

Tiffany Neighborhood Meeting with QuikTrip Representatives
September 1, 2020 @ 6:30 pm

The Tiffany Development Committee hosted a general neighborhood meeting to present the proposed QuikTrip on Grand Blvd.

Development Committee Members present: John Noecker, Paul Lowenstein, Breann Schubert, Patrick Burke, Jamal Sadrud-Din, and Joey Hollins.

Invited Guests: Brooks Goedeker, Executive Director of St. Louis Midtown Redevelopment Corp; Gwen Keen, QuikTrip Project Manager

Elected Officials present: Marlene Davis, 19th Ward Alderwoman; Queen Byrd, 19th Ward Committeewoman

Neighbors present: Approximately 45

Saint Louis University (SLU) owns the lot on the corner of Grand and Lafayette and has been looking to sell this property to an interested buyer. This is within the scope of the Saint Louis Midtown Redevelopment Corp. QuikTrip has been interested in buying this property in the past (2012), and talks began again in early 2019. Tiffany Neighbors will have a voice in the proposed development. The development committee has listened to the proposals and passed along concerns to QT reps. Many of these concerns have been addressed in some way, shape, or form.

Paul Lowenstein provided an introduction to the proposed development. Paul spoke to two of the major points that QT would commit to bringing to the neighborhood. The first major point is a change to the onramp to I-44 on Lafayette Ave. There is a problem with cars speeding down Lafayette. The new design has the potential to slow drivers down. This design approved by the department of transportation based on the traffic study that was performed, and the changes to Lafayette would only be implemented as part of the QuikTrip development. The second major point is that the QT development would ensure a certain level of funding for neighborhood programs.

Brooks Goedeker, Executive Director of St. Louis Midtown Redevelopment Corporation, spoke to the funding situation. There would be an initial contribution from QT of \$5k. SLU has historically given a donation to Tiffany on an annual basis as TCA usually asks for a contribution to the summer programs. Proceeding with the QT would guarantee (in writing) an annual donation from SLU of \$6k for 10 years. SSM is currently working on an assessment that would likely result in a donation to Tiffany of \$10k. St. Louis Redevelopment would also provide \$3k to the city for initiatives such as hiring police to increase security on Grand.

Gwen Keen, QT Project Manager, presented the development from their perspective and answered questions from neighbors.

- In addition to the funding Brooks spoke of, QT would be willing to provide funding on a case by case funding for neighborhood events.
- There was a detailed traffic study that is available for neighbors to see.
- According to their analysts, there is a need for QT. There will be new customers that would go to this QT that would not go to the others.

Neighbors brought up various concerns. There are 5 QTs within a 3-mile radius. \$5k is not a lot of money for a multi-billion-dollar corporation. SLU would guarantee their annual donations if the QT project moves forward, but would SLU discontinue their annual donations if the community rejects QT? Will there be jobs to community members and minority contractors?

QT does not specify that minority contractors will have any priority. QT will not guarantee any community jobs. The initial team will be an experienced team from other stores, then successful applicants will work at the closest QT to where they live.

- Questions were asked quickly and answers from Gwen and Brooks were often interrupted.

Marlene Davis, 19th Ward Alderwoman spoke to the background of QT coming here.

“We’re here today so that QT can listen to our concerns.” The neighborhood has turned down Walgreens twice and QT once before (2012). Previous developments have ensured minority inclusion was a priority. This will be the neighborhood for first hires.

Neighbors brought up more concerns: noise, lights, traffic, parking, constructions, crime, panhandling, etc. There was a landlord for multiple buildings on 3600 Lafayette who asked about property values and potential tenant move-outs due to the proposed QT. Some of the tenants of 3600 Lafayette also voiced concerns.

Gwen provided some responses with some interruptions

- St. Louis DOT requires certain openings in the alleys. It was not the original design. However, this design still did not yield a negative impact to Tiffany in the traffic study.
- QT meets all of the DOJ requirements in regard to minimizing crime with new developments.
- QT developments take 26 weeks for construction, plus there are weeks that regulations state that construction cannot take place and QT will follow the regulations.
- Cards have been sent out about alcohol potentially being served. QT has applied for liquor permit. There will be no single serve alcohol (tallboys, 40 oz, etc), which was a concern brought up by the development committee.
- QT did not bring the environmental report. Gasoline is highly regulated, and QT uses the best equipment and follows all regulations. All security procedures cannot be disclosed publicly, but there is a high level of security in place.

Neighbors:

- Lafayette residents and property owners voiced that they will not sign off on the cards.
- Can QT make a larger commitment (build a learning center) in the neighborhood? After the pandemic, it is projected that reading scores will decline. How can QT help to keep reading scores from falling?

Jon-Pierre Mitchom, former TCA Board President, spoke to the dialogue with QT. Many neighbors expressed their passion and view that QT is not needed in the neighborhood. Jon-Pierre reiterated that if enough neighbors do not want a QT, then it won't happen. Developments have been shut down before. This is like a job interview and QT is the candidate. We are not powerless in whether or not QT is built. We have a voice.

Neighbors asked about voting and neighborhood dues. Paul Lowenstein provided some context. Likely, dues paying members will get a vote. The development committee will provide a recommendation to the TCA board.

Neighborhood dues are as follows: Tenants/Renters --\$20; Homeowners -- \$60; Investors/Landlords -- \$30 per unit (\$60 for a 2 family; \$120 for a 4-family, etc.). Landlords get ½ vote per unit.

Breann Schubert, Development Committee member, gave a brief summary. QT came to Tiffany about a year and a half ago. The proposed development was brought up at general neighborhood meetings. Committee has been working on this – sending concerns to QT and getting responses. Then we did not hear from QT for almost a year. Now this has been a fast-moving process. And that's why this is a very important meeting.

The meeting fizzled out around 7:45pm.