

**MINUTES OF THE  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
AUGUST 19, 2024**

**Z-24-08-008: A rezoning request from R-5 (Residential Single-family – 5) to CD-PI (Conditional District - Public and Institutional) for the property identified as 2300 West Friendly Avenue, generally described as northeast of West Friendly Avenue and southeast of North Elam Avenue (5.26 acres). (APPROVED)**

Mr. Carter reviewed the summary information for the subject property and surrounding properties. He then advised that the applicant had proposed the following condition:

- 1) All uses permitted in the PI zoning district except: Elementary/Secondary Schools; Clubs and Lodges; Golf Courses; Shooting Ranges; Sporting and Recreation Camps; and Funeral Homes and Crematoriums.

Mr. Carter stated that the GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan's Future Built Form Map currently designates the subject properties as Urban Central and Residential on the Future Land Use Map. Staff determined the proposed rezoning request supports the Comprehensive Plan's Becoming Car Optional strategy to encourage new development that is compatible with the intended use of the adjacent roadway. The request also supports the Comprehensive Plans Filling In Our Framework goal to arrange our land uses for to create a more vibrant and livable Greensboro. The proposed CD-PI zoning district, as conditioned, would allow all uses in the PI zoning district except: Elementary/Secondary Schools; Clubs and Lodges; Golf Courses; Shooting Ranges; Sporting and Recreation Camps; and Funeral Homes and Crematoriums. The proposed uses are compatible with the general character of the area. Also, the change in the zoning for this property is appropriate given its location on the West Friendly Avenue. Staff recommended approval of the request.

Vice-Chair Magid invited the applicant to the podium.

**Thomas Terrell, 230 North Elm Street**, stated he was representing Cone Health and was accompanied by few members of the Centenary United Methodist Church. He mentioned that The Church approached Cone Health and offered to sell the property. Mr. Terrell noted that Cone Health was unaware that that Church wanted to sell, however they accepted to purchase the property. He gave an overview of the subject property and pointed out that it is in proximity to other lands owned and operating under Cone Health and would complete a health care campus. He said that the subject property has been institutional for about 65 years and the request is seeking to transition from institutional use to another institutional use. He noted that the area has a harmonious blend of residential and non-residential uses, and that residential and institutional uses coexisted in a friendly manner for decades. He talked about the surrounding land uses and pointed to the heavily commercial center, Friendly Shopping Center, to the northwest of the subject property, the institutional health properties to the north and Grimsley High School to the northeast.

Mr. Terrell clarified the uses allowed in the Public and Institutional Zoning District and specifically noted that retail, industrial, night clubs, bars to name a few uses, would not be permitted in the proposed conditional zoning district. He explained the role of the LDO and it has

standards designed and adopted to achieve harmonious neighborhoods, and separating similar and dissimilar uses.

**Preston Hammock, 1200 North Elm Street**, said he is the Regional President for Moses Cone, Greensboro, responsible for administration for several Moses Cone Hospital. He said his office is located at the Wesley Long Hospital located in proximity to the subject property. He stated that community stewardship is of utmost importance for Moses Cone Hospital. He mentioned the purchasing of the property as a grand opportunity they wanted to take advantage of. He stated there did not a specific use in mind, and that they wanted to acquire the land because of its proximity to one of their properties (Wesley Long Hospital). He agreed with the neighbors' concerns and stated that planning for health care facilities would take longer time due to heavy regulations. He said as they plan for the facilities there would be additional community involvement. He noted that the lengthy approval process for the certification left no choice but to rezone the subject property to a similar zone as that of the adjacent properties under their ownership. He said he was willing to continue working with the neighbors.

**Reverent Kelly Gross** introduced herself as the minister for the Centenary United Methodist Church. She asked the Commissioners to support the initiative.

**Mr. Terrell** inquired if the Commissioners had questions.

**Ms. Skenes** mentioned she had concerns after reviewing the LDO and the relevant district standards. She noted the Commissioners received numerous emails expressing concerns: lack of buffers and the potential removal of the mature trees. She said she understood that the LDO required 35ft buffer be provided along the perimeter of the boundary separating the subject property and the surrounding residential neighborhood.

**Mr. Terrell** stated that there should be 35ft building setback and referenced an illustration showing the existing "Type B" Planting Yard at the property. He noted that there is approximately 20ft landscape buffer along Villa Drive which gets to about 10ft in the middle of the planting yard. He pointed out that the existing planting yard was representation of what would be required by the LDO. He stated the planting yard should be 25ft in width and could go to a minimum of 20ft but should be an average of 25ft wide. He noted that the planting should have roughly 3 canopy trees and heavy shrubbery within 100ft. Mr. Terrell noted that under the existing zoning (R-5) should the owner decided to build a parsonage the LDO requirement would allow building height of 50ft with 5ft setback from the adjacent residential properties. He said that in the proposed PI zoning district any building that is 50ft high would need to be setback minimum 35ft from the adjacent residential property boundaries in accordance with the LDO.

**Vice-Chair Magid** asked if anyone else wished to speak in favor of the request. Hearing none, Vice-Chair Magid asked for anyone wishing to speak in opposition to the request to come forward to the podium. She reminded them that they had a total of 10 minutes for presentation.

**Karen Arnold, 2205 Briarwood Drive**, asked the residents opposing the request to stand, and stated they submitted to the City a door to door petition with 125 signatures against the request. She said that almost all the signatures are from residents living in the Centenary neighborhood and she was representing the neighborhood. She asked the Commissioners to reject the request. She

stated they were concerned that the request had no associated plans or conditions, as well as no willingness to communicate with the neighborhood to add conditions. She said when she spoke with Mr. Hammock and other Cone Health representatives about adding more conditions the response was it could not be done since there were no specific plan in place. She mentioned that eventually the existing building would be demolished and without any plans was a burden for the neighborhood. She noted the top concern was public safety and mentioned incidents involving discharged patients with mental health issues lingering in the neighborhood. She stated that such incidents would increase should the request be approved. Ms. Arnold mentioned other concerns: the absence of conditions that could prevent flooding to the surrounding residential properties; privacy with having 50ft high buildings; light pollution; loss of the historic Christmas ball lights, and the architectural value of the existing church building.

Ms. Arnold said that the GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan states that development of downtown neighborhoods should be consistent with the general character of the area. She mentioned the building could be left vacant for couple of years resulting to problem of vagrancy and vandalism, dilapidation of property value, and other blighted conditions. She noted that the GSO2040 Plan envisioned mixed-use, walkable communities for the area and stated that using the existing building and use in other creative ways would be better fitted. She said the request would detract from the Friendly Avenue corridor and could start a trend of changing the existing character along the corridor. She stated that Cone Health current problematic stewardship towards the adjacent residential neighborhood did not earn them having the request without a plan. She said that the request needed more time and more communication.

**Kristin Cheshire, 2205 Villa Drive**, said she lived in the neighborhood 11 years and loved the neighborhood. She stated her immediate concerns was the property left vacant without any plans for development. She noted the applicant discussed having security however, it could be challenging to monitor and maintaining the subject property.

Vice-Chair asked if the applicant wished to respond to the neighbors' concerns.

**Preston Hammock, 1200 North Elm Street**, recognized the neighbors' concerns stating they were valuable. He addressed the issues of discharged patients lingering in the neighborhood and explained that patients would not be released from the hospital unless cleared by medical staff. He said for patients to be discharged they need to show proof of having a destination including transportation. He stated the Hospital continued to work with the City and the County, and with non-profit organizations for the unhoused and mental health patients. He asked the neighbors to reach out to the hospital if they should encounter incidents with discharged patients from Cone Health. He noted that they had vacant properties under their portfolio and expressed that he was confident they could monitor and maintain the subject property even more so the proximity to an existing facility. He agreed that the Friendly Avenue corridor is an asset and promised that any proposed development would be consistent with and aesthetically pleasing to the surrounding neighborhood.

Vice-Chair Magid inquired if there was anyone wishing to speak further in opposition.

**Karen Arnold, 2205 Briarwood Drive**, pointed out the community outreach by Cone Health was poor compared to other cases presented at the meeting. She said that the security of the Health facilities have decreased due to recent staff laid off.

**Joe Joplin, 2211 Villa Drive**, said the neighborhood does not need another vacant property. He stated the rezoning request was not consistent with the GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan. He noted that vacant properties would not encourage high density and walkable development envisioned by the GSO2040 Plan. He referenced “Big Ideas” becoming car optional and stated the proposed development would not fit in with the adjacent road. He mentioned the GSO2040 “Creating great places” and said the existing use is a great place and should remain. He noted “Prioritizing sustainability” and stated the rezoning request would be against the plan. He asked the Commissioners to let the property remain in its current use and not support the uses permitted in the rezoned district. He stated the numerous petitions signed by the neighbors showed that the request is not building community connections. He mentioned “Growing competitiveness” and stated that allowing the applicant to take over the subject property is not encouraging competitiveness.

**Karen Arnold, 2205 Briarwood Drive**, asked the Commissioners to allow more time for the neighbors to engage with Cone Health stating it would be good for the city and the community.

Vice-Chair Magid inquired if there was anyone else wishing to speak in opposition.

**Arthur Close, 71 Kemp Road W**, said that the main concern for the neighbors was a rezoning request without a plan. He noted that there would be no guarantee unless conditions are added to the request.

Vice-Chair Magid inquired if anyone else wished to speak in opposition to the request. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing.

Vice-Chair Magid asked for any questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Mr. Gilmer, Sr. supported the request and stated that there was no plan and therefore there could be no specific conditions.

Chair O’Connor stated that she lived in the adjacent neighborhood since 1986 and noted she received notification informing that the Church approached Cone to purchase the property. She shared the neighbors’ concerns, however, she believed the request would be an appropriate use for the subject property and would benefit the surrounding communities. She supported the request.

Mr. Engle noted that his neighborhood was experiencing effects from unhoused and mental health people sleeping in their backyards. He said housing and mental health issues are items that needed to be addressed on a wider spectrum. He mentioned that by right 50ft high building could be built on properties within R-3 single-family residential zoning district. He said that churches property sales are happening nationwide. He said that as a zoning body the Commission determined compatibility of the use but could has no control over the sale or leaving the property in its current use. Mr. Engle said the request is consistent with the surrounding communities. He supported the request and indicated the applicant, and the residents should continue working together.

Ms. Skenes concurred with Mr. Engle and mentioned incidents when the existing use had traffic overspill into the neighborhoods. She said that she was aware of other church properties being sold. She noted that the current zoning could allow 25 single-family houses on the subject property. She stated that Cone Health and the residential neighborhood coexisted for decades since the 50's. She supported the request.

Vice-Chair Magid supported the request and concurred with Ms. Skenes and Mr. Engle that the request was suitable use for the subject property. She said that the Church reaching out to Cone Health indicated the path they would like for the property.

Chair O'Connor then stated regarding agenda item Z-24-08-008, the Greensboro Planning and Zoning Commission believes that its action to recommend approval of the rezoning request for the property at 2300 West Friendly Avenue from R-5 (Residential Single-family – 5) to CD-PI (Conditional District - Public and Institutional) to be consistent with the adopted GSO2040 Comprehensive Plan and considers the action taken to be reasonable and in the public interest for the following reasons: (1.) The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Future Built Form Map and Future Land Use Map; (2.) The proposed CD-PI zoning district, as conditioned, permits uses that fit the context of surrounding area and limits negative impacts on the adjacent properties; (3.) The request is reasonable due to the size, physical conditions, and other attributes of the area, it will benefit the property owner and surrounding community, and approval is in the public interest. Mr. Gilmer, Sr seconded the motion.

The Commission voted 8-0, (Ayes: Chair Sandra O'Connor, Vice-Chair Catherine Magid, Skenes, Engle, Downing, Gilmer Sr., Turner and Glass). Nays: (None).

Vice-Chair Magid advised the vote constituted a final action, unless appealed in writing and the appeal fee paid within 10 days. Anyone may file such an appeal. All such appeals would be subject to a public hearing at the Tuesday, September 17, 2024 City Council Meeting. All adjoining property owners will be notified of any such appeal.