

**City of Columbus  
Neighborhood Meeting  
Humber Street and 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE  
April 22, 2019**

The Mixed Use Designation Neighborhood Meeting for the City of Columbus was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Preiner at the City Hall. Present were Council Members Denny Peterson, Janet Hegland, Jeff Duraine, and Shelly Logren. City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, City Engineer Dennis Postler, and Public Communications Coordinator Jessica Hughes.

Also in attendance were: Andrew Rineck, Peggy Peterson, Michele Betz, Barb Bobick, Joe Bazey, Kris King and Paul Peskar.

**Motion by Duraine to approve the agenda. Seconded by Peterson. Motion carried unanimously.**

**PRESENTATION:**

Overview of City Council 04.03.19 Workshop Discussion

Mursko began by summarizing what was discussed at the Council's 04.03.19 workshop. The City submitted their 2040 Comprehensive Plan in December of 2018. The Comprehensive Plan is a long-term vision for the City and what kind of investments and developments will happen in Columbus. Since then the Metropolitan Council returned the Comprehensive Plan, saying some items must be amended. At their workshop the Council discussed how to respond to the letter from the Met Council.

The letter requests that the City consider replacing the suburban residential overlay with more definitive locations for mixed use. When conversation came up about mixed use with the possible expansion of the Garage Solution Condominiums, the Council determined that they would like to meet with landowners in the area to hear their perspective on the possibility of mixed use in the area.

What is a Mixed Use?

Interim City Planner Haila Maze presented a PowerPoint about what mixed use is and some history. She said the City is interested in hearing how the neighborhood feels about the possibility because they live and/or work in the area.

Maze started the presentation by stating the rural residential areas of the City are staying the same. There are some changes occurring in the Freeway District and the City is looking at adding mixed use in the commercial/industrial area off Lake Drive.

She continued to explain what mixed use is. Mixed use is an old concept that has been around for centuries and is becoming popular again. Mixed uses on a site should work well together to create a cross functional site, ensuring compatibility of uses. Mixed use can be done vertically or horizontally across a site, and not every lot has to be mixed use.

There are typically limitations on the types of non-residential uses that are allowed. In the neighborhood of 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Humber Street a mixed use density of 1-8 units per acre is being considered. Maze explained that this is small scale residential density.

The three questions considered at the neighborhood meeting were:

- What parcels should be guided for mixed use?
- Should there be different commercial uses allowed that are different from what is allowed in the commercial industrial district now?
- What is the appropriate housing density?

At this time questions were taken from the audience.

### **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:**

#### Will businesses be allowed in the current Garage Solution Condominiums?

No. The current Garage Solutions Condominiums (GSC) has a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for ministorage, which would not allow for any businesses to be run from that location. In addition, it is recommended that the current GSC lots be designated as mixed use in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Joe Bazey (CEO of GSC) commented that he does not want the current condos to be used for residential purposes.

#### **How is this change beneficial to current residents?**

This change essentially would allow for current residents to sell their home as residential, commercial, or as residential with a business on site. In addition, if current residents wanted to sell their home for residential purposes, this change would make it possible to rebuild a home on the site. As the zoning currently stands, when you resell for residential purposes a new home cannot be built.

Some residents noted that they have no interest in selling their property so the benefit of being able to sell to more people is not applicable to them. The Council noted that under current rules residents can sell to either a business or a single family, so it is possible for a business to move in next door to a residence. This change expands the group of possible buyers, which could decrease the likelihood of a large business moving in next door to the current residents and opens the possibility of selling to smaller “mom and pop” type businesses.

Mursko noted that from a City Council perspective, the mixed use designation offers a transition from residential to commercial. The mixed use designation would allow the opportunity to add additional regulations for a mixed use business located in the area. Things like additional screening and more intense design standards can be required for each business’ application

Residents expressed their concern that the Council will break promises that are made because of treatment in the past. They feel as if their rights as residents have been slowly taken away and are frustrated that the area has been consistently building up for the past 10 years. Mayor Preiner noted that the reality is they live in a commercial district that will continue to be built up.

Residents understood and reiterated that they want the Council to listen to their concerns and address them.

**Will residents be required to pay for paving 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE or Humber Street?**

When development occurs the City generally requires adjacent roads to be improved. However, it is too early on in the process to tell if and/or how these roads will be paved. Mursko noted that in the past some developers have contributed financially to the improvement of a road, which would decrease the amount in assessments given to residents.

Residents expressed concerns about losing trees and paying for an inflated percentage of the project costs. Mursko explained that the City no longer assesses based off linear feet, the new process assigns assessments based on subdividable acres.

The Council added that they are not pursuing the mixed use designation as a means to pave the road. Paving the road is a separate issue that will be dealt with at a later time.

**How will this affect traffic on 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Humber Street?**

Residents expressed concern over a possible increase in traffic on 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Humber Street because people already drive very fast on the road and create a dangerous situation, especially because there is no stop sign at the intersection of 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Humber Street. Mursko explained that there are a number of intersections in Columbus that do not have stop signs. The Council would have to have a discussion with Public Works to see if a stop sign would be warranted on that intersection.

**How would the change in zoning affect property taxes?**

Mursko said that this change alone likely wouldn't affect property taxes because the land is already being valued at a commercial rate.

**What uses will be allowed in this new district?**

The Council is currently working on zoning changes as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan, not defining uses. Zoning districts must be defined in the Comprehensive Plan before uses are defined in the City's ordinances. The Council will go through a process to write new uses and design criteria for the district. Mursko noted that all businesses which apply to locate in this mixed use district will have to go through a permitting process and be required to follow conditions associated with the permit.

**Why does the zoning have to change before any decisions are made about allowable uses?**

Mixed use designations must be approved in the Comprehensive Plan before changes are made to City Ordinances regarding allowable uses. The Council noted that residents can be a part of the discussion when uses for this district are drafted. Without the change in the Comprehensive Plan, mixed uses cant be added to City Ordinances. The City is legally required to have Ordinances that are consistent with what is laid out in their Comprehensive Plan.

**Are there other mixed use areas in the City?**

Mursko explained that this is the first time Columbus is considering adding mixed use to the City's zoning districts. This version of the Comprehensive Plan shows mixed use off 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Humber Street as well as three other areas in the Freeway District.

### **How will density be controlled?**

The density in this district is partially limited by the absence of public utilities. The number of people living on a property will be limited by the size of septic system and well that can be built on the site. Bazey noted that he wants to construct 6 buildings with 12 living units, and the actual density will be closer to 0-3 units per acre, rather than the proposed 1-8 units per acre. He added that there are no plans to add a new access point off Lake Drive.

### **What parcels should be designated as mixed use?**

It was explained that the mixed use designation would be for all properties on the east side of Humber Street NE and some on the north side of 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (addresses 7013, 7035, and 7060). Thus, the current GSC condominiums and other businesses in the area would not be designated as mixed use.

Overall, residents in attendance were either unsure or in favor of the change in designation. Mursko noted that the Council will need to make a decision by the Council meeting on 04.24.19.

**Motion by Hegland direct Interim City Planner Haila Maze to include a mixed use land use designation in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for all addressed properties east of Humber Street NE as well as properties north of 135<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE including 7013 and 7035 and 7060. Seconded by Duraine. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **CLOSING REMARKS:**

The City Council thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said that they will be discussing the Comprehensive Plan further at their 04.24.19 meeting.

Meeting ended at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Hughes, Public Communications Coordinator