

FHIA Community Meeting with Cornell Office of Community Relations

April 24, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Forest Home Chapel

In attendance from Cornell: Gary Stewart and Kate Supron (Community Relations); Leslie Schill (Cornell Campus Planning).

For North Campus project: Kim Michaels and Kathryn Wolf (Trowbridge Wolf Michaels Landscape Architects)

For East Village and Maplewood projects: Scott Whitham and Kate Chesebrough (Whitham Planning & Design)

In attendance from FHIA Community: Michael Bend, Nancy Trautmann, Charlie Trautmann, Marcelo Aguiar, Bob Mooney, Bruce Brittain, John Foote, Caroline Arms, Bill Arms, Mary Ann Oyer, Kyllikki Inman, David Kuckuk, Jonathan Miller, Linda Copman, Valerie Hans.

Background: Cornell Community Relations had requested a meeting with FHIA to update the community on plans for North Campus. The FHIA Board requested updates on the Maplewood and East Village projects.

North Campus project:

Cornell expects to start the permit process (primarily with the City of Ithaca, but also involving the Town of Ithaca and Cayuga Heights). They did not have drawings to share at this meeting but are prepared to come back when they do. Kathryn Wolf of Trowbridge Wolf Michaels described the plans in general.

Cornell is planning to add residences to North Campus for two reasons:

- To provide on-campus housing for all freshmen and transfers and for all sophomores who wish to live on campus
- To accommodate planned growth in student numbers (~275 new freshmen per year for 4 years, starting 2021)

A useful map is at

https://ipp.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/imce/site_contributor/Svc_Parking_and_Transportation/documents/2016%20Student%20Parking%20Map.pdf

Two sub-projects are proposed:

- On the current CC parking lot off Jessup Road. A "sophomore village" will have 800 beds, a new dining facility (replacing the one in Robert Purcell Union), a gym or other recreation facility. Compliant with City zoning, the height will be 5 stories. Planned schedule is to start in early 2019 and be ready in 2021.
- On two athletic fields near the tennis courts off Cradit Farm Road. New freshman residences (1200 beds). Height will be 4-5 stories on portion in City and 3 stories on portion in Town. Planned schedule is to start in October 2019 and be ready in 2022.

Many questions and issues were raised by FHIA attendees, particularly related to traffic. The landscape architects and the Cornell team listened attentively and responded with

helpful information where available. Many detailed decisions on issues of interest have not been made yet. Cornell is currently conducting a comprehensive transportation study; issues such as parking, commuting routes, and the alignment of the intersection of Pleasant Grove Road with Cradit Farm Road are in scope for that study. The perennial issue of safety for cyclists and pedestrians on Pleasant Grove Road between the downstream bridge and Cradit Farm Road was raised, as was the need to ensure that heavy construction traffic avoids Forest Home.

Interesting tidbit: Campuses nationwide are having to cope with rapid increase in demand for package delivery, stimulated by Amazon Prime. Additional space in Robert Purcell Union will be used to support this demand.

East Hill Village project:

Scott Whitham (Whitham Planning & Design) gave a brief report on the charrette sessions the week of April 9. Those sessions, which were well attended, had brought in representatives from several architecture and planning firms to learn from the public what people hoped to see (or not see) in the development on the 35-acre plot. Whitham noted that the need for pre-school and daycare had been raised. See <https://www.easthillvillage.com/> which should be updated with more on those meetings. The current expectation is to generate an overall site plan during 2018 but to proceed with development incrementally, offering the chance to adjust and adapt. David Kuckuk (FHIA resident who is an architect) strongly supported this adaptable approach. The approach now envisioned is less of a dramatic change than in a presentation to FHIA in April 2017. The plan is still for mixed residential and commercial use. The planning team is working with the Town of Ithaca to ensure that the Town's rezoning of the area and East Village plans are compatible.

Maplewood project (graduate student housing):

Scott Whitham gave a brief update, reporting that building is on schedule for a first phase of occupancy in July with the remaining units available in August. Leasing is going well. The development has units of varying sizes, totalling 872 beds. It is managed by EDR (<http://www.edrtrust.com/>) and, in contrast to the previous Maplewood facility, will pay property taxes. See <http://www.livemaplewoodapartments.com/>.

In response to questions about transportation, Cornell responded that there would be more frequent bus service. Options for improving pedestrian access to campus are being explored.