing from dozens of angry homeowners and receiving additional submission of letters and statements from individual homeowners and groups, did try to address some of those concerns.

An attempt at the December meeting to table the proposed plan failed to win approval. One upset homeowner summed up feelings at the meeting when addressing LRA's Monty Force: "Monty, Monty, Monty, Let's make a deal!"

For now, the deal appears to be in the hands of the Lowry Redevelopment Board for a final decision.



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