

The Issue With Apartments at the Lots for Cases: 7-C-24-PA, and 7-D-24-RZ

In this comment I hope to show to you why the lots for cases: 7-C-24-PA, and 7-D-24-RZ should not be rezoned from a RN-1 to an RN-4. In case you were not already aware the individual who has recently bought the land has the intention of putting apartments upon it. I have given you multiple detailed reasons on why apartments should not be built on this lot, and subsequently why it should not be upgraded to an RN-4. This is because the Zoning Ordinance of Knoxville does not allow it with the rules for making amendments to the zoning, Knoxville's Zoning Ordinance's Code disallows it, it will be dangerous, and it will create an undesirable environment for the people that would live there and the people of the surrounding area.

To begin, your own zoning restrictions disallow such an action. Within “The Zoning Ordinance Of The City Of Knoxville, Tennessee” under article 16 “Zoning Applications” within 16.1 “Zoning Text And Map Amendments” section E, part 3 lists conditions that **must** be met for amendments.

First: “The proposed amendment is necessary because of substantially changed or changing conditions in the area and districts affected, or in the city generally”. Conditions within this area have not changed for far more than ten years. To upgrade this property to an RN-4 and call it a *necessity due to changing conditions* is absolutely invalid within the eyes of people in this community. You can ask the people in Fountain City or outside of it and these individuals will all tell you that, without a doubt, Fountain City has not changed much since when they were kids.

Second: “The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent and purposes of this Code”. The opposition to this second point will be broken down into six sub-points for every point within the “Purpose Code” that is relevant.

- A. “Promote the public health, safety, and welfare”, by placing apartments at this intersection it will be worsening any idea of safety due to the increase of incoming and outgoing traffic. The intersection of Jacksboro Pike and Essary Drive is already an immensely stressed one because it completely lacks any traffic lights and is subject to high amounts of traffic. This traffic includes: rush hours on any given day, increase in traffic when school is beginning or ending, KAT buses, fire trucks, and school buses. Most roads that experience even half of what has been described have traffic lights on them. To add apartments would worsen an already bad problem. As well as incidents that may occur at the intersection the additional traffic would undoubtedly also lead to more people blocking the entrance to the fire station. While people are not supposed to do this; it still happens regularly. What is especially bad about this is that when the fire station is responding to a call; seconds matter, and if the reason for them being just seconds too late is because someone is blocking the entrance is a shameful scenario to think about. Once more this would be getting an already poor situation and making it worse.
- B. “Promote orderly development of the City and implement the adopted Knoxville-Knox County General Plan”, within the Knoxville-Knox County General Plan it states, in its Vision Statement, on page eleven that

“Residents in Knoxville’s oldest neighborhoods live in sound housing that has been renovated or maintained with respect to the original architecture. New development complements the character of early buildings in terms of scale, materials and setbacks” By putting apartments of any scale or material in this area it would not, to the slightest degree, be complementing the character of any of the surrounding buildings. More than anything it would be degrading the character of the buildings. As well as that on page 8 it also states “Neighborhoods are pedestrian-oriented, safe and convenient. Neighbors know each other and are involved in the community. Amenities are within walking distance, and character is maintained over many years”, details have already been given on how an apartment complex at this intersection next to the fire station is not safe. However, I would like to reinstate my point on maintaining the character of the area which any sort of apartments would ruin. Also, it would be dismantling the idea of neighbors knowing one another because there would be a disconnect between people that are living in the apartment building and those living in surrounding residential buildings.

- C. “Divide the City into zoning districts, according to use of land and structures, bulk of structures, intensity of the use of the lot, or other classification, as deemed best suited to carry out the purposes of this Code and adopted policies”, by placing a medium residential, which is what RN-4 is, in the middle of low density RN-1 and RN-2 housing would completely disregard dividing the city into zoning district because you

would not be dividing it up if you are deciding to put RN-4 in the middle of RN-1 and RN-2 housing.

- D. “Maintain and stabilize the value of structures, communities, and neighborhoods within the City of Knoxville”, many homeowners on Rondo Road, Jacksboro Pike and Essary Derive of the surrounding area have said that if apartments get built at this location then they will likely move due to not wanting to live that close to apartment. So by allowing apartments here, under RN-4, you would be not maintaining and stabilizing but utterly destroying and destabilizing the community and the neighborhood of this area.
- E. “Promote economic development that balances the needs of the current and future economy with a high quality of life standard”, one could argue that placing apartments at this location would promote economic development. To that it would appear the individual has been made a fool, for land development by apartment does not create economic development. However land development for businesses, for instance a dentist office as the land was originally used as, does create economic development as it creates jobs and profit. As well as what has been stated, in no way would placing apartments here balance “the needs of the current and future economy with a high quality of life standard”. This is evident on what has already been stated as well as what will be mentioned in points two through five.

F. “Preserve open space and natural areas, provide opportunities for multi-modal transportation, utilize existing infrastructure and resources, and preserve quality of life”, by placing apartments here you would be completely removing the already existing and natural space of the community. As well as that you would be failing to utilize already existing infrastructure, because the dentist office building that now stands there would be torn down in the name of apartments. Following this the Code also wants to preserve the quality of life which it would not be because people are considering leaving. As well, this will be discussed further in points two through five.

Third: “The use is compatible with the character of the neighborhood where it is proposed, and with the size and location of buildings in the vicinity”, in no way are apartments within this lot compatible with the character of the neighborhood. As has already been made apparent this lot is surrounded completely by RN-1 and RN-2 family homes so putting RN-4 here would not be compatible. It is also not appropriate with the size and location of the building because there are no other two story buildings within the general vicinity, and an apartment complex would stick out egregiously.

Fourth: “The use will not significantly injure the value of adjacent property or by noise, lights, fumes, odors, vibration, traffic, congestion, or other impacts detract from the immediate environment”, while it is agreed that apartments usually have a positive or zero effect on the surrounding properties values; it is also agreed upon that when substandard apartments are put into an area it will negatively affect the surrounding value. Having said that, there is no guarantee that if the owner of the land does build

apartments here that they will be positively affecting the value. As well as that there will also be an increase of noise. This is a given fact because anytime there are more people there will also be more noise. This is not even considering the one year or more noisy construction zone that would be present at the lot during building of the apartments. Along with that, there will also be an increase of congestion and traffic in this area (This will be discussed further later in this comment). The intersection of Essary Drive and Jacksboro Pike has increased amounts of traffic already during rush hours and when school is beginning and letting out. Which is expected, but the main problem comes from a lack of traffic lights at this stated intersection. Most roads that experience even half of the stress that this intersection handles with KAT buses, school buses, fire trucks, would receive traffic lights. So, to add apartments to this already stressed intersection would undoubtedly greatly increase congestion and traffic on this road and area.

Fifth: “The use is not of a nature or so located as to draw substantial additional traffic through residential streets”, yes it would. Rondo Road is a residential street that is already used, incorrectly, as a cut through during school hours or rush hours as an attempt by drivers to bypass parts of traffic. This road is already difficult to fit two cars on. To add apartments at this lot would cause an increased number of people to partake in this *cut through* in order to exit or return to the area quicker.

Sixth: “The nature of development in the surrounding area is not such as to pose a potential hazard to the proposed use or to create an undesirable environment for the proposed use”, the surrounding area both poses a potential hazard, and creates an undesirable environment for the proposed use. First, it is a potential hazard for an apartment complex at this area because the roads of Essary Drive, and Jacksboro Pike

would not be able to accommodate the increase of people attempting to turn in to exit or return to the buildings during rush hour and school hours. As well as that, as stated before, the intersection lacks traffic lights and for it to accommodate these additional people it could pose a notable hazard to people wishing to live there. Second, this area would create an undesirable place to live for one key reason; the fire department. Already this area is louder than most with Central High School having their band practice or having football games with music blaring and the loudspeaker roaring hours after the sun has set. However, there is also the fire station that could possibly sound its alarm or have a fire truck wait at any given hour of the night or day. So, to place apartments which are already noisy places to live as is, near to the school, and then right on top of the fire station; would create arguably the most miserable place to live in all of the city to Knoxville. The only possible way that it could be worse is if a train was running through the center of the road as well. I would pity anyone living in such conditions for sleep must be sparse. To conclude then, yes it would create a highly undesirable environment for the proposed use, that being apartments, for anyone living in such a place must be angry from misery.

Additional points:

1. People knocking on the fire department's door. On multiple occasions, from just the people that already live in the area, the fire department at: 5301 Jacksboro Pike, Knoxville, TN 37918, has received many knocks on their doors over minor issues that people were having. While the firemen are generous individuals and are more than willing to help people, they do not appreciate this type of action as it could take away from people that are having real emergencies. By building apartments on either side of

the fire department there will be, without a shadow of a doubt, an increase of people partaking in this. Consequently: this would mitigate firefighter response time or manpower to real emergencies.

2. A lack of traffic lights at the crossing of Essary Drive and Jacksboro Pike. Already this intersection experiences far too much traffic to not warrant a set of traffic lights. This intersection is used by KAT buses, school buses, fire engines, a vast number of people during rush hours, and people when school is starting as well as letting out. However, to add an apartment complex in this area will only lead to greater amounts of incoming and outgoing traffic at this intersection. Subsequently this would lead to more wrecks at this intersection.
3. An increase in noise pollution. This area is already an epicenter of noise. From the fire engines blaring at any given point of the night to Central High School's football games with a loudspeaker and marching band that can be heard within resident's homes; this area is already noisy. By adding apartments to this area it will only increase this problem, because anytime there are more people; there is more noise.

A decrease in privacy. Current building restrictions limit RN-4 buildings to 35 feet in height, or about two stories in height. By having apartments at this lot it would completely mitigate many surrounding houses' privacy. Many people have privacy fences and to allow an apartment complex to be able to look into these individuals' backyards would completely contradict the reason they had one built in the first place.

4. The fire station is in need of an update. It is a fact that the next closest fire station is two and a half miles away in Whittle Springs off of Whittle Springs road. It is also known that this fire station is an especially stretched one for its size and the area it has to cover.

Would it not be better for the City of Knoxville to buy either of the lots and instead expand the fire station for the greater good of the community?

5. There are better places within Knoxville to put Apartments. This place, as has been displayed, is not ideal for apartments. However, let one bring to you the fact that there are other places to put apartments in Knoxville. One such place is the old K-Mart building off of North Broadway. K-Mart closed back in 2018 and five years later that lot upon which it sits and decays is left unused. There are other locations where land could be used better or for this cause, however that is the one that comes to mind.

To conclude these lots should not be upgraded to an RN-4 because it is simply not allowed under Knoxville's Ordinance or Code, and it would create an insecure and undesirable place in the community for people around and in the apartments.