

STATEMENT EXCEPTS ON THE MAIN GATE OVERLAY FROM COUNCIL

URBAN INFILL - Karin Uhlich, May 11th 2012

The third time *can* be a charm. I made two attempts since last fall to reshape the Main Gate Overlay District and in particular the transition block bounded by Euclid, 1st, Tyndall and Speedway. I also insisted that the City Attorney provide further advice to Mayor and Council on the matter prior to the formal effective date of the original plan.

This week Vice Mayor Kozachik and the Mayor/Council concurred that the transition block in particular did need to be reshaped. I believe the new plan for the block, which will be further vetted by the Zoning Examiner and the public, strikes a far better balance of density (to the east of Tyndall) and transition to the historic, low density neighborhood to the west of Euclid. I am grateful to all of the community members who worked so hard to push for sustainable infill and sound urban planning. This may not resolve the unfortunate controversy sparked by the Main Gate Overlay process and the original plan. We have to demonstrate to the public that we will offer an inclusive and transparent planning process for any other overlays being considered (e.g. Grant Road Overlay). No back room or fast track deals.

Good process does not have to foil our progress. In fact, steady movement forward works better than this kind of one-step-forward, half-step-back turmoil. I am confident that we can restore trust and collaborate to fulfill our shared goal: economic vibrancy and infill that works in balance with our historic assets, peaceful neighborhoods, and functional open spaces. We all have a stake in success.

MAIN GATE DISTRICT OVERLAY - Steve Kozachik, May 9th 2012

The public meeting before the Zoning Examiner (ZE) relative to the MGD was held on April 25th. Prior to that, there were two rounds of meetings that involved all of the relevant stakeholders in front of a facilitator. The ZE had all of the materials generated at those meetings in front of him on the 25th, and he heard presentations that pretty much mirrored what was already in the record. This relates to the area bounded by Euclid and Tyndall, Speedway and 1st. To keep it straight forward, I'll break down the parts of what we considered into three pieces:

Euclid Historic Buildings

There are five of them that are single story bungalows, each privately owned, and each a contributing property to the West University Neighborhood historic designation. Current MGD development standard is four stories, not to exceed 56'. Currently any of these can be demolished, but the process for getting that approval is long and drawn out.

The motion I made changed those standards to a maximum allowable height of 40', and if one of them is destroyed or changed in a way that de-lists it from the historic register, the development benefits under the overlay are lost.

Speedway Historic Buildings

There are three of them, also single story, and also each privately owned. Under the MGD, the allowable height is six stories, not to exceed 84'. The same demolition requirements as exist for the Euclid properties also exist for those on Speedway. The motion I made reduced the allowable height to 40' for the first property at the corner of Euclid and Speedway, stepping up to 56' as you move to the east towards the alley between Euclid and Tyndall. Regardless of the height being built, a design review that will address scale, compatibility, step-backs, and other design criteria will be conducted.

Non-Historic Buildings

These are the buildings that would go to the east of the alley that divides Euclid from Tyndall. The MGD allows heights ranging from 84' for the parcel on the corner of Speedway and Tyndall, 144' for the parcel at the center of Tyndall, and 156' for the parcel at the corner of Tyndall and 1st. Throughout the discussions leading up to our meeting on Tuesday, the conversation centered around developing a gentle stepping up in density as you moved away from Euclid. In order to address that, the ZE recommended design review for compatibility if proposed building heights were over 56', 84' and 90', on the respective parcels.

I took a bit of a different position. I traveled around campus, and slightly off campus to look at existing student housing buildings. The tallest is Coronado at about eight stories. That is located on the interior of campus. On the perimeter is The District (six stories on 6th, stepping down to four stories at 5th), Manzanita at four stories, Gila at three stories, and similar 3-4 story buildings at other campus locations. None of them match what is proposed in the MGD.

The motion I made was to limit the acceptable building heights for the three non-historic parcels to the 56', 84' and 90' heights that the ZE suggested be used as benchmarks for more intensive design review. It strikes me that those heights, while still greater than most of what exists on and around campus are more compatible with what we have, and they provide a more respectful transition towards the neighborhood. After all, we have been calling this the West University 'transition' area. Council adopted the motion and there will be more ZE hearings to discuss it with you. If nothing changes, the ordinance will go into effect on August 8th.

Normally I include the exact documents I'm referring to. In this case the ZE file is too large for our antiquated computer system for me to forward over to Diana so she can pull out some of the relevant pages I'm sharing with you. She's happy. If you want to review it, go on line to the city clerk site, find 'agendas' and look at regular session item #13. The Zoning Examiner's letter is at the very end of the material – about pages 157 – 162. What precedes it is all of the material that was presented at the facilitations and the ZE meeting on the 25th.