

Agenda item 8. G. Master plan Amendment & rezone

Introductions

I am: Eric Crandall

*Baker/Owner Warehouse Restored - Emerald
111 N. Boswick*

Here to speak on behalf of my clients:

Todd & Jodi Dreyse and Ken & Cindy Lamain

They are the Owners of a growing local business..... - RecLending.com -

They have made an Offer to Purchase the old Bauman Manor - B & B - 218 N Cochran

--the offer is contingent on a zoning change that will allow them to use the building as office space for their family owned business.

If you have questions specific to their business, they are available to respond. However,

I believe tonight's discussion is a more generic, Big picture analysis of whether or not it is advisable to up-date the City's Master Plan, modify the MX-1 zoning language, and apply that designation in the area of the 200 block of North Cochran.

As a 14 year veteran of the Charlotte City Planning commission, I see an exciting opportunity in the North Cochran Corridor, where proper planning and zoning.... has the potential to create conditions that will deter blight,... protect our small town appearance and appeal,..... and protect property values.

The corridor along Cochran;North of the C B D is currently a very incongruent mix of single family residences, multi-family rentals, commercial offices and as you move north to the 300 & 400 blocks you even find retail and old industrial sites.

A few of the properties are beautifully renovated such as 210 and maintained like the Harts' Many others are not. There are market & life style trends at work here, that warrant some consideration by you, as our community planners.

First -- In the Real Estate business we see evidence that the cost of renovating, maintaining and heating large older homes deters many buyers.When those large older homes are on a busy...., major street....., it further discourages the affluent buyers, that have resources to renovate, but more often they choose a quieter, residential location.

Further : The up & coming, younger- home buyers- the Millennials & gen- Y , gen-X ... have different life style values, from earlier generations. They are not that interested in spending their free time fixing or caring for big, older homes. They much prefer time with friends & family; at events, sharing new experiences and activities that create memories.

As the number of interested buyer's decrease, so does the property value; simple supply and demand. When demand goes down, and value goes downNeighborhood blight begins to occur.

These properties only remain economically viable if there is a demand for their use. By embracing the mix of uses that already exist and allowing appropriate additional uses through the MX-1 zoning designation; you can manage the impact of these changing trends..... to protect what is good.... and encourage viable alternatives.

Expand permissible uses, increase the demand, protect the value, stem the blight.

For those reasons, from a future land use and Master plan perspective, it makes sense to overlay the mixed use district in this area.

Bryan Myrkel tells me the current MX-1 language prohibits this zoning designation in residential zones. I respectfully suggest you modify that language. When you read the definitions and purpose of the MX-1 designation ...there are several residential uses permitted by right and even more via condition use**the Statement of purpose** --uses the term "neighborhood" and "Neighborhood serving" and therefore it would seem very appropriate for this zoning overlay to be used in multi-family residential zones, especially in close proximity to other commercial zones, such as in this case, the CBD. So the relatively minor change to the language, required to apply this zoning is very much in keeping with the spirit and intent of the category!

So... right now..

Four (4) houses are currently for sale in the 200 block of North Cochran. By changing the allowable uses, you increase the pool of potential buyers for those structures. You encourage business owner occupants, who also have pride of ownership. And, often the business community can better afford to renovate, operate and preserve these older structures.

There is also the benefit of keeping growing business in the downtown area-- employees go to restaurants, wash cars, buy gas, get haircuts, pay for dry cleaning.....people that work in town, contribute to the overall commerce and the vitality of the downtown : That benefits everyone in the community!

Plus-- if we provide space for office/service businesses,near the CBD but not in the CBDwe might get lucky and increase the space available for retail in the downtown proper!

I respectfully suggest that it is not really a question of *Should* Mixed Use zoning be employed to preserve the charm and enhance the appearance of this gate-way corridor. It is more a question of; when do we start. The sooner the better because,MX-1 zoning will stimulate positive change that will, over time, create dramatic and obvious benefits.

I think we all would like to see the north Cochran corridor present as a beautiful gateway into our downtown.....MX-1 zoning will help keep these properties economically viable and thereby help to preserve our architectural history.

Expanding permitted use, increases demand, protects value and prevents blight! Sooner is better than later!

I respectfully request you recommend to Council the changes needed: to the Master plan, the language change to implement MX-1 zoning in the 200 block on North Cochran, and specifically approve the zoning request for 218 N Cochran.

Thank you for your time and attention.