

Bloomfield Hampton Inn on Penn Avenue Moves Forward By Christina Howell

After a quiet period from the Hampton Inn developer of 4520 Penn Avenue, the development is moving forward. On November 14 Michale Kratsas, developer of the hotel, met with Bloomfield Development Corporation's Property & Planning Committee to present updated plans. that included changes to the facade and first floor layout. The shape and size of the hotel did not change, and it still includes four stories and a governor's drive with entrance to the parking garage. Within the same square footage, 7 parking spaces and 3 hotel rooms have been added, bringing the total of each to 67 spaces and 118 rooms. The facade, first floor use and layout were the only additional changes presented.

After changing architecture companies to Indovino Associates, the front design of the building has changed to respond to community feedback. The design now features brick that matches materials used in the neighborhood. Materials used on the back of the building include brick but also architectural panels and a stucco-like product.

Another significant change is the location of the lobby entrance. A previous design had the entrance from the governor's driveway without any entrance on the street. Community members pushed back in order to have the entrance on Penn Avenue, which is more appropriate in an urban setting. The developer responded by reorienting the lobby to have the entrance directly onto the street with a canopy overhead.

Unfortunately, the developer stated that he has been unable to find a retail tenant for the first floor space and his updated plans showed three guest rooms in the retail space. Members of the committee drew a hard line that retail space was a condition of the community's approval. The January 30, 2017 community meeting clearly showed retail space. Committee members offered to help find a tenant, but the \$30 per square foot that the developer cited will be a deterrent to any small business. Additionally, committee members pointed out that few guests would want to stay in a first floor guest room where a person could easily lean against their room's window.

Mr. Kratsas was interested in additional landscaping or bike share infrastructure between the entrance and exit of the governor's drive. Committee members identified the empty space and suggested that, to discourage illegal stopping or parking that would impede a driver's ability to view oncoming cars and exit the hotel safely, an attractive addition to the space could also be a useful amenity to future guests.

The powerpoint presentation containing updated renderings that was presented to the committee is available on Bloomfield Development Corporation's website. BDC board and staff would like to know how you feel about the change in use from retail to guest rooms - please send an email to info@bloomfieldpgh.org with your opinion of the change. Further updates will appear in the Bulletin as well as BDC's website and Facebook page.