

More questions

From : Howard Miller <hmiller@jeffnet.org>

Mon, Sep 29, 2014 09:42 AM

Subject : More questions**To :** John Stromberg <john@council.ashland.or.us>,
Pam Marsh <pam.marsh@gmail.com>**Cc :** brandon goldman
<brandon.goldman@ashland.or.us>

Good morning, Mayor Stromberg, Councillor Marsh and Brandon,

After the last meeting, I listed several items of concern that many of the residents of Normal Ave. and surrounding neighborhoods feel have not been adequately addressed by the working group. Most have been mentioned at various sessions, including the one Sept. 18, but little has been done to resolve them. (We in the audience were disappointed that the discussion after the 10-minute presentations revolved around increasing the density of housing from what Mr. Jones, representing the Mahar company, had proposed, and dealing with the affordable housing clause he said the company could not meet). I can not see how any workable conclusions will be reached (and that may not be possible), until these concerns are seriously considered. The quality of life for the residents of the entire vicinity needs to be weighed against the indeterminate goal of satisfying vague RPS goals.

Here are some discussion topics:

Traffic

Clay Street from East Main to Ashland Street—no improvements have been mentioned, yet this narrow street would carry many more cars and perhaps pedestrians.

Clay Street at Ashland Street—if the State sees much more traffic, which there certainly would be, they make may good on their threat to close the east-bound turn possibility.

Ashland Street and Normal Ave.—the increased volume of traffic would certainly warrant a signal there; who pays?

Normal Ave. and Homes—Hunter Park and Walker School generate a lot of foot and vehicle traffic already; letters have been written by nearby employees concerning safety issues there.

Drainage/sewage problems

Meadowbrook subdivision has never resolved the problems; would additional pressures on the lines be adding to their woes and causing new ones?

Financing

The true costs for an upgraded RR crossing and the improvements to East Main have not itemized; several estimates have been mentioned, which vary by hundreds of thousands. That

does not include the other streets and intersections mentioned above.

If the city decides to approve the Advance Financing, the pressure on the builders to get the housing in and pay back this sum will be great; instead of a long term build out, as the city

projects, construction would be immediate and probably complete.

But, since we know the housing is not needed now in the inventory, what if the units are not sold and the contractors can

not pay this loan back? Does the city have any history of extending financing to contractors?

Impacts

This would be the largest subdivision by far in the city; the overall impacts have yet to be discussed.

The Comp Plan discusses open space, retention of view sheds and significant natural features, wildlife corridors, urban agriculture (such as community gardens and small scale

commercial plots to decrease local food insecurity) etc., as community values. Yet, future housing needs have been the main topic, other values have not received much consideration,

except as to how to site dwelling units around creeks, wetlands, and other important natural places.

What precedent would the city set if it allowed this annexation before the land is needed in the inventory?

Targeted Population

What type of housing is in most demand now, and who are potential renters/owners in the future? Families, for the most part, do not want to live in 3rd floor apartments. Seniors may be

hesitant, also. Right now Ashland has a dearth of younger middle-aged adults with children and a shortfall of housing options for low-income younger people. Will that continue?

Last thought

Does Ashland want to retain its touted "small town character and charm", or become a city with high rise apartments, shopping centers, and other urban amenities, even at the perimeter of

city limits. Having both is not possible, but if design concepts that favor the latter are adopted, the decision will have been made.

I know, these are not new issues, and I may very well have omitted some, but even this number and complexity make for a difficult task to complete to anyone's liking. I just hope adequate time is taken to recognize and

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deal with them, and perhaps admit some are not solvable.
Thanks for listening,
Debbie
