

February 5, 2019

Dear Planning Commission members:

As a resident of the West Hoover/West Davis neighborhood, I'm very grateful that the Planning Commission is considering a proposal to rezone the area from multiple-family to single-family dwelling. This is a wonderful initiative and the Planning Staff has done great work on it. My one concern about it is that it doesn't go quite far enough to correct the current zoning problem.

In the past several years, the character of the Hoover/Davis neighborhood, and the quality of life for the residents, has suffered significantly because of poorly designed development. My partner bought our 1200-sq-foot house on W. Hoover in 1980, and I've lived there with him for almost 20 years. He did not realize when he bought the house that the block was zoned R4C; since our lot is only 38 by 99 ft, and many of the other lots in the area aren't much bigger, I don't think it would have occurred to most people that this could be a site for multi-family housing. And in fact, for the first 35 years that he owned the house, there was no reason to suspect that it was zoned R4C; not much changed, other than neighbors making the usual renovations and improvements to their homes.

But in 2015, we had a rude awakening. A house on W. Davis directly behind our backyard was torn down, a small house next door to it was also torn down, the two lots were combined, and the four-story, 8000-sq-ft Davis Row building was constructed. Now, instead of two modest-sized and affordable houses, there is a big building with four vastly less affordable condos that sold for between \$580,000 and \$810,000 apiece. Little if any concern for aesthetics appears to have gone into the design; the building looms over W. Davis and doesn't blend with the houses to the west or behind it at all. I invite you to take a walk down W. Davis and look at it, if you haven't already. Guests walk into our backyard and are shocked at the sight of this building that dominates the view and looks completely out of place. To make matters worse, since Davis Row was built, a very similar structure was approved for the SW corner of S. Main and W. Davis, and is now under construction.

For us and other long-term residents, it's been heartbreaking to see our block irrevocably changed and its character harmed. It's especially bitter because rezoning of our neighborhood was recommended in 1992 and again in 2013, on the basis that R4C zoning was felt to be inappropriate for an area that is not in the central part of the city. But city government never acted on the recommendations. The argument is made that our block is walking distance to downtown and that justifies increasing the density. I can tell you that, while it's theoretically within walking distance, my partner and I don't walk when we're headed downtown, and our neighbors don't walk there either. We stroll through our own neighborhood and the Old West Side because they're nice neighborhoods for walking. We walk to Washtenaw Dairy. But even on days when the weather would permit walking, if we're going to shop downtown or at the Farmers Market, we drive or take the bus; it's too far to carry all your purchases home on foot.

We are grateful that rezoning is finally receiving serious consideration. It would correct a serious planning error that was made many years ago. However, one concern we have about the plan is that certain lots are proposed to remain zoned as R4C. We have no problem with the buildings that are currently multi-family retaining R4C zoning, but it troubles us that there are some single-family houses at the eastern end of the study area that are proposed to remain zoned as R4C. One of these houses is on the SW corner of S. Main and W. Hoover, and the other is on the NW corner, so they

flank the eastern end of our block. Both of these houses are over 100 years old. They make a lovely and historic gateway to our street. The one on the NW corner, at 916 S. Main, is a beautiful and stately house with a gorgeous red maple tree right next to it. At certain times of year, I walk to the corner just to gaze at that tree. The thought that these houses would remain zoned R4C, and therefore be prime targets for demolition, is painful. We fear that the eastern end of our street could end up looking just as unappealing and uninviting as the eastern end of W. Davis now does.

Thank you for considering my comments and for giving our neighborhood a better future.

Sivana Heller
128 W. Hoover Ave.

Lenart, Brett

From: Jill <jilltipton13@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2019 9:01 AM
To: Planning
Subject: Hoover/Davis rezoning

Hello,

I live in a 6-unit apartment building located at 330 W Davis Ave. I have received a postcard in the mail in preparation for a February 5 public hearing concerning rezoning this area.

On the map presented on the postcard, it appears that the lot where I currently live in multi-family housing has been recommended for rezoning to single family. However the map is rather unclear, so I'm not quite sure. Is this correct?

If yes, I'm wondering what the ramifications would be for existing multi-family housing. Would it be grandfathered in?

I am also wondering why the city of Ann Arbor would rezone these lots when density is highly needed in a tight rental/housing market. Current urban planning trends are moving towards multi-family housing, not away from it! By maintaining the multi-family zoning type, there remains a future margin for maneuver to relieve a tight housing market and improve affordability in the city. If the overwhelming worry is maintaining a quiet neighborhood with quaint historical houses, I think the worry is unfounded. Down the line, if desired/needed, the houses could easily be renovated into multi-family buildings containing separate units while maintaining the integrity of the exterior.

Anyway just hoping for some clarification on my personal situation for 330 W Davis as well as broader explanation for the rezoning.

I am not sure I'll be able to make the Tuesday night meeting so I would appreciate some answers via email.

Thank you!

Best,
Jill

Lenart, Brett

From: Jeffrey Benko <jeffrey.benko@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 11:55 AM
To: Planning
Subject: 19-0210 Comments/Questions

Hi,

Robert Jeffrey Benko
213 W. Madison St
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Concerning the report for 19-0210:

1. I read over the report several times and understand the points made, but the different scenarios of redevelopment outlined get a little confusing.
2. Could you please provide a scenario where the sites are environmentally cleaned up? Would this only be done by a developer purchasing several sites and then redeveloping them? If so, what is the ability to keep the current look and feel of the neighborhood? Is it only the Historic Commission approval to could do that at that point? Would that by itself hold up in court?
3. It seems like the only positive of keeping the site zoned as C2B would be for the possibility of getting the sites cleaned up. But that would mean that the current look and feel would be lost which is not what the City Charter or the Historic Commission would want. Is there any way that the site is clean up and similar buildings exist in the end?

Thanks,
Jeff Benko

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