



Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council, Inc.

619 West Cary Street, Richmond, Virginia 23220

To: Richmond City Planning Commission

From: Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council

Re: Concerns with CPRC.2020.039: intent to rezone properties in the B-3 General Business District

Date: August 2, 2020

Dear Members of the Richmond City Planning Commission,

On behalf of the Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council, which owns the anti-slavery landmark Jacob House at 619 West Cary Street within the B-3 zoning, we support rezoning the B-3 in Oregon Hill to UB zoning. However, we have important concerns regarding the process the substance of CPRC.2020.039. This resolution declares an intent to rezone B-3 properties in the General Business District in response to City Council Resolution 2018-R081.

The Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council received inadequate notice of this resolution. As confirmed by several neighborhood residents, when notice of the agenda was posted on the city's web site on July 28, 2020, there was no text attached to the agenda item CPRC.2020.039. Without posted text for the agenda item, the public was not given the public notice as required by city code.

With the exception of the three primary objectives of Councilman Michael Jones, the B-3 district rules should not be amended in advance of the B-3 rezoning proposed in CPRC.2020.039:

We support the three primary objectives of Councilman Michael Jones in removing these three permitted principal uses from the B-3 zoning: adult uses (such as adult book stores and massage parlors), car lots, and predatory lenders. Removing these three permitted principal uses through the amendment process is appropriate. However, other extensive changes to B-3 zoning by amendment is inappropriate and would circumvent the proposed rezoning process.

Wholesale changes of the B-3 must be made through rezoning and not through amendment process:

The fundamental zoning changes for the variety of B-3 zones throughout Richmond must be made through a legal rezoning procedure per city code. Implementation of CPRC.2020.039 must be made with direct involvement of the affected neighborhoods, including the Oregon Hill neighborhood.

The UB zoning is the desired zoning to replace the B-3 zoning in the Oregon Hill Historic District:

For decades the Oregon Hill neighborhood has sought to replace the B-3 zoning in Oregon Hill with the appropriate Urban Business (UB) zoning. This appropriate UB zoning was adopted for most of the properties west of Harrison St. through Carytown, yet tragically Oregon Hill was not included in this rezoning process.

Staff report for CPR.2020.039 contains inaccurate information:

The report states that, "... there are new apartments and some older storefronts all of which abut the Oregon Hill neighborhood." In fact (rather than abut the Oregon Hill neighborhood), all of the B-3 zoning in Oregon Hill is within the Oregon Hill Historic District.

We object the neighborhood's input being ignored in the draft Richmond 300 master plan:

The staff report for **CPCR.2020.039** recommends, "...including the area in the Richmond 300 planning process." Unfortunately, thus far the draft Richmond 300 master plan has ignored the input of the Oregon Hill neighborhood, particularly regarding building height limits in the neighborhood. We strongly object to the latest draft Richmond 300 plan that has a future land use designation with what is essentially an unlimited building height limit on "busy" streets such as West Cary Street. Any building height limit that exceeds the current 35 foot height limit of the B-3 is unacceptable .

In summary:

- We support a rezoning of the B-3 area on West Cary Street in the Oregon Hill Historic District to UB.
- Prior to rezoning, we support an amendment to the B-3 zoning to address the three main concerns of Councilman Michael Jones: removing adult uses (such as adult book stores and massage parlors), car lots, and predatory lenders as permitted principal uses within the B-3 zoning.
- Prior to rezoning we oppose adding other inappropriate permitted principal uses by amendment to the B-3 zoning, including dwelling units, parking decks, light manufacturing, or breweries.
- We strongly oppose any change in the zoning on West Cary Street that would increase the building height limit to over the current 35 feet.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Charles Pool
Board Member
Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council
619 West Cary Street
Richmond, VA 23220