

NEW PROJECT FOR 43RD AND UPTON

Questions and Answers with Mark Dwyer.

Mark has lived 17 years in Linden Hills. For the last two year's he's been head of the Linden Hills Business Association. He's the guiding force behind the plans for re-making the space that's now occupied by Famous Dave's BBQ and the Edward Jones building next door.

What's the plan?

To build one, or maybe two buildings that would house restaurant, retail, small office, and apartment space.

What happens to the two existing businesses?

There's a good chance Famous Dave's and Edward Jones will become tenants in the new space.

What will it look like?

We've just hired an architect. I know that we have to look at the texture and fabric of what's already part of that intersection in that village. Look at buildings like the library and fire station. We have to take something from those, but also take something from those that are stucco. I think it will be interesting to come up with a style that will pull the different themes of our neighborhood together.

Who's 'we'? Who's running this?

I've been looking for a lead investor, maybe two, who would let me give this out to the neighborhood. Let the neighborhood collaboratively decide what shape and form this will take. I have a couple of investors who are willing to finance the whole thing, but it's my hope to bring in neighbors as partners. So the next step is to start to identify people who might be interested in owning a share of this.

Why take that extra step, if you've already got the financing?

I love the idea of our business district being as locally owned as possible. It's good for people to be able to own something in your own back yard. And it takes the 'shop local' idea to a whole new level.

When will all this happen?

Can't really put a date on it. It may be two years before we break ground. We want to have a process where we hear from everybody in the neighborhood. And that includes the people who shop and work and own businesses here. We're hoping to wait on starting the official process with the city until we're comfortable that we've given the neighbors every chance to make their voices heard.

The project is on the agenda at the next meeting of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council at 7pm on April 7, at the LH Park Building. There's more information, including Mark's contact information, at OurLindenHills.com.