

September 30, 2016

Gerald Green, Executive Director  
Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission  
City-County Building, Suite 403  
400 Main Street  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902

Dear Mr. Green,

I appreciate you and Mike Brusseau meeting with me a couple of weeks ago regarding the proposed "Baker Creek Bottoms" development on the site of the old Sevier Heights Baptist Church. I've also spoken with Dan Kelly and he gave me a copy of the development/concept plan that Tom Weiss submitted on Monday of this week. I want to update you on some developments since our last conversation.

The South Haven Neighborhood Association held its regularly scheduled meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup>, with the goal to let more stakeholders, especially those residents living closest to the site, share their thoughts about the proposed development. Several days prior, I walked about a block radius around the site, handed out fliers about the meeting and spoke to several residents. I also notified South Woodlawn neighbors about the meeting. I had invited Tom Weiss to come to the meeting, but unfortunately he was out of state. There was a good turnout at the meeting, with more than forty people participating from the South Haven and South Woodlawn neighborhoods. Many of the nearby residents I'd spoken to came. We met for about two hours – sharing what information we had, then listening to neighbors as they talked about their concerns about the proposed development and their hopes for the property, as well. Please see the attached. There were many things that are unclear, but without the developers present and lacking even a conceptual plan, we ended up developing a list of questions.

Most of the neighbors' concerns centered around whether the proposed uses of a brewery and restaurants serving alcohol are the best fit for a residential neighborhood and nearby school zone. Increased traffic, noise, and the inherent safety concerns with beer sales and alcohol consumption appear to present an incongruity of uses in that location – beer sales and transient residents at the hostel, etc. and middle school students walking to/from South Doyle Middle School and families with young children living close by. While many neighbors talked about the desire for development and appreciation for the developers' interest in the site – they recognize that vacant, deteriorating buildings cause their own set of problems – they want development that is appropriate for a residential neighborhood. Such a big leap in zoning from R1 to C3 (even with conditions) is not something to take lightly.

Many liked the developers' ideas that would maximize the potential of the park and trails, but concerns were expressed about the developers' level of experience to do the type of development proposed. With the decision to make such a huge zoning change hinging on pretty specific uses and users, questions about their ability and level of experience seem appropriate. If the zoning change is made, what happens if they back out or can't make it happen like they plan? The potential of what might be allowed to happen with the property zoned C3 is a fear. Some expressed concern about future zoning changes that might "fill in" the area around the current (and expanding) commercial node at Sevier and Sevierville Pike to the C3 former church site. Many neighbors were pleased to hear that the developers plan to re-use the existing buildings, as there is still emotional sentiment tied to the many events that took place at the old church. However, there is concern that renovation plans may be more costly than the developers are aware of at this time. Questions about the level of investment and funding required seem appropriate to ask of the developers.

We did not get into much conversation at the meeting about some of the conditions that could potentially be put on the development, such as buffer zones, hours of operation, etc. These are things that might alleviate some of the neighborhood's concerns, but it was just too much to accomplish in one meeting. There was discussion also about who was NOT at the meeting – other stakeholders who may want to weigh-in. It became apparent that the neighborhood

wants to meet with the developers and hear more detail from them, have their concerns heard, be able to ask some of these and other questions, and see a more detailed development plan. Which uses go where? What ideas do the developers have to mitigate some of the negative consequences of some of the uses? etc. To that end, the group present at the meeting empowered the SHNA Board to relay their concerns (along with their appreciation) to the developers and ask them to meet with us.

Several days later I met with the developers, Tom Weiss and Thomas Krajewski. We had a very cordial conversation and they expressed that they definitely want to work *with* the neighborhood. They want the development to be an asset to the community. And they *do* have ideas about how to manage some of the issues brought up by the neighborhood and want to clarify some of the uses. They told me they'd have a much more detailed plan from their architect within a few weeks. They said they were happy to meet with the neighborhood. We talked about the timeline and it was obvious that October 13<sup>th</sup> was much too soon to make all that happen. I asked them to postpone their October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting with the MPC to give us the time we needed to get more detailed plans and to set up the meeting. Tom had some concerns about what postponing would do to their development timeline, but after speaking with you, I believe, the next day, Tom got his questions answered. We spoke after that and he agreed to ask for a postponement.

Since then, we've been working on a date/time/location and Tom offered to host the next meeting on site, at the old church. We have settled on Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. This will give us enough time to let more people know about the meeting and for the developers to both be available and have more detailed plans and drawings. I do have a concern though that Monday, when Tom apparently turned in his concept plan to Dan Kelly, he didn't mention anything about asking for a postponement. Dan didn't know anything about it when I spoke to him after City Council meeting Tuesday evening. I called Tom right then to get clarity on what we'd spoken about, but had to leave a voicemail. Tom called me later and said that yes, he did intend to ask for a postponement.

To sum up, on behalf of the neighborhood, I would like to request more time so that we can work with the developer to see if the neighborhood's concerns can be addressed. May I/we ask MPC to postpone the meeting scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup>, if the developers do not? If so, will this letter suffice or is there some other action that I/we need to take? Your guidance would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,



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South Haven Neighborhood Association  
September 17, 2016  
Hillcrest United Methodist Church

Notes from meeting on proposed "Baker Creek Bottoms" project

#### Questions

Could the property be split into different zones?  
What are the developer's experiences with this type of development?  
What are the sources of funding for the project?  
What are the anticipated renovation costs?  
What is the developer's level of investment?  
Why such a large change in zoning and use?  
Why here, in the middle of a residential neighborhood?  
What are other options?  
Examples of C3 zoning in a residential neighborhood  
What governs how beer/alcohol is sold? Beer Regulations  
What are some examples of joint or community ownership? Examples in the US?  
Who is responsible for keeping up the walkways by SDMS?  
We want to see the development plan  
We want to see a traffic study done

#### Concerns

This is a residential area, is this the best fit?  
Development of the property that was the JWP extension  
Concerned about development – noise, unsightly buffer wall, alcohol, traffic  
Beer sales  
Tearing down the church  
Endangering children in the neighborhood (traffic, DUI)  
Drugs, alcohol use  
Weeds on the site, debris -brick, is overgrown now  
Alcohol, drunk drivers, danger to children at SDMS, the nursery  
Noise (even the church was noisy at times)  
Traffic near SDMS (grateful for new trails making it easier for kids to enter SDMS grounds)  
Empty building can bring crime and vandalism  
Something needs to be done there  
\$1M is a lot for another church (not practical to expect another church use)  
Without alcohol – are there other uses?  
Responsible alcohol sales are needed  
Businesses – niche market – Urban Wilderness  
Urban Wilderness is bringing in quality people that we want to be in our neighborhood  
Beer Board – City Council – Nick spoke about rules  
Noise, traffic, vandalism happening now in cars  
Problems with leaving a building abandoned  
Hostel has a "seedy" feel – we don't want another Executive Inn (Chapman Highway nuisance property), especially with the proximity to SDMS  
Don't mind the beer sales  
Who'll maintain the property?  
We want to be a part of the conversation about potential development  
Increased road signage, vehicular traffic  
Speeding, foot traffic/SDMS kids walking to school

## Timeline

The developer getting started and not being able to finish/tearing down the church

Likes the hostel idea (experience in Europe); doesn't like the community involved with beer sales

Concerned about brewery itself, not beer sales; a brewery is a whole other matter (volume of scale for sales), Alliance brewpub has a lot of activity

Safety concerns for children and families

Children, vehicular traffic and better signage on Sevierville Pike, South Haven Road, and Sevier Heights

Noise from the Urban Wilderness trails

Glad someone is interested in investment in the neighborhood

Some change is inevitable

We welcome developer to our neighborhood

Concerns about potential development with C3 proximity

## Hopes

Assisted living or a nursing home

Sidewalks up Lancaster, or an alternate safe way for kids to get to SDMS

Improved maintenance on site and park land

Community Center

Family Garden

Park

Pool

Charter School/SDMS Homeschool co-op

Lodge/hostel/lodging

Dog Park

Something good for the neighborhood and Urban Wilderness

More food options (but not fast food), Food

Business increase in neighborhood

Likes the plan, but questions about hostel

Preserving the church buildings

Support for development – something that brings the community together

Green, eco-friendly, non-profits

Sustainable

Small medical clinic

Bike shop

Study sidewalk terminus, take sidewalk up to Sevierville Pike

Re-use vs demolition of building

Family Life Center has potential

Potential for out-of-state missionaries ("Whitestone"), something good for families

Health Club

Bookstore – sit, eat, a place to socialize

## Next Steps

Time delay/postponement

Meet with Tom Weiss

We need to see a plan

Look at development schedule

Committee vs. a large meeting → people liked a large meeting

Who's not here/missing stakeholders

We want to meet with the developer and influence/shape his ideas

Nick will reach out to other groups – Island Home, Old Sevier

A memorial to the church

Meet with him before plans are finalized, before next meeting (if it's not possible, ask for a postponement)

SHNA will follow through, plan for a larger meeting where developer is here to present and answer questions/concerns