

Date: May 6, 2019

To: Mr. Chris Fletcher, AICP

From: Chris Rogers, AICP 

Subject: **Small Area Plan: Public Meeting Notes**
Area 5 Public Forum #1 – April 17, 2019

Meeting Start Time: 6:00pm

Meeting End Time (at Jones Place): 8:00pm

Sign-in sheet attached (late arrivals may not have signed in).

The listening session lasted to approximately 7pm followed by the walking tour. Approximately 15 residents took part in the walking tour.

1) Presentation – Below is a summary of the slides presented at the meeting:

- Goals
 - Introduce Area 5 and zoning issues
 - Listening session on key issues and concerns
 - Walk the area with participants to get first hand input and insight
- Why prepare small area plan
 - Identified in Comprehensive Plan
 - Appendix A of 2013 Comp Plan
 - List of 2013 Comp Plan Recommendations
 - Neighborhood-level approach
 - Benefits:
 - Represent stakeholder and community vision
 - Provide neighborhood-scale recommendations
 - Enable proactive planning for neighborhoods
 - Guide investment for transportation, housing, environmental protection, open space, and other categories as defined through the process.
- Small area plan process
 - Phase One: Inventory and Analysis
 - Phase Two: Plan Development
 - Phase Three: Planning Commission Review
- Existing Conditions
 - Encompasses 13 acres and 61 parcels
 - Comprised of single-family, two-family, townhouses and multi-family

- 25 parcels and 2.4 acres are vacant
- 32 parcels are zoned R-1A; 30 parcels are zoned R-2
- 106 renter-occupied units; 3 owner-occupied units
- A property owner application is under review by the City to rezone area between First Avenue, Stewart Street, and Jones Avenue
- Considerations for Further Study
 - Permitting of very modest increases in density of two-family and townhouse housing
 - Provide incentives to assemble and consolidate realty
 - Discouragement of continued added density of single-family dwellings
 - Establish appropriate design standards
 - Improved infrastructure supporting slightly higher densities and increase supply of on-site parking
- Next Steps:
 - Stakeholder Interviews
 - Scenario Plan Development (3)
 - Technical Advisory Group Input
 - Community Forum #2
 - Revise Scenario Plan(s), as appropriate
 - Planning Commission Consideration

2) Public Comments – Listening Session / Area Walk – The following represents a summary of the comments received during the Listening Session as well as the Area Walk. We have taken the liberty of organizing the comments into various categories to avoid repetition and to provide a more coherent summary.

Design / Community Character:

- Concerned that an eight-story 80-foot-tall building could be built in the R-3 with a conditional use from the Board of Zoning Appeals under current zoning regulations. Concerns included impacts on community character, views, property values.
- An option could be a zoning ordinance amendment to eliminate potential increase in height in the R-3 as a conditional use.
- The area is centrally located and connected to community assets. For example, residents can walk or easily drive to the WVU's main campus, the downtown, the Law Center, football stadium, the Children's Hospital, and area industries and businesses, among others.

- Concerned about traffic, especially on Stewart Street, which is already backed up. Noted that even if residents / students have the opportunity to walk, that most drive because of the hills and sometimes weather conditions.
- Concerned about how development will affect the community.
- Concerned about high density and student housing encroachment on established neighborhoods. Did not want Jones Place townhouse developments.
- Little off-street parking available.
- Sound (especially from parties, construction, vehicles) travel up the hill and into the neighborhood.
- Need for more strict code enforcement to address building code violations.
- The R-2 is a buffer between the higher density R-3 and PUD zones and the single-family R-1A zone.
- R1-A helps prevent multi-unit rental encroachment and was specifically designed to preserve existing communities.
- Not against redevelopment, but against rezoning and up-zoning, and the unstable geology.
- People want to be near the community center and senior center and other community amenities.
- People are moving back to the neighborhood.

Housing:

- Need affordable, workforce housing in the City, and Wiles Hill/Highland Park could be an ideal place for that.
- R-1A and R-2 may provide opportunity for workforce housing.
- Affordable means having housing available that is commensurate with their income levels.
- Chamber of Commerce has a study of housing for the Big 12 university cities.
- Wiles Hill/Highland Park is a great, diverse and affordable place neighborhood to live.
- Believe there is demand for quality single-family homes and neighborhoods, and Wiles Hill neighborhood provides the opportunity to meet that demand.
- There is concern that student housing developments will hinder the desire to move to / reside in the neighborhood.
- Also concerned that student housing developments will hinder the desire to convert former single-family homes, now two-family or multi-family rental homes, back to single-family homes.
- Believe the rental occupancy data and map do not accurately reflect the actual occupancy conditions of the area. While the records show a home is rented, the home could still be a long-time residents.
 - Examples: renter is a family member of the owner, the unit is rented by a family, or the owner resides in one unit and rents out the other unit.

- Great place to live for workers and mixed income levels. Concern that there are many places in Morgantown that are too expensive to live.
- Not enough affordable single-family, move-in ready quality homes in the City.
- Two-family homes may be fine on Lorentz Avenue.
- New professors cannot find appropriate housing within the City.
- Zoning currently does not allow accessory units / granny flats.

Slope and soil stability:

- Very concerned about the “geography” [geology], that it is not stable to support any development.
- USDA has the area mapped as very limited for supporting structures and excavations, and very concerned that the slope and soil can not support development, especially higher density development such as townhouses and multifamily buildings.
- The Indian word Monongahela means “falling banks” because of the instability of the soil.
- Want assurance of protection of neighborhood.
- A zoning overlay could give more consideration to the unstable geology.
- AECOM staff did not know what Building Code the City used.
- Residents reported slippages during development and post-development that had to be addressed with retaining wall.

General / Procedural:

- Concerned that the planning process results have already been pre-determined by the City.
- Believe the study is not an open review of all alternatives. Believe it is already a City goal to have the property developed.
- One participant stated the process is a “fake consult” – Everybody talks and everybody listens, but the residents get burned.
- Asked if a geotechnical study to determine bearing capacity was going to be done first that would inform the planning study. AECOM stated that a geotechnical study is not within the current planning scope nor is such a detailed study typically part of a planning process.
- Concerned that 2 Community Forums is insufficient; more specifically, as scheduled, there will not be another Community Forum until after the alternative scenarios are created.
- Recommended a design charrette where the residents could offer input on the uses and design, rather than responding to scenarios conceived by the City.
- Concerned that entire planning process is flawed in its consideration of existing zoning and not existing uses.
- Ignoring data that people want single-family homes.

- Need market analysis for housing for retirees, families, and students.

Other

- Background Information for Study Area #5 was provided to AECOM by Frank Scafella of the Wiles Hill-Highland Park Neighborhood Association:
 - "Leadership in Crisis": presentation on the origin of R1-A zoning for Morgantown's older residential neighborhoods.
 - "Chapter 2": a more detailed exposition on R1-A zoning;
 - "Abandoned Wiles Hill Elementary School": retrofitted by neighborhood-city collaboration as Senior & Community Center for more sustainable R1-A community.
- Campus Neighborhoods Revitalization Corporation (CNRC) formed by City Council in 2001 for revitalization of WVU Campus Neighborhoods, including Wiles Hill.
 - Mission Statement: CNRC for Campus Neighborhoods.
 - Comprehensive Plan for Revitalization of Sunnyside: biggest and most blighted neighborhood of 150 acres; first to be addressed as a TIF District; over \$200 million of private sector and TIF Infrastructure funds invested to date (2017)
 - Wiles Hill request to CNRC for priority in next step of revitalization: Sunnyside pretty much completed.
- Public Service Vita.
- Residential Market Analysis for Sunnyside; April 8, 2015

Small Area Plan #5 – City of Morgantown
Public Forum #1
Wiles Hill Community Center
Wednesday, April 15, 2019 6:00 PM

Sign-In Sheet

Name	Address	Email or Phone
Barb Howe	432 Riley	bhowe@wvu.edu
Dave Harshbarger	1009 Vandalia Rd	harshbargerd@gmail.com
Jane Lefevre	301 Raymond St	jane.LLEFEVRE@mail.wvu.edu
William E. Blaser	127 Wilbur Dale Rd.	
Jimmie Annina	" "	
Maude Sander	37 HIGHLAND AVE	WVUDUDE@AOL.COM
Bette Bryant	36 Highland	mothface@hotmail.com
Jenna Rowley	56 Highland	jlow612@gmail.com
Zack Cruze	600 Jones Ave	Cruzezc@gmail.com
Sharon Wolfe	104 Hoffman Ave	
CHARLIE BYRER	420 Raymond St.	charliebyrer@gmail.com
Linda Morton	436 Center St.	rainspours@comcast.net
FRANK SCAFELLA	346 VIRGINIA AVE	FAS4@LABS.NET
PATRICIA JOHNSON	521 OVERHILL ST.	WILDHILL CLAM @ G.M.A. 50%
Bill Wyant	505 OVERHILL ST	william.wyant@comcast.net
NORMA WYANT	505 Overhill St	NORMAWYANT@COMCAST.NET
FRED HAGEDORN	280 EUREKA DR.	grumps_fred@yahoo.com
Nadine Kelly	4406 Overhill St	
Joyce Harris	530 Center St	
Catherine Lozier	345 Virginia Ave	clozier@gmail.com
Lori Mueller	307 Raymond St (rental)	lorimuelkr2003@yahoo.co.

