

FROM: Joel Gratz, Homeowner
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TO: Madison Plan Commission

RE: Demolition approval of 2202 E. Johnson Street

DATE: 4/11/2011

The use proposed for the redevelopment of 2202 E. Johnson Street is entirely inconsistent with the neighboring properties and community.

There are numerous problems and issues associated with this proposed use of 2202 E. Johnson St., enough of which to suggest that it ought to be wholly rejected. In fact the Report to the Plan Commission notes that in the Neighborhood Plan it was recommended that this lot be rezoned entirely which would ensure more appropriate use of this property.

Ultimately, the major concerns rest mainly on Conditional Use Standard 3 of how this would impact the uses, values and enjoyment of neighboring property.

The entire surrounding neighborhood is residential in both character and zoning. The only exception is a neighboring commercial building which houses a church that produces little traffic or has any other negative impact on the residents of the area and the presence of East High School across the street. There are no other commercial buildings in the immediate vicinity.

The proposed use for the new construction essentially would be a fast food location in the midst of a residential neighborhood. This inconsistent use will challenge the residential character of the neighborhood in many ways and while the developers and owners of the store have been gracious in trying to address those concerns, it remains that it is not appropriate to have a fast food store at this location.

Among the many concerns:

- Increased crime. Police representatives have noted that because the business will not primarily face Johnson Street and will sit essentially on a dead end that it could be subject to more crime than other locations. Someone committing a crime has an easy foot getaway from the proposed store.
- Increased garbage and litter.
- Increased loitering.
- Increased traffic at an already congested intersection. The traffic on Johnson Street is uncontrolled at this intersection with the exception of recently installed flashing pedestrian crossing lights. There are times of the day where crossing Johnson Street or turning off of Fourth Street in either direction is very difficult. With the pedestrian traffic associated with the school, there is already significant

risk of accident and injury at this corner. Adding a fast food store with more vehicle traffic as well as delivery vehicles during certain times of day will add significantly to this risk. Finally, the store as currently designed does not include any dedicated parking and should the public parking be completely occupied as it can be at various times, could cause the delivery drivers to double park or stop in the flow of traffic. No approval should be made without requiring parking dedicated to the businesses.

- Both the size and design of the building will be inconsistent with surrounding residential buildings (mainly single family homes). The building will almost completely fill the lot and be of a design that is essentially a mini “strip mall” in appearance. The building described would fit in just perfectly about a half mile away on some sections of East Washington Avenue, but will stand out tremendously next to the modest homes of the neighborhood.
- In the evening this corner is a dimly lit, quiet street. The existence of a fast food establishment will bring increased lighting and distracting signage, which takes away from the residential character of the neighborhood.

Public policy implication

Business should not be locating or encouraged to locate to create distractions from the regular school environment. Our school leaders work hard to keep the students attention at the school and in the school building physically during the day and have made great strides in this respect in recent years. Our policy makers should not be encouraging business location which seeks to draw them away from the school environment.