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[MPC Comment] Rezoning request 7-L-16-RZ, and all related petitions by Vintage Northshore Town Center LLC

1 message

Deborah Stevens <dstevenstn@outlook.com>

Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 12:38 PM

Reply-To: dstevenstn@outlook.com

To: "commission@knoxmpc.org" <commission@knoxmpc.org>

Commissioners,

Vintage Northshore Town Center, LLC has filed a request to amend the Sector Plan, the One Year Plan and the zoning on 8.9 acres at Northshore Town Center. Essentially, the change is a request to remove town center zoning from the heart of Northshore Town Center. We are residents of Northshore Town Center and have lived here for more than 10 years and ask you to deny this request. The original developer transferred the property to the current owners through a deed in lieu of foreclosure. As early residents, we were comforted that our investment in our new home was protected by the very strict zoning that was in place for a town center. It is a unique concept and it was a unique zoning concept for Knoxville and hundreds of hours were spent developing this zoning. The town center concept has worked in cities of a similar size and character to Knoxville. The residential portion of Northshore Town Center and it is bustling with activity. New houses are being built every day and it is one of the fastest growing subdivisions in Knoxville. Despite little activity by the investors in the heart of the town center, the new residents have felt protected by the zoning.

Several years ago, the investors who purchased this property asked the neighbors in the residential portion of NTC to agree to a rezoning of some large parcels of property on the perimeter of the town center. They had reached a "deal" with Target and Publix and believed that the investment in these stores would spark further development in the town center. As part of those discussions, the investment group maintained that they believed in the town center concept and intended to follow the town center concept on the interior portions of the property. The residents who were here at the time reluctantly agreed with the promise that this would enhance future town center development. Then came a request to rezone another perimeter parcel of property for apartments. Apartments were contemplated in the town center zoning but the density and character of the apartments were non-compliant. This time the investors and city council asked the residents to consider working with the Flournoy Group to find a common ground to enable the apartments to be completed. Flournoy would not budge on the issue of density but they made significant modifications to design to be more in keeping with the town center concept and the residents reluctantly agreed. Again, we were told that the overall concept of the town center design would not be impacted.

Now, those same investors want to sell a large tract of property in the heart of the town center to build another, non-compliant apartment complex in complete disregard of town center zoning and the concerns of the neighbors who have invested in this community. As residents, we have been asked to make concessions and, as good citizens, we have agreed to concessions to the perimeter of the development. We were asked to work with the investors to see if there was a compromise and we have. But, despite the assurances that were the basis of the agreement to compromise, the current request would be the demise of the town center concept. The current rezoning request was initially filed in July and a postponement was requested. The hearing was then set in August and another postponement was requested. Now, it is my understanding that there is a request that this matter be postponed until November.

As residents of Northshore Town Center, we want it to be clear that we strongly oppose any change in the zoning that was specifically created for this area. The investors understood the zoning limitations when they purchased the property and have made multiple representations of support for the town center concept to get the perimeter changes they were requesting. Although the current applicants have not offered to meet with the neighbors, they are aware that there is strong opposition to additional apartments and changes in zoning from the city tax payers who live within Northshore Town Center, the parents of the school located in Northshore Town Center and residents of adjoining neighborhoods. As members of MPC, you have received numerous letters in opposition to the requested changes. WE URGE YOU TO DENY THIS REQUEST whenever it comes before you. Please protect the zoning and the contemplated development of a walkable, urban-like community with well-thought out building restrictions and requirements for green space planning. Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah and George Stevens

9/7/2016

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