

Additional Email Council Received Concerning St. Andrew's site
August 5-9, 2010

August 5, 2010

I support the appointment to fill the council vacancy as reflecting the views of the member being replaced and voted in. New appointment will reflect this community and feel the council did the correct thing.

I am also supportive of the development project for St. Andrews.

John Streif

August 8, 2010

I write to ask for your support of the Bauer Proposal for the St. Andrew property which was recommended to you by Planning and Zoning after a 4-1 vote. Thank you. June Braverman

I was asked to forward this message from the Schmidt family and Elizabeth Rowley.

Liesa Moore

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "RichSchmidtIA@msn.com" <RichSchmidtIA@msn.com>
To: lkparko@yahoo.com
Sent: Mon, August 2, 2010 7:44:39 AM
Subject: Fw: University Heights Building Code

Schmidt address is 207 Mahaska Dr. Rowley address is 216 Mahaska Dr

From: RichSchmidtIA@msn.com
Sent: Monday, August 02, 2010 7:36 AM
To: lkparko@yahoo.com
Subject: University Heights Building Code

We do not support a change in the building code. We do not want to become like

Iowa City and look like the congested complex that was recently built on Benton Street next to the Muslim church.

Saint Andrew property has not been offered for sale until the congregation, Presbytery all concur on the sale. The division within the church has cost all of us at St. Andrew Presbyterian church, Why has the UH Council continued to pursue this property with Maxwell construction as the sole developer? Are you really acting as a good citizen?

Richard K. Schmidt
Mary L. Schmidt
Karla Schmidt

For our neighbor that does not have a computer, She wishes to put her support to not change the building code of University Heights.

Elizabeth Rowley

Earlier this week I received a letter from Concerned Residents of University Heights requesting that residents provide their view of the proposed Maxwell development. My view is that the Maxwell Proposal is a reasonable proposal and I support this development. I do have issues with some of the points that were in the letter.

Our community is deeply and rather evenly divided over the Maxwell proposal for developing the St. Andrew property. Such extensive, dramatic, and controversial changes in our town should not be made without much broader support.

*I'm not sure the community is as divided as some want to think. This is not an emotional issue for me – one group is going to win and one group is to lose. This decision is not going to ruin my life. If I don't like it I can rent my house and move somewhere else.

*University Heights is in no way nearing financial collapse. Revenues have been keeping up with expenses, carryover balances generally have been in line with the Iowa League of Municipalities recommended target of 25%, and there is ample unused borrowing authority to fund any needed major capital improvements (e.g., street rebuilding).

*This may be true now but I have concerns about the future. We might be able to survive but will never be able to do anything that will improve the city. To me this is kind of like living from paycheck to paycheck.

*There is no guarantee that property taxes would decrease as a result of this development. The site could be developed in several different ways — all of which would bring in significant tax revenue. Although the developer has not provided specifics, it is possible that the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) could be structured so that University Heights would not receive any tax revenue for 10 years.

*I find this statement to be a little misleading. The structure of the TIF could just as easily benefit the community. The TIF is negotiable and I have faith that our current city council are not going to give away the farm.

*A coffee shop or grocery store would likely not be financially viable, as the developer indicated at a public meeting that commercial spaces would be leased at high rates that knowledgeable commercial real estate professionals view as far beyond those of competitive market rental rates. Nate Kaeding's new restaurant — opening where several grocery store/restaurant ventures have failed — will also serve as a coffee shop with wireless internet access (according to the Corridor Business Journal). It will need our support to survive.

*I agree that a grocery store would not be financially viable — too much competition in the Iowa City area. As far as other business I'm sure there are many that would survive. I have contacts in both the commercial real estate and the commercial banking business and will be asking them for input when we get some solid facts. Restaurants come and go; they have the highest failure rate of all new businesses. I don't really think that Nate Kaeding is depending solely upon this community for his success. *

The Maxwell development would generate approximately 1500 additional car trips per day in our town, according to JCCOG (Johnson County Council of Governments). The commercial spaces in the development would generate well over 900 of those trips.

*Has anybody taken into account how many trips on Melrose will be eliminated with the location of many of the UHIC clinics being moved to Coralville?

*The development involves filling in the ravine, one of our few remaining green spaces and home to a variety of animals and birds. Large developments like this destroy habitat, and displace, even crush, wildlife (Humane Society of the

US, All Animals, July/August 2010). UH Ordinance #128 protects sensitive slopes like the ravine.

*It's the straightening of Sunset Street that involves filling in the ravine not the development project. And JCCOG is the group recommending the street realignment. I grew up on a farm in the 50's; back then there were fences and the fence rows were the best place to hunt pheasants. The fences are now gone and the pheasants moved to other locations; they were not crushed. The DNR will not let development take place without addressing the sensitive slope issue.

*The reasons for the recent petition for a special election are not limited to the Maxwell development issue, which may be decided before the special election is held. Although some of the 89 residents who signed the petition are very concerned about the Maxwell development issue, others were fundamentally offended that the appointment to fill the Council vacancy did not reflect the views expressed by members of the public who spoke at the meeting or wrote to the Council, nor did the appointment reflect a desire to bring our community together on reasonable middle ground.

*Prior to the last election I remember a flier that had a list of 6 candidates that all adhered to core principals, mostly about development. They ran as a slate and 5 of the candidates on that slate were defeated. I believe that the candidate chosen by the council should reflect the views of the community who elected the current council.

*This year's proceedings (unlike those in 2009) have included reasonable and workable alternatives to the Maxwell development plan — alternatives that could be widely supported in our community. However, the City Council could effectively decide on the Maxwell plan at their August 10 meeting.

*

It might be an alternative proposal but I find it difficult to consider it workable. There is no supporting financial data; the plan wasn't even original just an altered copy of the original Maxwell proposal. I don't see this as a plan but more as a diversion. Maybe every resident could offer a proposal and we can have a drawing for the winner.*

Ken Yeggy

Hi Mike– My email to you came back. Just a quickie to say I think the Bauer plan which sailed through P and Z is a viable alternative and hope you will be able to support it. All the best, June

August 9, 2010

Dear Council members,

We are writing this to express our concurrence with letters written by Mary Mathew Wilson and Larry Wilson in support of Pat Bauer's proposal. Actually, our strong preference would be for the status quo, i.e., the church remaining where it is. In the event that the church does decide to proceed with the sale of the property, Pat Bauer's proposal seems like a very fair compromise that both sides to the dispute could and should agree to.

Sincerely yours

Scott and Carol Ann Christiansen

Dear City Council and Zoning Commission members,

I have been following the ongoing yearly discussions of development pressures that have occupied University Heights for the ten years I have lived here. Due to the charming nature of our housing stock and quiet residential feel of this very small

single family cluster of homes, developers have pressured us continually from all sides to infill more and more land. The existing high density nature of what surrounds us at this point is already a threat to the quality of life and aesthetic charm of our community. I am opposed to the current Maxwell proposal for a PUD on the site of St. Andrews Church. As Maxwell stated in one of the meetings last year, "I don't care what you people think." And he doesn't care that his massive development is completely out of character with our existing community. I would prefer to re-think the future of the site if sold, and I am in favor of single-family dwellings similar to existing homes. If this is not possible, I would support scaled-back proposals such as the Bauer plan, though even that plan seems too dense. Bauer is a brilliant supporter of our best interests and should be commended for his thoughtful approach to compromise.

Sincerely,

Sue Hettmansperger, Professor of Art, Univ. of Iowa
114 Highland Drive, 52246

Councilors,

I've written several letters on the issue of developing the St. Andrews property so I'm at a bit of a loss as to what to say in this one. But I can't stop writing because somewhere, deep down, I believe that my voice matters, at least as

one of many voices being heard. I want to believe that we all count in this issue. And I firmly believe that if a community-wide vote were taken on the issue of the Maxwell development, this community would be solidly divided down the middle. The council election bore this out. My experience with my neighbors continues to bear this out. And I'm enormously saddened by this division.

My husband and I moved here nearly four years ago and were shocked to find such a welcoming community. We met neighbors that were so helpful and kind and friendly. We feel now as though many of our neighbors are family. This is not a common experience, and certainly not one to be taken for granted. In the past year, as debate on the Maxwell development has raged, that sense of trust and neighborliness has been eroded by suspicion and frustration. I want more than anything to restore the community that I moved into. No development is worth the destruction of a truly unique neighborhood.

And the beauty of the situation is, there is actually a nice compromise on the table. The Bauer plan offers high-density residences and higher tax revenues with the preservation of our neighborhood environment and the protection of the natural environment surrounding the property. I sincerely hope that you will consider healing the divisions in this community.

I believe that a developer is not in the position to decide how a community should be developed. We get that power. And I hope you see that we can decide what fits best on that property, and the other parties involved can figure out how to make the business of building on that property work. Please vote on Tuesday night for the Bauer compromise. It is a plan that we all can live with and take pride in.

Sincerely,
Rachel Prickman
321 Koser Ave.

9 August 2010

Louise From, Mayor
Brennan McGrath, Councilor
Stan Laverman, Councilor
Pat Yeggy, Councilor
Mike Haverkamp, Councilor
Jim Lane, Councilor

Dear Mayor From and Councilors McGrath, Laverman, Yeggy, Haverkamp, and Lane:

I urge you to reject the Maxwell development plan for the St. Andrew site.

Many of the people who would be most affected by the Maxwell development oppose such extreme rezoning, as do I. We are not anti-development. We support responsible development.

Many are willing to compromise and support the far less invasive alternative proposal approved by the Zoning Commission. This compromise plan omits the commercial aspect of the Maxwell development, which, based on the University Heights history of restaurant/grocery failures, we cannot realistically support. This change greatly decreases the size of the paved parking lot, reduces estimated daily car trips by 900 (from 1500 to 600), does not require realignment of the intersection, does not entail filling the ravine, and eliminates the need for signage. The compromise plan also decreases the height and density of the residential component.

The environmental destructiveness of the Maxwell plan should not be supported by our community. What kind of respect should University Heights expect to gain when we support the destruction of sensitive slopes, natural spaces, and urban habitat? The Neuzil property development in Iowa City demonstrates sensitivity to the surrounding neighborhoods and to the environment. In my opinion, this type of development would be ideal on the St. Andrew property. It would fit the character of University Heights and generate significant tax revenue.

Your rejection of the Maxwell plan, whether in favor of the alternative plan or some other sensitive and responsible future plan, would provide an excellent opportunity for you to take leadership in bringing our sadly divided community back together.

Misrepresentations and inconsistencies in presentations concerning the Maxwell development seem to increase with each meeting: slides that make the massive buildings seem almost invisible, commercial spaces changed from enticements such as a coffee shop into unspecified professional offices, assertions that the commercial spaces will be supported mainly by foot traffic in our small community, Mr. Maxwell's promise one week to review the alternative proposal and his refusal to do so the next week.

Another misleading presentation is "Smart Growth Principles from Jeff Maxwell," a document taken from a copyright-protected website, then selectively edited and enhanced without citations. This is prominently posted on the University Heights official city website without even a disclaimer warning of omissions and alterations that change the context of the original document.

Mayor and councilors, all of you live in areas that are well-insulated from the St. Andrew site. Imagine the huge Maxwell development across the street from your house — its mass, height, density, commercial spaces, traffic, light, and noise. In a community as small as ours, we all should be concerned about the well-being of all of our neighbors.

" . . . You can look at these characteristics of design and the surrounding neighborhood, . . . and analyze those extremely critically, because it's not going to act as an impediment to this development of this property, if you were to reject this particular plan. . . . So, I would just ask that Council look at that critically, and just wait for the proper plan to come down the pike, because it's just a matter of time before it does."

The above quote is quite pertinent to the St. Andrew site, although it is former councilor Amy Moore speaking at a council meeting in Iowa City regarding the Neuzil development near her house on Olive Court. (A transcript of the meeting with the complete quote can be found at <http://www.icgov.org/transcriptions/621.pdf>, page 42. For the record, I am aware that Ms. Moore supported the Maxwell plan.)

There will be a development plan for the St. Andrew site that fits and enhances the unique character of University Heights, one truly supported by a large majority of citizens. Please have the determination and foresight to wait for it.

Respectfully,

Liesa Moore
220 Koser Avenue