

PUBLIC COMMENT ON A2D2 ZONING AND PARKING AMENDMENTS

MARCH 23, 2009

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Hieftje announced that this was a public comment and not a public hearing. Anyone who speaks tonight may also speak at an upcoming public hearing. This is an opportunity receive feedback on the A2D2 zoning process from the public tonight.

The Mayor also asked that everyone pay close attention to the time clock so that they can be fair to all speakers.

A2D2 ZONING AND PARKING AMENDMENTS

The following people addressed council regarding A2D2 Zoning and Parking Amendments:

SHIRLEY AXON

Zoe Bemke, president of A League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area and Shirley Axon were present.

Shirley Axon, 2016 Seneca, said that the Ann Arbor League of Women Voters feels it is very important to be a part of the development process. Ms. Axon read the following letter:

The League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor area recommends that the City Planning Commission or the City Council appoint an Urban Design Review Committee, to be made up of a landscape architect, an architect, an architectural historian and an urban planner, and that the City Planning Commission charge the Urban Design Review Committee with developing urban design standards and reviewing proposed development projects to ensure that the standards are met. The urban design standards should be incorporated into the City Zoning Ordinance concurrently with adoption of that ordinance. We feel that it is important that it be a concurrent appointment and action of the design committee because otherwise it may not happen.

She added that many of their members are over 60 years of age and she was really surprised at how strongly they felt for the wellbeing of the future of the community that we have good looking buildings and substantial buildings and not just quick and easy buildings.

ALI RAMLAWI

Ali Ramlawi, 821 E. University, said that he was here more specifically not because of the zoning changes that are occurring throughout our city, but more so on the parking structure proposed next to them and the Ann Arbor District Library. He said that it looks as though they are moving forward with what is being proposed presently. He got involved later in the process than he wished he had. Most of the ideas were almost already settled on by the different committees, the DDA and such. Early on the talk was about putting an urban park or landscape using the surface of the underground parking structure in order to add to the vitality of the downtown, possibly putting a skating rink or a park; someplace where the community could come together and celebrate life. There is no where for the community to come together and do things together without shutting down streets. An example would be closing Main Street on a Friday at 4 p.m. This causes confusion, congestion, and frustration.

He said that he would like Council, the Mayor and citizens to really reconsider what is being done to the top of that parking structure. It is one of the last prime pieces of real estate that is in the downtown. He felt that some councilmembers want to increase the tax base of our city. He knows that they are having some financial problems like the rest of the country especially with Pfizer leaving and taking 15 million dollars off the table a year. He understands that we need to find a way to replace that, but there are better ways to replace that tax revenue than building something that is not very useful to our city.

Mr. Ramlawi concluded by saying that he would be present at future meetings to continue to stress the importance of placing something better there that would add to the greatness and not take away from what could be and should be done.

RAY DETTER

Ray Detter, speaking on behalf of the Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council, said that they know how complex this process has been and how difficult the results are for everyone to understand and predict. It has been going on for years and before that, we were a part of the downtown plan. They have always thought about the nature of planning and how all of these things come together to eventually create something that we all can agree on that we want in the area of the downtown. But we still don't have it right. A memorandum was sent to council outlining some of their key points and concerns. Specifically, they know the extreme importance of having within this plan, design guidelines and a process.

He added that there are a few things that are important to a number of people close to the downtown. First, we need more clear and accurate graphic illustrations as a part of the downtown plan as well as the zoning plan and we'll get them with regard to the design/review process. Height limits, buffer areas and adequate rear setbacks and some character areas are also needed, particularly adjacent to residential neighborhoods and historic districts. The area along Huron Street between State and Division Street is the only

section of the downtown in which high-rises will rise to the south of residential historic neighborhood. It is the only area of that particular kind.

They also want included, incentives to encourage underground parking. Those should be included in the zoning recommendations. That has always been their position. We should not waste an opportunity to include underground parking in developments where we can get it and currently there is no incentive to push downtown underground parking. They also want to eliminate any reference to transfer of development rights because the one thing we want to get out of this is something that we can all expect is going to be what we want and the idea of Transfer of Development Rights seems to work in opposition to that particular position.

Mr. Detter expressed that the downtown plan amendments, the zoning ordinance revisions and ultimately a design review process and guidelines should eventually put be together so that they can be cross-referenced and coordinated. They all make sense together and they are not in conflict with one another. They would prefer it if all three were passed at the same, but that is not the way it will be done. They do want a commitment that the third part will be a part of this as we move forward because it is absolutely essential with regard to making this all work.

He concluded by saying that there should be no conflict among the documents, particularly no conflict between the protective concepts of character areas, and the downtown plan and development concepts of zoning.

JIM MOGENSEN

Jim Mogensen, 3780 Green Brier, said that he believes he followed this long enough to know what the vision is. But he thinks it may not happen. We have a vision of what we want to have happen and in order to make that happen, we're saying, we'd like some more density downtown and so we are going to do some up-zoning. But sometimes when that is done, you can end up with nothing. You want more, but you could end up with nothing. Why? Downtown land is not too expensive. People persistently agree to pay too much for it, but it's not inherently. One of the reasons is because there is an expectation that property owners have about how much their land is worth, based on how much capacity is allowed and all of them want to have the maximum amount allowed.

You can have a situation where if it's not feasible, you could end up with no project. People will just wait. They have valuable property downtown, so they will wait until it comes around. It may not happen. You have a situation where we have to have a commercial development financing that. We could probably envision that happening, but when it comes to the housing that everyone wants downtown, people who are going to be in that housing have to be able to get the financing to buy that and it may be a case, since downtown housing is more expensive, that will be harder sell.

We've gone through a major situation where we sort of maximize the amount and still developers were struggling to have downtown housing. So we could have a situation where this is what our vision is but it may be hard to make that happen.

In relation to the active uses, he did not think that was a good idea to have. He used Ashley Mews as an example. If this is done, you have to have a situation where over long periods of time people will come and having to be able to change the PUD to allow different kinds of uses, so it may not be a good idea.

Mr. Mogensen added that you have a situation where we've actually experienced this recently, which is people have a lot of assemblage and the question would be, how would you have a maximum lot size instead of having a height limitation. This would have to be crafted very carefully.

The South University up-zoning is more of a rationalization than a rationale. People are seizing on the fact that people in South University said, lets do some up-zoning and the fact that there is not a robust buffer zone around the residential area is more of a rationalization than an actual rationale. In the end for the long term, it is not a very good idea.

JOHN HAINES & RANDY BIRD

John Haines, 322 E. Liberty and Randy Bird, 322 E. Liberty spoke on behalf of property owners living in 322 Liberty Lofts.

John Haines said that they support development in the city, especially development that helps to retain the main character in Ann Arbor. After all, they actually moved into the new, 322 Liberty Lofts building. They are all hoping to get a better understanding of the long term development plans that the commission and council have as it relates to the core of the city which they are a part of. The Liberty Lofts residents are having a very difficult time understanding what the long-term development plans are for the Fifth Street Parking Structure and the surface above it. Some residents continue to wonder about the need for a huge underground parking structure when many parking spots seem to be always available in the downtown parking structures. All of the Liberty Lofts residents hope that if a structure must be put on the surface of the Fifth Street Complex, that as much green space is incorporated into the surface as possible and that the building is properly set back from other buildings. They all support an urban park. Additionally, should this development project begin, they would like to work with the city to make sure that noise, dirt, dust, traffic, etc. is mitigated. Finally, all of the Liberty Lofts residents care about the city and would like to know who is the single person or committee that they could work with to better understand the development project and be supportive of it.

NANCY SHORE

Nancy Shore, 2020 Winewood, said that she has a lot of support for the A2D2 plan. She supports downtown density and is among many young professionals in this community that either has come here or has lived here that support downtown density and wants to make sure that an urban environment is retained. She likes the A2D2 plan for the fact that it is trying to make it easier for there to be more downtown density. She brought attention to the fact that downtown density is environmentally sustainable. If we want to have a community that is committed to environmental sustainability, we want to make sure that people can live and work as close as possible together. In order to do that, we need to understand the realities of the fact that people do want to be able to live in an urban environment, live downtown, and have all the amenities that they want to go to close by within walking or biking distance. She said that adding some development and some density to the downtown will do that.

Ms. Shore went on to say that she likes the character districts. She likes the fact that there different parts of the downtown have been clearly identified and that they do have different needs. She also thinks that it is good that the A2D2 plan presents it as a unified whole. Because clearly, when people are coming to the downtown, that they see a downtown and we want to make sure that we can make development easier in that area.

She said that she knows that Ann Arbor will continue to grow as seen in the Calthorpe Study. Looking at job growth in this community, we know that there are going to be more jobs coming to Ann Arbor. We also know that the U of M is going to continue to grow and we want to be able to attract people to live in our downtown areas, instead of going to some of the outlying areas and having to drive in to work. There are a lot of people who work in downtown Ann Arbor businesses that would live close to the downtown, that would like to be able to walk to work, but they do not necessarily have a place to live, either because it's not affordable or because it's just not something that is feasible for them. She added that she would like to see that happen, because a number of people would appreciate that. If we want to continue to attract the IT professionals, people who are doing innovative things, they want an urban downtown that is vibrant, walk-able, that have things like zip-cars, and good transportation systems. The only way we can continue to have those things is if we develop more density. This is the way to create a vibrant downtown to build on what we already have.

Ms. Shore concluded by asking council to continue to talk to employees as well as residents. While she is an Ann Arbor resident, she also realizes that a lot of people coming into the downtown are visitors and employees that do not live in Ann Arbor. Their needs should also be taken into consideration because they are coming out here to enjoy the downtown and we do need to think about making this a vibrant place for them to come and enjoy as well.

NORM TYLER

Norm Tyler, 126 N. Division, said that he loves living downtown. It is a wonderful lifestyle and he does it by choice. He said that he would like to continue to live in the downtown the rest of his life. The A2D2 process has been a marvelous process. A2D2 has looked at a lot of details of what's happened in the city and have made some important adjustments. However, there was one part of the process that he is frustrated and very disappointed with. That is the fact that the E. Huron Street portion of the downtown has been designated as D1. Everywhere else in the town, there seems to be buffers to residential areas, but for some reason, this block has not been considered to be necessary. (A buffer to a very important residential district, a historic district that has many homes that give a very important character to the downtown.) He encouraged council to look beyond where the Planning Commission looked and consider this area for D2 designation rather than D1.

Mr. Tyler presented a sketch to give some indication of the kind of building that could be built on Huron. (A copy of the sketch is on file in the City clerk's office.) He added that council should incorporate the design review aspect as part of the zoning. There should be not only coordination between the zoning and the design review, but also cross referencing between the two documents. If zoning is passed without considering design review, it is very difficult to go back and do it later. They should be considered at the same time.

He added that there is a 15ft. setback from the property lines to the new buildings that was originally 30 ft. It should go back to 30 ft. at least. Mr. Tyler passed out a communication from the Ann Arbor Preservation Alliance that makes other points that are relevant to this as well. (A copy of the communication is on file in the City Clerk's Office.)

MARC GOLDSTEIN

Marc Goldstein, 1321 Forest Court, asked that as council deliberate and vote on the A2D2 Zoning proposals, to remember them and the significant effect that changing the zoning to encourage large scale development would have on his house, street and the neighborhood. He said that he was strongly opposed to designating South University a D1 downtown zone. He urged council to instead give it a D2 or preferably lesser zoning designation suitable to the low density retail street that it is currently.

He added that D1 would allow much taller and more massive buildings to be built right up against the small residential houses on his street and the adjacent neighborhood. He asked that council seriously consider the importance that buffers, rear and side setbacks have for adjacent residents and strongly urged them to make mandatory a setback of at least 50ft. in any direction from the property line of any residence on the base and the tower of any new buildings.

He said that at the Planning Commission level, it started out at a 15ft. set back and increased it to 30ft. He asked that council look at what 30ft. really is before considered designating a number for the setback. 15ft. is almost nothing, 30ft. is still a fairly small

amount and really contingent on whether it is for the people living on Huron Street or the people living behind South Forest. Anything less than 50ft. risks significantly degrading their privacy and their quality of life in a place where they have happily lived for more than 25 years. The health and life of central Ann Arbor depends not just on the present and future businesses there, but on the continued satisfaction of the people who live there, whether long-term or owners, or short-term or renters.

Mr. Goldstein concluded by asking that Council change the A2D2 proposal to take their property into account.

CHUCK WARPEHOSKI

Chuck Warpehoski, 2020 Winewood, thanked everyone involved in the process with putting together the A2D2 recommendations. He said that he appreciates the idea of trying to simplify and be clear about what we want our vision for the downtown to be. Part of the reason that he and his wife decided to move to Ann Arbor is because they've lived in places that spend a lot of their time feeling dead. They've lived in Washington, DC and there are areas of DC in the business sector, where after 6 o'clock, it's a ghost town. They've lived in suburbs and there are chunks of time where everyone is off work and it feels dead. That is part of why he is here today.

He added that the idea of having a community where it doesn't feel dead, that there are places where people can work, live, shop and play, is an important part of having a healthy community. The A2D2 recommendations help move us into making it easier to create good places to do all of those things. One of the pieces that Mr. Warpehoski did recognize is a tricky piece to get right is active uses, but does think it is an important one. Even in the Main Street area, there is a block that still feels dead because there are a lot of imposing buildings with structures that are not actively used. He recognizes the difficulty of getting it right, but that concept is one that is worth trying to figure how to do it and make it work.

BRUCE THOMSON

Bruce Thomson, 2582 White Oak Drive, speaking on behalf of family members who own the property at 413 E. Huron, said that he is very aware, involved, and sympathetic with some of the neighbors concerns. He understands why they do not want a high-rise. Mr. Thomson would like to develop the property and place a small downtown lifestyle mall there, but was not sure if that will happen without tenants, but that is the plan.

He addressed the notion that they are somehow going to do something to this part of town and make it different.

He said that it is already zoned C2AR, Commercial. He showed pictures of surrounding properties; Sloan Plaza, Campus Inn, City Hall, and across the way there is the 10-story parking building, a student dorm coming in and that is all in just one block. It is commercial

property and it was commercial when his grandfather bought it 80 years ago and it has been commercial ever since. It was commercial when Ray and the Tylers' brought their property near by. It has always been tall buildings with dense construction.

Mr. Thompson passed out a letter that talked more about this area. He said that they are in an office/hotel/government corridor; not a pedestrian-open space area, bound by two major traffic arteries, Huron and Division. They're surrounded by tall buildings to the east and west, next door to Sloan Plaza and Campus Inn and within one-half block of City/County government high-rises and hotels. This is an opportunity area for moving a surface parking lot, zoned C2A/R, the densest zoning, like much of the Core area, and unlike much of the Interface area. They have a FAR density currently; more than double the average for the other Interface areas.

He went on to say that they are not asking for anything new, just a continuation of their current entitlements. Given the small area in question and given the fact that half of this small area is already built far beyond the proposed specifications, the net effect is half a block that will be kept 180ft. lower than the rest of Huron Street.

For the last 20 years it has made sense to include their site in the Master Plan as a Core area. It still made sense in the Central Area Plan and still makes sense today to conform to the City's Master Plan and include this intensely used, high-rise, urban block in the Core area. The neighborhood concerns should be addressed through the use of design criteria, not a change in zoning.

PETER NAGOURNEY

Peter Nagourney, 914 Lincoln, said that South University should not be zoned D1 because simplifying zoning should not have a higher priority than preserving the integrity of unique neighborhoods. The Planning Department classifies South University in the same zone as the City Central Business District. Is South University contiguous geographically with downtown? No. Is the culture that of downtown? No. Is the architecture that of downtown? No.

South University's current proposed height was designed to match that of the 601 Forest project. That height was allowed because the developer took advantage of an unanticipated loop hole in the past zoning. Unfortunately it now appears that project may never be built because of financial and legal difficulties. So why impose zoning on South University that was based on a mistake and a phantom project?

Mr. Nagourney added that South University is not a downtown core zone. It is a neighborhood shopping strip and needs to be developed by increasing retail and residential density. The proposed D1 zoning would create serious problems, like a possible high-rise upon Washtenaw Avenue, an out of scale development impinging and imposing on a residential area. The solution is to give South University zoning that would achieve

everyone's goals, regionally scaled buildings with retail and residents to create density and encourage street life.

That could be D2 or a new zoning that recognizes and resolves unique problems of this important neighborhood shopping area. He concluded that he hopes council will act before this inappropriate zoning designation advances any further.

KERRY WIESNER

Kerry Wiesner, 2790 Kimberly Rd., said that she was born and raised in Ann Arbor. Her father grew up in the area and originally purchased the property on East Huron on the northside. It is now owned by 10 other family members. They are not a developer who is from out of town who doesn't care about the community. They are the community and this property means a lot to their family.

She thanked the Planning Commission for working with residents on Ann Street and wanted everyone to be aware that the owners are community members and that this is something that they are watching very closely and is also very important to them. When she thinks of the Huron Street she immediately thinks of D1 downtown and it should have tall buildings.

CHRIS CROCKETT

Chris Crockett, president of the 4th Ward Association, said that she encourages the density of the DDA area, adding a great deal to the vibrancy of the City of Ann Arbor. It is important to respect the character of Ann Arbor not only for the residents, but also for those who visit Ann Arbor because Ann Arbor is a special place with special character. She said that we need to preserve that and conserve it and make sure that we continue our development along that vein. She hopes to see future density in the DDA area with respect of the character that is not only in the downtown, but also surrounds the downtown in the traditional neighborhoods where she lives.

She added that is unfair to ask people to live in a constant state of darkness and lack of air and sunshine. Currently the buildings, which are pretty big, in the block of Huron Street under consideration, have an approximate 50ft. setback which does respect the lifestyle and the quality of life for the people who live on Ann Street, even though there are tall buildings or large buildings. We can come up with something that will allow the people to develop and yet allow people to live in their own homes.

This is a character district and it is important to have a character buffer to the character district. It has been done in other parts that abut other character districts. It is important to do this in the block Huron that abuts the Old 4th Ward Historic District.

Ms. Crockett said that she understands why people are outraged. It is not a pleasant thought to think that at some time in the future, we could have no more sun in our backyards and this is not fair. They are taxpayers, council works for them, they've paid our taxes for many, many years in this neighborhood and they deserve the respect of ensuring that their quality of life will continue because they think they contribute a great deal to the quality of life also in Ann Arbor.

She also urged council to pass the design guidelines. This too is another part of ensuring the character.

SUSAN FRIEDLANDER

Susan Friedlander, representing 1320 S. University owners, said that the A2D2 amendments are intended to benefit both the city as a whole, the residents as a whole and it does benefit the property owners as well. The increased density that is permitted under the amendments provides a creative way for this city to fight against the physical problems that most built up cities have. It allows for building up, and it allows us to take advantage of air space. U of M is not going out of business. It will continue to contract employment and housing needs. There has been a lot of misinformation regarding South University, the area surround it, and the true character of the area surrounding South University. She said that she does have specific facts and would present those to council in writing.

Statistically the area South University character area and the area surrounding it, is populated by housing units and households, 99-100% of the households within the South University character area and immediately surrounding are renter-occupied. The residential zoning districts to the east are intended for sororities, fraternities, and University use. The residential area to the south of Willard to Mumford is intense multiple family development. These are not single family residential districts with long-term residents. There has been less than 1% residential vacancy in this area. It is central to the University area. It was first rezoned not because of 601 S. Forest, but rezoned before that because of its character.

MARK ZAHN

Mark Zahn, 6431 Marshall Rd., representing his family and his father who owns a property at 401 E. Huron and 110 N. Division, thanked everyone for their hard work. He said that trying to strike a balance is what this is all about. A balance with the homeowners and the business owners.

Mr. Zahn said that their property has been in the family for 75 years and they have been taxpaying citizens as well and their rights should be represented. He asked that they are allowed to maintain their C2 zoning. The City Planning Commission came up with a decent proposal that allowed some building restrictions, and setback restrictions on the towers as well, and he thought those were appropriate.

Mr. Zahn concluded that they support the current City Planning Commission's ideas for the development of the property on East Huron.

LINDA BINKOW

Linda Binkow, resident of Sloan Plaza, said that the D2 designation around Sloan Plaza would be more appropriate for the area.

PETER ALLEN

Peter Allen, 2224 Applewood Ct., said that he came to Ann Arbor 40 years ago. He explained that the downtown rezoning is all about people and jobs in downtown. If you look at the initiatives that are ongoing right now, they're all impacted positively by this rezoning. At the Greenbelt Advisory Commission, 1000 acres were bought so far out in the townships. They have another \$9 million left to purchase more. The market is working for us to help preserve more green space. The commission is trying to create more of a local food shed that would benefit downtown and create more emphasis to live downtown and enjoy the pastoral setting and the farm setting around the city.

Work has been going on with the Allen Creek Greenway for years in trying to tie our neighborhoods to the riverfront. Progress is being made with 415 W. Washington as a starting point. There was an RFP process there that's ongoing and ready for the next step from City Council. There are three bidders on that that are all eager to continue to work and began to make that the first step of the Allen Creek Greenway to link up along the tracks and get to the riverfront. Next, talks will begin about the riverfront itself and public discussion is beginning to occur on Argo Pond. This is a wonderful step forward. Again, linking the pedestrians to downtown will benefit people living downtown.

Council has passed the emphasis of redoing Division and Fifth Avenue to be much more pedestrian friendly. The East/West Rail now has a specific date to ribbon cut on East/West Railroad from Detroit to Ann Arbor. The date is October 25, 2010 at 11 o'clock.

The City, the University, the DDA and the AATA have agreed on \$650,000.00 to begin to look at a downtown trolley, connecting various parts of campus, and connecting around Plymouth Road, and Pfizer.

There is also proposed rezoning of commercial properties along the Plymouth Road corridor and along the State Road corridor. All of this supports the idea of having more people and more jobs in the downtown.

SEAN ZIETA

Sean ZIETA, 633 Church, said that if we do not create greater density downtown, smaller low density areas will pop up which Ann Arbor would not like since they went with the initiative for the greenbelt. He added that we have a responsibility and if people are going to be attracted to the area, living space will be needed in order to protect the outer region so there is not an urban sprawl. One area in particular that would benefit by greater density is the South University area. The area is under utilized and with greater density we can provide a lot of office space, retail space and living quarters for a whole diverse set of individuals.

He concluded by asking that we keep in mind the importance of sustainable development. He would like to have a commitment to council that we would be instituting such initiatives as well as for council to require us to do the same. Lead standards are coming under issues with federal laws; there are still many things that can be done to hold our feet to the fire to make not only high density but sustainable development that would be good for people, businesses as well as the environment.

ALICE RALPH

Alice Ralph, 1607 E. Stadium Blvd., said that she would like for council to consider some clarifying reservations that are needed along with the development of coordinated design guidelines. First, define downtown as an economic entity, having the TIFF district boundaries established with the DDA. Define core as a contiguous historic city from which the city expanded well within the economic boundary. South University is not core. Identify flood zones, according to the most recent adopted maps. Designate public land as such on all maps. Provide review of development in flood way zones in the context of character areas and according to special requirements of flood mitigation. Restrict new building developments in flood way zones. Align new zoning district boundaries with the DDA boundaries, but avoid bleeding out from or intersection with them. In general, there are new concentric zoning district boundaries to fall in a public right of way, aiming density to the core. Maintain or expand existing local historic districts with survey, study and regulatory review. Identify neighborhoods or character areas based on established patterns of development including social history and visual character elements.

Recognize that context is not limited by boundaries. In general, there are no bullet character area and historic district boundaries to fall in tern to a block. Consider an area premium for right-of-ways, expansion where public walk-ways are less than the optimal, 16ft. adjacent to the active use areas.

State legislation is being considered to give communities broader leeway regarding lead-like design requirements and Ann Arbor should do it now. An integrated development agreement system will not solve all of our development problems, but it can free us to address more open. In order to develop on that development system that fulfils public expectations, zoning amendments must be driven by community based plan and

accompanied by expressive design guidelines. The development process must not include not only early participation but also compliance with formal and professional design review, nothing less will satisfy.

NEWCOMBE CLARK

Newcombe Clark, 113 W. Liberty, thanked everyone who has put so much time and effort into what's been accomplished so far. He said that we have a lot of goals that many agree on; density, affordable housing, increase public transportation, sustainable design, historic preservation and protecting the characters of neighborhoods. It's a great wish list and now is the time where we're going to actually see where the rubber hits the road in plans.

He added that we need to seriously look at whether it's possible to achieve these goals. Can we afford these goals? He urged council to form a committee, and do whatever it takes to get the impartial voice. He suggested talking to bankers, brokers, architects, and construction people. It is going to be difficult to achieve these goals without really understanding these things that we are proposing to do.

Mr. Clark went on to say that we could wait for the market to self-adjust and create these guidelines and eventually the land will go. The developers are somewhat like sharks, they have to keep moving or they die. At the end of the day we may not be able to afford waiting as long as that will take. We learned this morning that nothing is sacred here in Ann Arbor. The world will change, the city will change and there will be sacrifices and we can pretend that is not the case and let those choices be made for us and not having put on what we have input on what we will have to sacrifice or we can move forward with our eyes open and choose what is truly important and what will help us move this forward.

U of M can provide a great quality of life, but it is does not guarantee it. South Bend, IN. and New Haven, CT. are two prominent universities with downtowns that are lacking. Council is at the point where they will review financial considerations when it comes to setbacks and stacking and boundaries; all the things that at the end of the day will determine what gets built.

SUSAN MORRISON

Susan Morrison, spoke on behalf of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. The nonprofit entity holds a historic preservation easement on a group of properties located on East Washington between Division and Fifth. They are very concerned about the adverse affect that the A2D2 zoning amendments will have on these properties. The amendments will eliminate the setbacks which would adjoin these properties as well as other national registered properties in the city and allow greater density and thus greater height. Their concern is having high-rises that would overshadow the historic buildings. The proposed master downtown plan has admirable goals for protecting historic buildings. There is language regarding establishing priorities for the protection of important historic structures

and it must be established in compatibility with the existing development, and context must be encouraged in the design of new buildings. It talks about positive transitions of scale and height. The problem with the zoning amendments is that it does not anywhere implement these goals. There is no positive transition in scale and height and it would be an incredible disservice to these buildings and historic treasures that make Ann Arbor what it is, to pass this version of the amendments.

Ms. Morrison asked that council consider points submitted in a memo submitted before this meeting from the Ann Arbor Preservation Alliance which also addresses the protection of national registered properties as well as historic districts. She suggested that since historic charm is what brings people to downtown Ann Arbor, it makes economic sense to take a close look at protecting those. Given the state of the economy right now, there is time to do this right, so they urged council not to pass the amendments until careful look is taken to make sure they get it right on protecting historic structures.

BOB SNYDER

Bob Snyder, 525 Elm St., said he started thinking about what it would be like to indeed have a core density in the Ann Arbor downtown area. Projecting ahead to when it will come about, he wonders how this area would be represented at City Council. He urged council to start thinking ahead 10-20 years and one or more of council or their successors might actually live in the downtown area, the ward boundaries may be redrawn, that they would have representation as a core of Ann Arbor. It is a long ways away before we get there, but it is something to consider.

REBECCA LOPEZ KRISS

Rebecca Lopez Kriss, 800 W. Huron urged council to adopt the A2D2 Zoning and Parking Amendments. She has also spoke at the Planning Commission meetings in favor of the active role that the city is taking. Cities will not sit still, or stand still or be the way that they are. She hopes that council will be brave in making their decisions that will keep Ann Arbor relevant now, in 2060 and 2110. She pointed out that density the key.

She added that she hopes we are able to reach compromises that make people understand why some D1 zoning is necessary. She said that a couple things are market driven and it is not a reality that will happen tomorrow if A2D2 is passed. This is something that we are looking at for 50 years down the road. We have the opportunity to build scene in our town which is necessary for its survival.

BETSY PRICE

Betsy Price, 905 Olivia, said that South University needs help. It is a prime location for diverse populations to work, shop, eat and live. Yet it has vacant and unkempt buildings and

there is great room for appropriate growth. City Planners, the Planning Commission and City Council seem surprised when various factors permitted the 601 Forest project to be assembled. Some councilmembers expressed dissatisfaction with the plan and were reluctant that they could do nothing to stop the project; it was out of their hands. Responsibility is now squarely in the hands of City Council to set the stage for South University. This is the time to plan for future growth, without sacrificing the character and the draw of this unique neighborhood. Nonconforming structures must not be used to justify future standards. University Towers is an unattractive building. Additional tall buildings will not make it any more appealing.

Recently the height of 601 Forest, a neighborhood insensitive building, was used as a basis for setting new height standards for the South University district. Please do not use this aberration to destroy the character of an entire neighborhood. Instead of replicating an unpopular anomaly like University Towers look, to buildings with charm and detail like the Amsterdamer (sp) on South University. It fits within the scale and the context of South U. It meets the goals of increasing residential density and providing first floor retail commerce. Zoning South University as D2 would be a substantial increase in density, but would respect the rights of all residents and visitors to sunlight and would provide an inviting pedestrian-friendly ambiance to support businesses.

ADAM BLANCK

Adam Blanck, 921 E. University, a senior at the University of Michigan, said that he has lived in Michigan his entire life and have seen many of his peers leave the state after graduation. All of his friends that are graduating in May want to leave and go to Chicago and New York and not stay in Michigan. In his opinion, that has been one of the big reasons for the economic decline in our state. With this proposal, Ann Arbor has the option to drive economic resurgence in the state of Michigan. People his age want to live in dense areas. They want to have things at their fingertips. They want to be able to walk downstairs and get the mixed uses of retail and restaurants and have life. He believes the proposals can make Ann Arbor a vibrant city and cause people like him who are 22 and graduating from the University of Michigan to not look at places like Chicago and New York, but look at Ann Arbor and stay here and create economic vitality for the State.

ANDREA VANHOUELING

Andrew VanHouweling, 920 Lincoln, asked if allowing tall buildings up to the current proposed 176ft. will promote or defeat the mutual goals of the merchants, the neighbors, and the city to revitalize the South University retail area? One of the arguments for allowing tall buildings is the prevailing opinion that developers can only afford to build tall or not at all because the price of land is high. However, enacting this zoning may be a self-fulfilling prophecy because the legal right to build that tall will drive land prices even higher. It practically ensures that only tall buildings will be deemed profitable to build on South University far into the future. Might the city be zoning a catch 22 situation? Setting a

building height limit of 176ft. may mean that no new development takes place in the South University retail area. If local competition from a number of soon to be open luxury apartments and dormitories is too great, if student demand for this kind of housing turns out to be low, if students are unable to afford this type of living in our new economic environment it is conceivable that no more large residential structures will be built in the area.

As long as the property owners on South University hold out the hope of selling their land to a developer or a future high-rise land development, land prices will remain too steep for more modest developments; those that are more financially realistic and less likely to fail. If instead, the maximum height of buildings were capped at 6-8 stories, land prices would reflect this reality and smaller buildings with ground floor retail would be built.

Development on this scale would preserve the unique character of this local area, blend into the surrounding neighborhoods and help achieve the mutual goals of the merchants, neighbors, and the city to develop and revitalize the South University area while increasing the number of residents.

Ms. VanHouweling passed out a paper that examines this issue in more detail and thanked Council for considering her point of view. (A copy is on file in the City Clerk's Office.)

JOHN FLOYD

John Floyd, 519 Sunset Rd., offered four elements to round off some of the sharper cores of the present A2D2 plan. At last fall's Old Westside Candidate forum, Mayor Hieftje advocated a 14-story limit on building height in downtown. He supports the Mayor's position on that. Second, if we are going to increase the population of people living downtown we need to have some kind of green space for people to recreate without having to get into their car and drive someplace else. We should look for some place we can make some kind of downtown park. He suggested driving to Birmingham and looking at their downtown. The Allen Creek Greenway could be a place to start. It is not enough if you want to make downtown a nice place to live 15 years from now so that things like Ashley Terrace don't slide into section-8 housing. Third, a D2 type height limit on the boundary of historic zones; Councilmember Briere has talked about the importance of boundaries in historic districts. That would go along towards mitigating many of the community reservations about building heights downtown if we protected all of the historic zones. Lastly, in round numbers, there are no city residents who support D1 zoning for South University zoning. Council should respect that.

There being no further comments, the Mayor declared the comment session closed.