From:	Phil Dodd
To:	John Hollar; Dona Bate; Anne Watson; Justin Turcotte; Jean Olson; Ashley A. Hill; Rosie Krueger
Cc:	Michael Miller
Subject:	Zoning matrix comment #181 (Main Street)
Date:	Tuesday, October 24, 2017 4:26:01 PM

Hello City Councilors -

I expect you will reach this comment Wednesday night and wanted to offer my thoughts by e-mail rather than take up time at the meeting.

Comment #181 states that the zoning on Main Street is too dense. That was not my comment, but as I and others have suggested to the council, this stretch of Main Street from the library to the roundabout is a beautiful area with truly historic buildings and some green space, and the zoning should seek to preserve that iconic appearance.

I was glad to see in the reply to comment #181 by Mike Miller that he agrees the density as proposed is too high and that he is revising his recommendation. The proposed zoning puts this stretch of Main Street in the same zone as the western portion of Barre Street in a district called UC-2. Mike suggests the Barre Street and Main Street areas be split into to two different districts. That stretch of Main Street is already in its own district under current zoning (Central Business II) and this change would continue that treatment.

Mike's full response is pasted in below, but this is part of it: "I would create a new district with those requirements and the specifics of the revised setbacks from the earlier decision." The requirements he refers to are a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, the same as current zoning, and also the addition of a unit max of one per 1,500 square feet or possibly one unit per 3,000 square feet. I think the earlier decision he refers to was to increase the proposed setback from 5 feet to 10 feet, unless abutting buildings are closer (that was the decision on matrix comment #25).

Mike says that on further examination he found the density on Barre Street is much higher than on Main Street and so he recommends creating two different districts out of the proposed UC-2, to be called UC-2 and UC-3.

Because it will help retain the current character of this irreplaceable stretch of Main Street, I strongly support Mike's recommendation of having a separate district for that part of Main Street, with a minimum lot size of 10,000 sq. feet, as he proposes. I also support following the 90% rule in this case and putting the unit max at one per 3,000 square feet.

In addition, I would retain the current height limit of "3 stories or 45 feet" and would reduce the proposed UC-2 lot maximum coverage from 90% to 70%. Lawns and green space are an important part of the character of the street, and somewhat smaller buildings would fit in better with the character of the area.

The key step is creating a separate district. As Mike noted in an Aug. 22 e-mail to me, making the area its own district will give flexibility to make whatever other changes the council thinks it would like to see to protect the neighborhood.

Thanks for your time.

Phil Dodd

Miller response to comment #181:

Relates to #25 above. #25 focused on the dimensional requirements between the new and old zoning (setbacks, coverage, height). My responses were based on how those were characterized (that new development would change the character of the area). In those cases there aren't much difference between new and old. But looking at minimum lot size specifically and residential densities to a lesser extent (see those neighborhood descriptions we prepared you can see on 2-2 Main Street) I need to revise my recommendation. There is enough difference that may warrent a better approach. I misunderstood the nature of the comments so I wasn't looking at the lot size and residential density requirements specifically. In the original draft zoning there was only Urban Center (not a 1 and 2). We found that some areas (Main Street and Barre Street neighborhoods) were different enough from the rest of downtown so a separate district was created. Looking at the DISTRICT the densities and lot sizes were developed. Barre Street though impacted the overall numbers (see 2-1 fpr Barre Street West); if you look at the tables oyu will notice the lot sizes and densities are smaller than Main Street. I remember that the PC had considered making two different districts (maybe UC-2 for Main and a UC-3 for Barre St) but chose to keep them the same. Looking at the lot size and density numbers today I would recommend making a separate distirct as had been discussed previously by the planning commission.

The biggest difference you can see on the table is that minimum lot size is recommended to be 3,000 square feet where most lots in the Main St area are bigger that 8,700 (90%). Also as proposed there is not a residential density established. It shouldn't matter because it would be as many units as one can fit in a building in the neighborhood but under current zoning its limited to 1 per 1,500 sq ft and on the ground the 90% conformance is 1 per 3,200 sq feet. That is a policy discussion for you to decide. I would create a new district with those requirements and the specifics of the revised setbacks from the earlier decision. We will still need to resolve front setbacks as I have pulled surveys to find the recommended standards work for the western side of the street but not the eastern side of the street so we will need to discuss options to resolve that matter.
Staff recommedns creating a separate district for Main Street and make the minimum lot size 10k (which will match current zoning) and to set the other dimensional amd use requirements as appropriate.