From: cindy wofford
To: Darby, Anne W. - PDR; Olinger, Mark A. - PDR
Subject: RE: pulse plan
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 8:54:31 AM

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Thanks for your response.
Choose any of the questions listed below.
But the "umbrella question" I asked was "How are neighborhood associations supposed to be notified of specific projects which may be of concern to the neighborhood?"
You basically responded "That's a great question. We used to do something like that" and then you moved on to the next question.

PLEASE Do NOT insult the citizens of our neighborhood!

Most everyone I know supports commercial growth and greater density on Broad Street and throughout the city. We also prioritize growth and density that enhances and harmonizes with the wonderful, historic, architecturally rich city we are proud to be part of. Let's approach these matters together, as the community we are, rather than being subjected to decisions made by a few.
•
I am shocked to hear the Planning Department is proposing new zoning on Broad Street that will allow buildings over 20 stories tall in an area of historic low-rise residential neighborhoods
.
Neighbors and friends express the same shock about the possible height of new buildings. The majority are opposed to the rezoning for that reason only. (I don't know anyone who supports it.) Please postpone this process until the community can properly engage and comprehend the goal and the consequences of new zoning, which will have lasting effects on the entire region.
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City Council approved the Pulse Corridor Plan in 2017. The Plan specifically calls for building heights of no more than 12 stories in the corridor.
Unelected city officials are ignoring the codified vote of elected officials by proposing zoning that allows buildings of over 20 stories tall. Please stop civic employees, who are paid by the taxpayers, from overriding the decisions of elected officials.
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The rezoning under consideration will affect Richmond for the next century. We who live here are the stewards of a rich history, and our decisions either will or will not honor that legacy. Therefore, when we hear Planning Department staff say, "Don't worry, none of this will happen right now," we lose confidence in their

abilities as professional urban planners. These decisions are not simply about “right now.” These decisions are about what kind of future we foster for the generations of those who follow. I want to leave a better version of
the vibrant, architecturally rich mid-sized, human-scaled city Richmond is – and not some facsimile of New
York or anywhere else.

•

**Seven neighborhood associations have signed two letters expressing concerns and questions about the proposed zoning in the Pulse Corridor Plan, and these associations have requested on multiple occasions that
the Planning Department reply in writing to their concerns. Three months have passed, and these issues have not been fully addressed.
We ask the mayor and City Council to demand decent, respectful public engagement from those hired to serve the public.**

**The neighborhood associations include:
Carver Area Civic Improvement League
The Fan District Association (FDA)
Historic Jackson Ward Association
Historic West Grace Street Association
Monument Avenue Preservation Society (MAPS)
Newtowne West Association
RVA Coalition of Concerned Civic Associations**

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The Planning Department continues to insist that new zoning allowing buildings over 20 stories has been discussed with adjacent neighborhoods. Yet the leaders of these and other neighborhoods have not been part of such discussions, nor have these leaders even heard of such discussions. That’s why the common
response to the possibility of high-rise buildings in low rise, uptown neighborhoods is shock. In addition, none of the involved neighborhood associations have participated in any discussions of these revised new zoning
designations, as called for in the Pulse Corridor Plan. It is notable that once zoning is granted, it is near impossible to pull it back.
These are among the reasons we ask for a pause in the process: these zoning decisions are critical to Richmond’s future, and must be done with true public engagement.

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One of the requests in the May 29 letter which seven neighborhoods sent to the Planning Department is this: Please share with us the list of private individuals and/or business interests in the Pulse Corridor with whom the Planning Department has met. We are interested in the reply.

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Attorney General Mark Herring has strongly suggested that because of the quarantine, all elected bodies throughout Virginia limit their agendas to emergency-related and budget-related issues; he specifically recommends that non-emergency decisions, such as land use decisions, be postponed until after the quarantine. And this edict was issued before the social unrest! It appears that the Planning

Department is attempting to railroad through a new zoning ordinance while everyone's attention is on the health crisis, social unrest, and calls for social reform. The reasonable response is to pause the rezoning process until the public can constructively engage. Therefore, we ask: wait on rezoning until the public can gather and participate in these critical decisions.

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The brakes need to be put on the proposed zoning ordinance to allowing 20-story buildings along uptown Broad Street. While the Pulse Corridor Plan approved buildings up to 12 stories, the Planning Department is proposing a blanket ordinance for 20 stories or more up and down the street. This is a huge change that calls for a series of well-publicized public meetings. Online forums during the pandemic, when people are focused on other, more pressing concerns or don't have online access, won't satisfy the need for transparent governance.

•

The covid-19 pandemic is changing many major cities' downtown and high-rise districts, as major corporations leave these areas for less expensive sites and direct their employees to continue working from home. In Richmond, we need to fully consider the wisdom, the economy and the productivity of lining Broad Street with high rises. The proposal needs to be tabled until the community-at-large can thoughtfully weigh in and consider best outcomes in partnership with all stakeholders, including the city administration, developers, the social justice community, and neighborhood associations.

•

Richmond is a vibrant, architecturally rich, mid-sized, human-scale city that attracts people and businesses from all around the country to visit here, move here, live here, and do business here. The proposed zoning ordinance to allow 20-story buildings along portions of the Broad Street Pulse Corridor raises visions of a high-rise canyon, which studies prove does not enhance community, but instead undermines it. The Times Dispatch has carried ongoing stories – in the wake of the protests – calling for a reimagining of our city. We need to hold off on this proposed ordinance until the surrounding neighborhoods, and indeed, the entire city, can fully respond to it.

Many thanks
Cindy Wofford
928-5395

On 09/08/2020 8:25 AM Darby, Anne W. - PDR
<anne.darby@richmondgov.com> wrote:

Good morning Ms. Wofford,

Could you please re-state your questions? In the meantime, I will post your email with other comments so that the Planning Commission has access to them.

Thank you,

Anne

From: Olinger, Mark A. - PDR
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 8:22 AM
To: cindy wofford
Cc: Darby, Anne W. - PDR
Subject: RE: pulse plan

Ms. Wofford

I didn't see what your questions were during the meeting.

Anne Darby was compiling responses…copying her.

Mark A. Olinger, Director

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From: cindy wofford [mailto:wofford3@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 8:19 AM
To: Olinger, Mark A. - PDR <Mark.Olinger@Richmondgov.com>
Subject: pulse plan

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Morning Mark-

I attended the zoom meeting last week regarding the north side of Broad Street building density.

Please DO NOT allow 12 to 20 story properties to be built in that area. Density is a goal - but over density is not wanted by anyone in the adjacent neighborhoods.

Limit the height to 8 floor maximum - and actually 6 would be better.

I asked a few questions at the zoom meeting. One of which you acknowledged was a great question. NONE OF MY QUESTIONS WERE ANSWERED !!

DELAY THE VOTE. And answer the questions.

On a side note - I spoke against the Opus project on Lombardy and Broad last February.

I mentioned that the project was essentially a dorm - and one that would not be under the purview of the college due to its off-campus location.

Later in the meeting, my comment was admonished by developer Ben Angelo at Opus when he stated, "This project will appeal to a very broad demographic...I don't want this characterized as a dormitory".

In looking at the Opus website the ***very next morning***, I noticed the following announcement on the company's homepage - literally announced the day after the Council meeting! **Mr Angelo was promoted to VP of student living**. The company acknowledged the student living market as an increasingly important and competitive sector of their business.

PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW DEVELOPERS TO OVERWHELM OUR NEIGHBORHODS!!

Thank you

Cindy Wofford