

Meeting Notes from Monday, July 7, 2014 meeting of the UAC Zoning Committee:

6:00 PM – Business/administrative session began at the Pride Center for members of the Zoning Committee. We reviewed the agenda briefly, and waited for committee members to arrive to achieve a quorum for the meeting.

PRESENT: Ethan Hansen, Joyce Hughes, Seth Golding, Craig Bouska, Tom Wildman, Colin Odden, Dick Talbot, Susan Keeny

EXCUSED/ABSENT:

VISITORS: Amanda Hoffsis, President of Campus Partners; Keith Myers, FASLA, Associate Vice, President Physical Planning and Real Estate, Chair; Laura Bidwa; Rory Krupp; Deb Supelak; Mike Shannon; Josh Coy

6:30 PM – Applicant(s):

1. **South Campus Gateway Project** – This meeting was to present and discuss the proposed development package for the parcel located South of Gateway, east of High Street, in Weinland Park. The property is currently owned by Campus Partners. The intention is to create a CPD (Commercial Planned Development) which is a very specific, unique, registered site plan and text to describe the particular area as to how it may be developed. It becomes the zoning for the site. The current zoning of the site is ARO & R4. To explain the purpose of a CPD, the following code section is included herein:

Section 3361.01 - Purposes:

The purposes of the commercial planned development district are:

- (a) To encourage development of an overall design concept for commercial developments designed to be integrated into, and be compatible with surrounding environment;
- (b) To encourage development of an overall design concept for commercial developments to encourage an internal environment which will provide for the typical behaviors of the expected users;
- (c) To encourage development of an overall design concept for commercial development designed to integrate the proposal with the existing conditions to form a functioning overall environment.

Campus Partners desires to have the CPD zoning approved prior to seeking developer proposals. It is planned there would be one developer for the entire site.

Project Information & Presentation by Campus Partners:

- The existing Gateway development is being used as the template for this project.
- Site acquired in 1981 & rezoned a CPD in 2003
- 7.5 acres with 200,000 SF retail space, 1200 parking spaces in the garage (900 parking spaces required by code)
- New plan proposed 4 subareas:
 - Subarea A: east of High between E. 9th & E. 8th and Pearl
 - Subarea B1/B2: south side of E. 9th
 - Subarea C1/C2: north side of E. 8th
 - Subarea D1/D2: south side of E. 8th
- Current draft University Plan proposes Regional Mixed Use along High Street - max. 75 ft. building height. New CPD calls for max. **90 ft. building height** Subarea A.
- Current draft University Plan proposes Higher Intensity Residential east of High St. to Indianola Park – max. 45 ft. building height. New CPD calls for max. **75 ft. building height** in Subareas B & C: max. **60 ft. building height** in Subarea D.
- Transportation - Bike lanes were identified & project is close to bus routes.
- Design:
 - Active uses are proposed for lower floor, especially on High St.
 - Must integrate neighborhoods
 - New plan must be pedestrian oriented
 - New building design must have quality architecture
 - Architectural building vocabulary must be coordinated on site
 - Build on existing uses
- Process now is to develop zoning text to put framework ('bumpers') on project prior to issuing requests for proposals from developers – opposite process typically used where developers submit proposals and then work out zoning variances.

Discussion & Zoning Committee Comments/Observations:

- Tom expressed surprise at 110 ft. height district proposed in new plan (w/ 90 ft. max. ht.). Current Gateway is not that high.
- Campus Partners worked with UAC on developing current Design Guidelines for High St.
- Campus Partners demolished some decent housing in this site.
- Joyce stated that when original houses were demolished there was opposition and questions as to what would replace these houses. Campus Partners' Response: single family homes, not apartments; Tom concurred
- Joyce noted Weinland Park Housing & Civic will be discussing project, but zoning issues are not in their purview.
- Housing development at Summit and 17th noted as being an 'eyesore' and appearing to deteriorate due to lesser quality exterior building materials. Concern that the same thing might occur at proposed development.
- Joyce stressed importance of continuing the conversation with residents and all stakeholders. Concern over the finished product.
- Ethan noted that area south of Gateway along High St. is current 'dead zone'. But, there has not been much time invested so far in community input. Must have community buy-in from Weinland Park residents.
- Collin noted that proposed 90 ft. max. height along High St. does not include rooftop mechanicals and cornice. Campus Partners confirmed this & stated that correct language should be 'mechanical parapet.'
- Suggestion to limit building height on south side of 8th, in particular, as it is adjacent to single family houses.
- Keith noted that when limit heights put in a CPD text, architectural creativity could be limited. Master Plan for the Arena District started @ 5 story limit, but project's success drove the height up in next development phase.
- Important to preserve pedestrian perspective for the 1st 2 stories in current project, and be flexible with remaining height parameters.
- Collin noted that Weinland Park neighbors will be looking at 6 stories. He also noted questioned items in the following CPD text sections:
 - Sect. 2 (B) – a billboard could be approved as part of a graphics plan
 - Sect. 2 (C) – Subarea A has 6 floors; Subareas B,C have 5 floors; Subarea C has 4 floors
 - Sect. 3 (A) (3) – clarify building heights. Response: a height district must be selected, but within each height district a maximum building height can be noted.
 - Sect. 3 (B) (3) – parking requirement seems minimal. Response: current Gateway parking garage is overbuilt & under-parked: 300 parking spaces available for this project. Question – will students realistically want to pay for parking spaces within parking garage?
- Seth asked why Campus Partners adding more density – too much density already exists. And Sophomore Rule will remove approx. 3,000 student beds from neighborhood housing market.
- Amanda stated that developers do not think area is too dense and that area can accommodate more apartment housing
- Keith noted that some plans already proposed to Campus Partners feature exaggerated proposals such as 20 story buildings. Proposed CPD is consistent with University Plan being worked on currently. In order to encourage a high quality development with high quality materials, must offer more units (density) to potential developers.
- Joyce noted that developers have said that a particular project will attract young professional tenants. But Fair Housing Act cannot dictate renters, & experience shows that 6 bedroom units more attractive to student renters. What if amount of housing currently proposed remains unoccupied/doesn't work? Current landlords stand to lose.
- Developer may think a project attractive, but neighbors might not.
- Keith noted that 3000 dorm rooms will be built as designed. There is currently 2% vacancy rate in Univ. Dist. & current landlords also have advantage of location – proximity to campus.
- Craig noted Campus Partners has been good to area. Also, not many existing large apartment bldgs. in district. Landlords tend to build non-contributing additions onto single family dwellings. Large density project may curtail this negative influence on existing housing stock
- Develop mostly 1-2 bedroom units to encourage young professionals who like urban lifestyle.
- Row houses in current Gateway have not hurt neighborhood.
- Dick noted that proposed density in draft University Plan not as high as proposed in this project
- Campus Parc owns all OSU parking lots. Will they guarantee 300 parking spaces and @ what cost? (Note: FedEx Kinkos paid for 10 parking spaces for just 1 yr., then reneged) Response: Developer must figure out & provide parking spaces as required by code. Would hate to see

- project compromised by parking.
- Suggestion: treat subareas B-D differently to better incorporate with Weinland Park
- Zoning Committee told previously that students were not target market; Response: Along High St. there's room for student rentals; east of High St. room for more apartments; Project driven by # bedrooms & how to rent – per unit or per bedroom?
- Keith noted that students can't afford Short North or Arena area rents; High St. too noisy for many young urban professionals.
- Seth noted that after working thru current Gateway project, suggest focusing undergrads along High St. & leave existing neighborhoods for older (more mature) grad students
- Campus Partners more optimistic about current housing market; won't be assembling land again – no more 'Gateway Projects'.
- Try to have open-mind about project – flexibility to be considered by all stakeholders
- Positive: project might leave neighborhood vacancies which could open market for individual home ownership; Negative: project could also leave vacancies that would be filled by more lower-income renters.
- Try to figure out way to bring more grad students into neighborhoods.

Visitor Comments:

- Graduate students @ OSU would not live in project as currently proposed
- Buckeye Village has desirable community and housing stock for families
- OSU plans to eliminate Buckeye Village – potential market for graduate student housing this side of the river, close to campus
- Prime opportunity to incorporate Buckeye Village residents into Weinland Park if offer safe, affordable housing
- Current housing in Short North & Italian Village too high in cost for many grad student families
- Units with 4+ bedrooms will not attract graduate students & families – appears more as a 'giant dorm'
- Long-term homeowners in community want more family-friendly homes to revitalize neighborhoods
- Projects being currently developed in referenced Arena District dense but are in more commercial/urban locations (former state penitentiary site), not in residential neighborhoods as this project is.
- When several parcels are assembled into 1 lg. parcel, attracts big developers with big project proposals.
- Large project sets precedent in area. (Some disagreement with this.)
- Think about project 20+ years from now and effect on neighborhoods throughout entire district
- Note that draft University Plan has max building heights of 72 feet along High Street & 45 feet east of High Street along 8th * 9th Streets. South Gateway Project should work within University Planning Process to help achieve already established goals. This plan has had countless staff and volunteer hours spent on it; input has been received from stakeholders throughout the district.

Takeaways:

- Treat **Subarea A** different from **Subareas B-D** to better “integrate the proposal with the existing conditions to form a functioning overall environment.” (per code Section 3361.01)
- Look at modifying building heights/mass to better integrate housing into Weinland Park residential area; consider buildings that step-down east from High St.
- Explain setbacks
- Study streets & setbacks
- Review street frontages
- Correct some language in CPD such as parapets.
- Explain intent of Section B (8).
- Try not to pack 7 acres with students
- Help achieve goals of University Plan
- Think about graduate students and housing stock for their families. Safe housing for families.
- Look at amount of green space provided & add more trees (1 tree/10 parking spaces?)
- Agreement by all that siphoning 1/3 students with on-campus housing combined with more dense housing is potential conflict that needs to be carefully considered.
- Better explain the benefit of project to adjacent neighbors and to Weinland Park.

THIS IS A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF THE PROJECT. NO VOTE REQUIRED AT THIS TIME.