

Proposed height of building to be discussed Feb. 5

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
Wednesday, 30 January 2013 20:04

How tall a structure should developer Gertjan van den Broek be able to erect as he renovates the former M&I Bank and Harry's Restaurant building?

The public will get its say when the Common Council holds a public hearing on a special exception permit for van den Broek's project at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5.

Van den Broek has proposed a sweeping renovation plan that calls for the construction of a new structure between the former bank and the restaurant buildings, as well as an addition on the east side, to create a multi-million-dollar retail and residential development.

The renovated and new buildings would have an average height of 45-1/2 feet, while the tallest element is a 48-foot-tall tower.

City codes allow a 35-foot tall building downtown without a special exception permit.

Although controversy has greeted a number of building proposals in the past that exceeded the 35-foot limit, City Administrator Mark Grams said he hasn't heard any objections to van den Broek's proposal.

In part, he said, that could be because neighboring buildings are similar in height to van den Broek's proposal. The Biever building across the street and the Boerner Mercantile Building northeast of the site are 45 and 50 feet high, respectively, officials said.

The special exception permit is the last city approval van den Broek needs for his project, Grams said.

However, the city and van den Broek are continuing discussions about parking, Grams said. The city has agreed in concept to reserving 19 parking spaces in municipal lots for building tenants, but has not determined where those spaces will be.

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Also Tuesday, the Common Council will hold a public hearing on proposed changes to its liquor license law, tightening the procedures to issue and revoke the permits.

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