

Minority Opinions

BAUER

. I respect anyone's right to express an idea on what could be built on the St. Andrew site. Obviously there are differing opinions on what is appropriate to build on this site and those opinions should, and must, be allowed to be expressed.

I also respect anyone's right, therefore, to offer an alternative development to the Maxwell Proposal. Such an alternative development should be well thought out in terms of financial viability, should name a developer who is willing to take any risk associated with any proposed project, and should adhere to the objectives of the newly rewritten Comprehensive Plan.

The Bauer proposal is an IDEA, but it is not a viable alternative development option, and it should not even be considered by the Council, for the following reasons:

He has shown us no financial data to substantiate the success of his plan

He has admitted that he has no developer. Hence, we have no idea of how the buildings will look, we have no idea of what building materials will be used, we have no idea whether the project will achieve LEED certification. In short, there are many more questions than answers, due to the fact that he has not submitted a development plan.

His idea does not provide the principals of a Walkable/Liveable Community, a concept that many of our citizens have expressed a desire to achieve.

His idea provides us with condos and parking lots, but no shared Community Space, another concept advocated by the Smart Growth philosophy and embraced by many of our citizens.

In short, this is a very detailed Rezoning Amendment for private property not owned by the proposer of this amendment, and as far as we know he has shown no initiative to purchase the property, and there is no definitive development plan.

While this procedure is legal, after talking with Planning and Zoning officials at several Iowa cities, all expressed the opinion that such a submission is highly unusual. One stated he had never seen this in his career. One described this as Speculative Zoning, which is not even allowed to be brought before the Council for consideration.

If Mr. Bauer would show his intent to purchase the St. Andrew property and/or has a developer who would more fully develop Mr. Bauer's idea, and then would submit an application, then I think the Zoning Commission should consider the plan, and then possibly forward it on to the City Council for consideration. Until that time, this is not a viable proposal.

I would urge the Council to vote against the Bauer Proposal, for the reasons I have just stated.

MAXWELL

On behalf of the minority opinion, I urge the City Council to approve the revised Maxwell development proposal

The Maxwell Proposal is a well-thought out plan. For more than one and a half years he has worked with our citizens, listened to them, and revised his plans to reach a compromise at every juncture. I'm sure, therefore, that that cooperation will continue as details are worked out.

In addition, the Maxwell Proposal addresses the elements for the rezoning process that were amended in the current University Heights Comprehensive Plan adopted in May of 2010. As a result, we as a community know exactly how this multi-use facility will appear, and once again, we will have the opportunity to "tweak" things as the project moves along.

The Maxwell Proposal is a progressive plan. His plan meets many of the criteria of Smart Growth, providing us with the opportunity to be responsible citizens and examples to our surrounding cities, and even our state, of expansion without explosion. Maxwell has publicly stated, and his plan shows, that he places an emphasis on being environmentally sensitive in both the "destruction" and "construction" phases of his building.

During the January/February 2010 process of revising our Comprehensive Plan, input was sought from our citizens. A summary of that input, compiled by JCCOG, shows the following:

73% of our citizens who sent email correspondence stated that University Heights should be concerned about finding an additional tax base. 54% of those who took part in the on-line survey felt that our city should be concerned with gaining additional tax base.

66% of our citizens who sent email correspondence felt that the St. Andrew site should be considered for some sort of commercial and multi-family development. 64 % of those responding to the on-line survey felt that adding commercial and multi-use development at the St. Andrew site was appropriate. Comments from many residents show that they would like some sort of identification of their city, some sort of town center where neighbor can meet neighbor. Clearly, Maxwell's Proposal addresses that issue.

Pages 33 and 34 of our revised Comprehensive Plan talk specifically about the finances of our city, and what we as a city need to consider in planning for our future. It says:

... "to remain financially viable, the City of University Heights should remain open to discussions regarding expansions to its tax base, increases in property levies, and/or decreasing expenses when possible. Through the use of any combination of these tools, the City of University Heights can maximize its ability to remain a financially sound community."

By including commercial/retail in his development, once again, Jeff Maxwell is adhering to some of the principals of Smart Growth, thus providing us a "walkable/liveable community." And no homes

have to be torn down to do this. And by allowing that commercial, we as citizens, and you as council members are acting responsibly for the financial security of the future of our city.

It was pointed out by one of our citizens that UHeights is a single-family neighborhood—but then exceptions were noted. Those exceptions were:

The Moore Commercial building, with the dental offices and restaurant.

The Planned Unit Development of Grandview Court apartments and now condos

And the Planned Unit Development units of Birkdale

In other words, while we are a single-family neighborhood, we are willing to make exceptions. Each of these exceptions was met with opposition when they were proposed. But now they are part of what makes up our town. Maxwell's proposal is another exception.

Many of our citizens have acknowledged that there will be development on the St. Andrew site. Maxwell's Proposal allows us the opportunity to rebuild our city using Smart Growth principles, it allows us the opportunity to build a liveable, walkable community, it allows us the opportunity to finally define our city by providing a City Center, and it allows us the opportunity to increase the tax-base for our community and thus provide added financial security.

Our thoughts should be not only for today, but for the future of us and our city. I urge you to approve Maxwell's development.

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