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Mary Crapo Redevelopment Community Meeting

Comments & Responses

At a community meeting on February 19, 2020, Communities First, Inc. presented a proposal to redevelop the vacant Mary Crapo Building, located at 8197 Miller Road, in Swartz Creek, Michigan. Communities First, Inc. asked residents to write and submit responses to four questions as shown below. Similar comments/questions have been grouped together for clarity.

What do you like about the plan?

1. We received several comments that residents were happy that Mary Crapo will be used for senior housing, not be torn down.

Thank you for coming to the community meeting and for your input. We are excited about preserving this important historic building and contributing to the vibrancy of downtown Swartz Creek while increasing the property values in the immediate neighborhood. It is extremely important that those in support of the proposed development voice their opinions and we hope you will continue to do so!

2. If this senior project comes through—would it be possible for the historical society to have a presence there?

We believe the presence and any contribution the Swartz Creek Area Historical Society can make to the development would be extremely valuable and are happy to discuss this further.

3. I like that an old build(ing) will be used and we don't have to watch it fall apart.

We could not agree more that preserving this historical community asset will provide new life and increase property values in the immediate neighborhood while contributing to the vibrancy of downtown Swartz Creek. Alternatively,

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a large, vacant, and decaying building will be an eyesore and reduce property values in the neighborhood.

4. I like the proposed phase 1 and would like to see the integrity of the building preserved *not eliminate green space

We are proposing to rehabilitate the historic school building to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of a Certified Historic Property. This means that the historic integrity of the building will be preserved. The proposed plan does not eliminate the green space and any additional plans must be approved by the City separately.

What are your memories of Mary Crapo School?

1. Playing softball; watching softball and baseball games.
2. Playing on the toys on the playground.
3. Watching movies, eating popcorn at Mary Crapo on a Saturday.
4. Ball games in the summer
5. I never attended Mary Crapo but love driving by—it's a beautiful building.
6. I used to play there.

What amenities or programs do you think should be offered for seniors and the community at Mary Crapo?

1. The baseball stays in that same area; community garden; and play ground,
2. Theater/Movies
3. Service Coordinator
4. Arts and Crafts in community room
5. Transportation
6. Community garden

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What are you concerned about?

1. Will the historic façade remain? That is important to the community. Will you maintain the historic integrity of outside of the building—red brick etc, as you did in Oak Park and Coolidge?

We do not have a specific scope of work completed for the historic façade but the historic integrity of the building will remain. Any work done to the exterior of the building will be completed according to the Secretary of Interior Standards for Federal Rehabilitation of a Certified Historic Property.

2. Are you going to use a highly energy efficient design to keep low energy cost?

The most efficient thing we are doing is saving and reusing a historic building rather than letting it go vacant or spending a lot of money demolishing it and dumping the materials in a landfill. The proposed development will also be certified “Green”, likely through Enterprise Green Communities or the National Green Building Standards. These certifications integrate many environmentally friendly and energy efficient components.

3. When did 55 years become a senior we want 63 or older. Define senior age.

The definition of “senior” as 55 years of age is directed by the State of Michigan and is not up to Communities First, Inc.

4. Is there any federal funding for this project?

Yes, we are currently requesting HOME funds which are allocated by the Federal Government to be utilized anywhere in Genesee County and we hope those funds are used in Swartz Creek.

5. Does the school have the right to use property for something beside a school? This property was donated for a school. Explain: Mary Crapo School Board wanted this when did that happen more about school board!

The School Board approved an option agreement to sell the Property to Communities First, Inc. on the condition that its use be limited to senior housing and other ancillary uses for 30 years.

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We believe the School District has explored the continued use of the Mary Crapo Building but came to the conclusion that the building was outdated and/or too costly to utilize for the next generation of Swartz Creek students. We are not aware of any restrictions that could prevent the property from being used for another use.

6. Can projects be sold before completion or before 30yr. tax break ends?

The Property can be sold but the provision as senior apartments and any affordability restrictions cannot be removed by Communities First, Inc. or any purchaser. The proposed development is expected to make an annual Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) which is an annual payment to the City that covers things like basic and emergency city services. The PILOT is only in effect if the development remains affordable and will terminate upon any loss of affordability restrictions.

7. Windows on the addition should be bigger.

The windows are sized to meet with historic requirements and meet current building codes. We will further explore the design of the addition with our Architect.

8. What will the outside power house be used for?

It is currently used by the large boiler system and we are still exploring the best option for that space which may depend on if it is determined to be of historic significance.

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9. Feel mixed emotions. Concerns with ballpark. Parking problem. Don't sell anything to Communities First, Inc. Keep Mary Crapo as a school and leave the ball-field alone also. Fix up the school! The baseball diamond is not something that we never want a phase 2; we like the baseball park just the way it is; want to keep playground and ballfield for children; Please do not develop beyond exist bldg. Deed restrictions to ensure no future homes in green space ballfield. Do you want just the school with parking? City manager told us at a council meeting that the whole project had just moved to phase I that is contrary to what you have said. Only develop the school—save the ball field.

Many residents gave us comments that they were concerned about the future of the baseball diamond and do not want to see that space redeveloped. We do not propose to redevelop the baseball diamond. Any redevelopment of that space into multifamily housing or a plan that is different than is allowed by current zoning must be approved separately and cannot be completed without such approval. A deed restriction will limit many opportunities in the future that neighborhood and community residents might benefit from and we are exploring options with the school district and City regarding the ballfield. **We are only proposing to redevelop the Mary Crapo building and associated parking.** Parking at the proposed development meets the City's requirements. We are not proposing to make any changes to the baseball field. There is currently no playground equipment as it was previously removed by the school district.

10. Proposed individual homes on green space—

We are only proposing to redevelop the Mary Crapo building and not any individual homes on the green space.

11. I am across street this reduces my value eliminates my privacy what will be done to screen property? Don't want my property values to drop been thru that in 2007 lost over looking in accessed value!

We have completed the adaptive reuses of two large historic school buildings and another vacant historic building. Residents in those neighborhoods have told us that the completed redevelopments have been a benefit to them. A vacant school building and large lot can easily attract vandals and looters and

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become an eyesore. The property is currently not screened and will be much nicer to look at. Your current level of privacy will not be impacted.

12. With additional traffic who maintain roads and which roads will traffic be directed? Will Traffic Increase?

Responsibility for road maintenance will not change. We expect current traffic patterns to remain unchanged. We promote walkability and public transportation for our seniors. We have an excellent relationship with the Mass Transportation Authority and they currently provide excellent transit services for residents of our other properties. Our experience has shown that investing in developments like this reduces dependency on auto-transit while increasing support for walkable businesses and public transportation.

13. Concerns with increase 911 calls?

We do not expect 911 calls to increase. However, a vacant building often attracts vandals and looters and can cause an increase in criminal activity. We do not state this to scare anyone. We have seen the result of letting a property sit too long and the difficulty in securing and managing such a property.

14. With the low income will you have regulations on who can live, move, important visitors and how long someone can stay with the tenant? We have two low income housing and do not want another one. We don't need or want any more low income apartments. We are concerned about low income. How many units are low income compared to market value rate?

We find that concerns about "low income" apartments and/or residents are related to poor property management and lack of lease enforcement rather than the income level of a person in the community. We screen potential residents and ensure leases are enforced, including who is living in the unit and for how long. Guests have limited overnights and this is enforced as part of the lease rules. We have found that removing "bad apples" who don't follow the rules makes for more "good apples." All residents, including low and moderate income residents of Swartz Creek need and deserve quality affordable housing. This proposed development and our property management are unrelated to other developments in the City of Swartz Creek.

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The proposed residents will be seniors who are the everyday people that make Swartz Creek such a great place to live. We are currently estimating that about 20% of the units will be market rate units for senior households; about 25% of the units will be restricted to senior households earning up to \$14,000 per year and about 55% of the units will be restricted to senior households earning up to \$44,000 per year.

15. How will the residents be chosen to live here? Will they be chosen from the Swartz Creek residents or brought in from Flint, etc.?

We expect to draw residents primarily from Swartz Creek. However, we also anticipate to draw potential residents from Genesee County, including Fenton, Flushing, Grand Blanc, and Flint Township.

16. What are the options for zoning in order for the ball area not to be developed?

We are requesting that only the school building and associated parking portion of the site be rezoned to RM-1 from R-3. The remaining portion of the site (often noted as the “ballfield”) will remain zoned as R-3. This means that the “ballfield” area could not be developed unless a separate request was made. CFI does not have plans to redevelop the ballfield.

17. How will the front circular driveway be used?

The front drive will be utilized as a pick up and drop off area only.

18. What about the first story house around perimeter?

This is not included in the proposed scope of work. However, redeveloping and activating a vacant school building into senior apartments and community space will positively impact the neighborhood.

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19. Regarding the house next door (8215 Miller Rd.). The addition to the building is going to cut the view that as well as cars parked behind the lot. A privacy fence is needed around this property to at least make the property more liveable.

The current view of the house is an abandoned parking lot and vacant building. We respectfully ask that consideration be given to how the proposed redevelopment will improve the property and enhance the current view when it is complete and properly maintained.

We believe there is a large tree between the backyard of this house and the area where the addition is proposed. It appears that the tree cuts the view of the current building and parking lot and will also cut the view of the proposed addition. There is currently a parking lot behind the backyard and this would not change under the proposed development plan (area will remain a parking area). We will examine the condition of the current fence between the adjacent house and the Mary Crapo Building and if it is in poor condition will replace it. We will also explore installing additional fencing to provide appropriate screening between properties.

20. Ball field liability? Everyone thinks ball field is public property but it is not after sale. School owns (Public) Communities first (Private) use of field does not have to be granted and trespass law could be sought. Is the City open to buying the ballfield and maintaining it?

You are correct to comment that there is significant liability regarding use of the baseball field area. Our proposal does not address the use or development of the "ballfield" and we would have to seek separate approvals to develop that portion of the site as multifamily housing. We are working with the school district and City to preserve the ballfield for community use and any liability concerns.

21. 100% NO

We respect your comments and opinion and just ask that you keep an open mind to the benefits of this development and let us know what can be improved upon.

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22. The baseball field will the public still have access?

We are exploring how to best utilize the baseball field, including allowing the public to access the field. The baseball field will not be developed as part of this proposal.

23. The citizens want a vote to turn this down totally if we choose.

We understand some residents are apprehensive about a major development like this which is why we held the community meeting to present our proposal and solicited feedback in this manner.

24. I've never been to a q&a meeting like this before. Waste of our time. We need a question/answer meeting with Communities 1st. Second Public Meeting.

Thank you for attending and providing your comment regarding the meeting format. We discovered that someone was deliberately misinforming residents about both the purpose of the meeting and the proposed development without speaking with us first and understand this caused some confusion.

We work really hard to be inclusive and welcoming to everyone. We have found that gathering comments and publishing them for all to see respects everyone's time by allowing everyone attending to see and hear our proposal and give their input. Additionally, this allows people not in attendance but interested in the proposed development the opportunity to read people's comments and our responses.

25. Is there a need for senior housing? Why do you think we need senior housing?

Yes, there is a great need for senior housing in Genesee County and Swartz Creek in particular, especially housing that is affordable and of good quality. The number of senior households in the Swartz Creek area increased by 18 percent since 2010 with an additional gain of 11 percent predicted between 2019 and 2024. Additionally, there are sizable waiting lists reported at most senior facilities in the surrounding communities.

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26. Mary Crapo School was a gift from the Crapo Family—they don't care what is done!

We do not know the Crapo family and have not communicated with them regarding the proposed redevelopment. Our goal is to prevent the negative impact of the property becoming vacant and blighted; restore a historic community asset for Swartz Creek residents; ensure the use of the property is compatible with the neighborhood; ensure the property is financially feasible for the long term; and activate the property as a connecting point between residents and the Swartz Creek Community.

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