

Zoning and Annexation Committee Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers, John Knisely Centre
October 10, 2016

The Zoning and Annexation Committee meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. Committee members in attendance were Mr. Darrin Lautenschleger, Mrs. Aimee May, and Mrs. Cheryl Ramos, Committee Chair. The Chair announced that the meeting would be recorded. Guests attending were: Chris Rhodes and James Stephens (Residents and Property Owners), Sam Hitchcock (Council President), Dean Holland, Kelly Ricklic, and John Zucal (Council members); Mayor Joel B. Day, Council Clerk Julie Courtright, and Service Director Ron McAbier. Present for part of the meeting: Rob Maurer (Councilman).

PURPOSE: To discuss proposed Ordinance 14-2016; the expansion of the Central Business District by rezoning the residential area on Fair Ave NW from 2nd Drive and Ray Ave NW to 3rd St NW and the residential area on 3rd St SW to Bank Lane SW and 2nd Drive SW to the railroad tracks to Central Business.

The Chair noted that all Council had previously received a map, a list of property owners affected, the Planning Commission meeting minutes concerning this re-zone. All property owners were invited to attend this Committee meeting via a letter from the Chair with the announcement of the meeting. A map was visible for all attendees to see the area in question was referenced throughout. Mayor Day explained that the idea behind the re-zone proposal was to give residents/property owners more options to use their properties and to improve the appearance of the blighted areas. Service Director McAbier added that this plan would square up the zoning of the Central Business District on the map and try to get away from spot zoning.

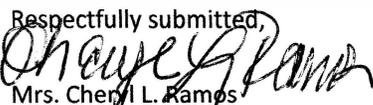
Resident and property owner Chris Rhodes asked what the dual purpose would be, if his property taxes would increase as a result of a re-zoning and what the purpose was behind this proposal. Resident and property owner James Stephens voiced the same questions and asked if the business district downtown was out of room for business. The Mayor answered, "No." He also answered that the reason to change the zoning was not to increase taxes.

Discussion ensued concerning blight, purposes of rezoning the area, city ordinances not being followed, enforcing city codes, the need for some teeth in the current building and zoning codes, visible violations (e.g. inside furniture on outside porches, rodents), not hindering natural evolution of neighborhoods, and the possible need for an architectural plan(ner) for planning of the City, and Heritage Homes in the planned re-zone area. Mr. Holland said that the City needs a master plan (Mayor Day responded that Master Plan is being worked on), Mrs. May asked if observed violations need to be reported and to whom (the Service Director asked that they be reported to him), Mr. Zucal expressed concern that the building inspector should be going around the community to check violations and that temporary landmarks should not be used as boundary markers (such as the railroad tracks in proposed Ordinance 14-2016). Mr. Lautenschleger noted that, in the past, railroad tracks have been removed for the creation of trails and suggested contacting Dan Rice of the Ohio to Erie Trail and Rod Kirkendall of the Tuscarawas County Heritage Homes Association for planning considerations.

Mr. Rhodes stated that he lives close to the school and wants to remain in the neighborhood. Mayor Day had previously recommended that the Committee should not go forward with this proposal at this time and that it should go back to the Planning Commission for further consideration and given concerns raised by staff in the Service Director's office. The Chair advised the residents/property owners that the intent was to keep them well informed in advance of the intentions and/or plans of Council. Mr. Zucal agreed that this should be sent back to the planning commission but that the intent should be examined as to economic development or to preserve the neighborhoods and how to achieve that goal.

Mr. Lautenschleger moved that the Committee accept the recommendation of Mayor Joel Day to request that proposed Ordinance 14-2016 be referred back to the City Planning Commission for further review, consideration, and refinement according to the concerns identified by the Committee and City Administration.

Mrs. May seconded. All voted yea, none opposed. As there was no other matter that to come before the Committee, Mrs. May moved for adjournment at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Cheryl L. Ramos

Chairwoman, Zoning and Annexation Committee

A recording of this meeting is available from the Council Clerk.