Fallon Redevelopment – Tenant Meeting

* Meeting started at 5:37 PM on August 27, 2020
* Presenters: Tom Hulihan, Tim O’Byrne, and Dominic Rigosu.
* Attendees: 8 residents from the Fallon Apartments, THA Commissioner Lisa Rodriguez, Executive Director Deb Witkowski and Asset Manager Barb McGivern. Duncan Barrett and Madeline Schoeck, both from Beacon, also attended over Zoom.
* The meeting discussed THA and Beacon plans on renovating the Fallon Apartments.
* Tom Hulihan informed tenants of their right to be informed (accomplished by the meeting and the memo tenants received and to be continued with updates on the THA website), their right to affordable housing (gave tips on how to maintain), right to minimal disruption, and their right to an apartment suitable to their situation and family size.
* First question: When are we moving out? (No direct answer given; Tom was in the process of listing tenants’ rights.)
* Second question: Will tenants move back to their original apartment after being relocated?

Answer: No, tenants will generally stay where they are moved.

* Tim reiterated that while initial plans have been created, they are not final, and we are soliciting their opinions.
* Third question: tenant asked if the new building would have multiple stories, seemed concerned about accessibility.
* Fourth question: Will new units have in-unit washers and dryers? If not, will the units have hookups so that the tenants can install their own?
* Fifth question: Will the renovated building be similar to (inaudible) housing in Albany?
* Process can take up to 2 years and construction would probably start in 2022.
* Currently in the Early Design Stage.

Tenants like the following features in their current apartments:

* Quiet
* Their community
* Gas stoves
* In-unit washer and dryer hookups
* Convenient location
* Parking lots
* No issues moving in or out

Tenants want the following features:

* Family-oriented design
* Central Air/ improved circulation
* Community activities like exercise classes
* Improved outdoor lighting
* Garbage located away from building with consistent pickup
* Multiple garbage locations
* Bigger yards and storage spaces
* Safer playground with benches

Tenants do not want the following features:

* Dishwasher
* Current garbage situation/ pests
* Lax community enforcement
* Tenants noted that National Grid has not come by to fix streetlights that are not functioning despite several reports, which has resulted in the front of the building very dark at night. The THA reminded tenants to report these issues to them, as they were unaware of the problem.
* Dominic said that unit spaces (including bathrooms) will likely be made larger in the new units, but this will depend on agency decision and regulations, as well as lender requirements.
* Many tenants were vocal about their preference that there be no dishwashers in the units. However, one tenant pointed out that it would help reduce pests.
* Tenants spent a good portion discussing the need for consistent community monitoring by both the THA and security forces, including the police.
* 2 story units versus common hallway? No clear consensus but sharing a common hallway would be more difficult to maintain.
* Individual entrances being considered.
* Tenants say they use both the front and back doors regularly.
* Many residents park their cars along Glen Avenue due to its proximity to the building.
* Commissioner Rodriguez - interested “defensible space” … security, crime prevention, environmental design and spaces that clearly define what belongs to tenants. Suggested removing “porous” spaces anyone could wander through and instead creating greenspace with a courtyard.