

**DELAWARE-MUNCIE METROPOLITAN PLAN COMMISSION
NOVEMBER - 2022 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
AGENDA**

DATE: November 3, 2022

PLACE: City Hall Auditorium
300 W. Main St.
Muncie, IN

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

Jerry Dishman	Allen Wiseley	
J. P. Hall	Teresa Hensley	Jud Motsenbocker
Shannon Henry	Rheaunna Jones	Rickie Sipe
	Jesse Landess	

Advisory Members

Tom Borchers	Justin Curly	Adam Leach
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MINUTES: Consideration of the October 6, 2022 regular monthly meeting minutes.

TABLED BUSINESS:

MPC 08-19A ABC-DG Subdivision

NEW BUSINESS:

MPC 04-22A Jurisdiction: City Council

Being a public hearing on the matter of an application file by **City of Muncie, et al.**, 300 N. High St., Muncie, Indiana, requesting a change in zone from the R-4 Residence Zone, R-5 Residence Zone, and BV Variety Business Zone to the R-5 Residence Zone, CB Central Business Zone, and the RC Recreation & Conservation Zone on premises located at 620-716 N. Walnut St., 648-747 N. Mulberry St., 610-721 N. Jefferson St., 601-735 N. Elm St., the east side of the 700-800 BLK of N. Elm St., 110-318 E Columbus Ave., 300-328 E. Race St., and 317 E. Myrtle Ave., Muncie, Indiana, as more accurately described in the application

LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

REPORT FROM DIRECTOR:

ADJOURNMENT:

**DELAWARE-MUNCIE METROPOLITAN PLAN COMMISSION
NOVEMBER - 2022 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
MINUTES**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Moody called roll and the following members were present: Mr. Dishman, Mr. Hall, Mr. Henry, Mr. Motsenbocker, Ms. Sipe, and Mr. Wiseley. Absent were: Mr. Borchers, Mr. Curly, Ms. Hensley, Ms. Jones, Mr. Landess (arrived at 7:20 P.M.), and Mr. Leach. Also absent, attorney for the Board.

MINUTES: Mr. Henry made a motion to approve the October, 2022 regular monthly meeting minutes. Mr. Dishman seconded the vote. Voting in favor: Mr. Dishman, Mr. Hall, Mr. Henry, Mr. Motsenbocker, Ms. Sipe, and Mr. Wiseley. Voting against: None. Motion carried, October 2022 minutes approved.

TABLED BUSINESS:

MPC 08-19A ABC-DG Subdivision

NEW BUSINESS:

MPC 04-22Z Jurisdiction: City Council

Being a public hearing on the matter of an application file by **City of Muncie, et al.**, 300 N. High St., Muncie, Indiana, requesting a change in zone from the R-4 Residence Zone, R-5 Residence Zone, and BV Variety Business Zone to the R-5 Residence Zone, CB Central Business Zone, and the RC Recreation & Conservation Zone on premises located at 620-716 N. Walnut St., 648-747 N. Mulberry St., 610-721 N. Jefferson St., 601-735 N. Elm St., the east side of the 700-800 BLK of N. Elm St., 110-318 E Columbus Ave., 300-328 E. Race St., and 317 E. Myrtle Ave., Muncie, Indiana, as more accurately described in the application

Mr. Wiseley stated that the Board would allow 15 minutes of speaking time for the applicants, 10 minutes for the non-applicants in the rezoning area, and 3 minutes for those who are in support or opposition of the rezoning.

Dan Ridenour, Mayor of Muncie, 300 N. High St., Muncie, Indiana, appeared. He thanked the Board for attending and stated that he wanted to start by talking a little about the history of this project, which began over 4 years ago before he even took office. He stated that the first meeting was held September of 2018 because of a desire to enhance the properties and area around the Muncie Central campus, which included Bruce Rector, the Neighborhood Association President, Chris Smith of Muncie Community Schools, Betty Brewer of Minnetrista, Traci Lutton from the Muncie-Delaware Economic Alliance, Kelly Schrock from The Community Foundation, and Terri Witt-Bailey with the City of Muncie Redevelopment. He stated that they began monthly meetings and collecting feedback from a number of individuals and that the proposal they ended up with was an idea that was proposed at the 2019 Idea's Conference which is where neighborhoods get together and talk about what is happening

in their community. He stated that eliminating blight and unsafe housing, creating a new tax base and preserving a mix of housing options were just a few of the original ideas and that it had changed a little since 2019. He stated that he attended his first meeting in March of 2020, and they also added Gretchen Cheeseman, Community Development Director to the list of individuals involved. He stated that they already had a developer interested in the area along the river, unfortunately there were financial concerns and this was at the beginning of COVID, and he did not feel comfortable providing the funds that the developer wanted. He stated that that developer was no longer interested, but that the desire for the project had continued.

He stated that in 2021 they had fixed some of those finances and that he felt very comfortable where they were now and that the MRC had about 5 million less in debt than where they were when he took office. He stated that the meetings continue to happen monthly and at the January 2021 meeting they discussed the goals of the neighborhood, which had changed slightly but still focused on properties that were not being maintained and asked for more code enforcement, more improvement to the sidewalks, and concerns about drug use in the area. He stated that in April of 2021 they met with Ms. Moody and discussed what could be done as far as zoning since there was a desire by the neighborhood to have townhomes and other types of housing options. He stated that Ms. Moody was very helpful in explaining what some of those options were and how they could be accomplished through the rezoning and the variance process. He stated that the mission for the area was to build a safe and healthy neighborhood that would eliminate blight and improve the overall image of the area. He stated that they had also wanted to establish a program to help provide homeowners with the funds to paint their homes, and that they had been able to do that. He stated that in 2021 the YMCA chose the location at Columbus Avenue and Walnut Street, next to Muncie Central High School, as the site of a new \$27 million facility to begin construction next year. He stated that since then the school had announced that they would be spending \$5.8 million to make improvements to the football stadium and an addition of a concession stand and restrooms. He stated that he began working with Traci Lutton to try and obtain state funding through the Ready Grant, and that they had successfully been granted \$1,582,427.00 set aside for improvements for infrastructure. He stated that he began to have meetings with Ms. Moody months ago because they knew that zoning would be the next step in the process, and that she had been very helpful. He stated that the last neighborhood meeting had been on September 15th, 2022, which he was able to attend, and that they had been able to present what the hopes were for the neighborhood and to share the news about the Ready Grant funds. He stated that the rezoning requests fit in well with what the neighborhood was looking for, available funds that the City could contribute, and interested developers for the area. He stated that for those who have the money, and a big capital gain, can invest in the neighborhood without having to pay those capital gains if they maintain the property for the 10-year period. He stated that he had letters of support from Bruce Rector of the McKinley Live Learn Neighborhood Association, Jacob Crawford, a homeowner in the area, and from Dr. Kwiatkowski of Muncie Community Schools.

Mr. Wiseley stated that the Board had the letters from the Mr. Rector and Mr. Crawford and asked that Mayor Ridenour leave a copy of the letter form Dr. Kwiatkowski.

Mayor Ridenour stated that he would. He stated that the plans had changed a few times, but that they wanted the change to Central Business for the space that would be diagonal from the proposed YMCA, because they felt that there should be a signature building for the area at that location. He stated that they did not want to make the entire area Central Business because it did not meet the goals of the neighborhood which was mostly single-family homes with some townhomes throughout.

Mr. Wiseley asked why they were asking to make the change to Central Business at the area on Walnut Street near Concannon's since they would be a down zone from it is currently.

Mayor Ridenour stated that if he understood properly, the Central Business zone would allow the same types of business as Variety Business, but did not have the same setbacks and would allow the buildings to touch.

Mr. Wiseley asked if Central Business allowed for less business use than the Variety Business Zone, this would be restricting the property in terms of what can go there.

Ms. Moody stated yes.

Mr. Wiseley stated that he was also concerned about some of the proposed R5-Residence Zoning areas, since required lot size in an R5 zone was larger than some of the proposed parcels.

Mayor Ridenour stated that there would most likely be some variances needed in places.

Ms. Moody stated that the other option would be to combine some of the smaller parcels.

Mr. Henry asked how this would affect any current property owners in the neighborhood.

Mayor Ridenour stated that at this point nothing would change, but that as things progress they hope to have more residents in the area. He stated that there will be a designated green space, more safety, and more activity which creates better property values for everyone.

Mr. Dishman asked how much money the City would be investing in the project.

Mayor Ridenour stated that the City had \$730,00 in funds set aside and that there was an additional \$1.5 million in state funds.

Mr. Dishman stated that he had an issue with giving city funds to developers when the taxes are outrageous in Muncie and should be lowered. He stated that people cannot afford their taxes as it was, and we should not be giving money to developers for a project that was going to be a long process.

Mayor Ridenour stated that this would be a decades long project but that the funds would not be going to developers, they would be going towards the infrastructure and street improvements for the area.

Mr. Dishman stated that he would like to see the property taxes adjusted and see the community benefit instead of having all of this progress for someone else to benefit. He stated that he was all for uplifting the neighborhood, but at the developer's expense.

Mayor Ridenour stated that the money would help to add sidewalks and crosswalks, and that Central High School, the proposed YMCA, and the neighborhood would all benefit from those improvements.

Mr. Hall stated that his biggest struggle with trying to understand this proposed project was how it would align with the Comp Plan, and if we had to choose where to incentivize future development, it needs to be downtown as stated in the Comp Plan. Development should be where the amenities currently exist on two corridors, Walnut and Main Street, this is where our limited resources are likely to have the biggest impact. He added that he understood beautifying a neighborhood, but this is

redeveloping a neighborhood for commercial use. He stated he is supportive of helping the neighborhood and added the current proposal is concerning because it pulls our focus and limited resources out of the downtown. This proposal shifts the focus on density to a historically residential neighborhood north of downtown.

Mayor Ridenour stated that the Comp Plan steering committee did not know where the YMCA would be relocating and that this location is within a stone's throw to the downtown and it could be argued that it is part of the downtown. He added that we are not putting this in a TIF district and these revenues will help our school system and the development downtown. He added that we are not slowing on the development downtown and expect to have more success in the downtown.

Mr. Hall stated he was not convinced that moving the YMCA would be a good move for the community. The YMCA currently draws a lot of people to the south end of the downtown and serves as an anchor point. He added that any loss to the downtown proper is a loss moving forward.

Ms. Moody stated that locating the YMCA immediately south of Muncie Central High School will require approval as a Special Use. She added that the Special Use process involves both the MPC and BZA and there will be public hearings at that time. They will have to provide a plan of development as part of the application for Special Use.

Mr. Hall pointed out that there are a number of unknowns at this point. He asked if we are chasing a proposed development involving the YMCA without knowing what that will look like or if it will even happen. As far as we know the Y relocation is not a done deal and there are funds to be raised and approvals to be sought before it will be.

Chris Smith, 4309 W. Sandpiper Dr., Muncie appeared. He stated that since the fall of 2018 he has served as the chairman of the McKinley Live Learn Neighborhood Next Muncie project management team which has been working alongside the neighborhood associations in the city to advance revitalization within the neighborhood. Working with the neighborhood to implement a vision including healthy housing options, procuring the Ready Grant, and coordinating with the major property owners. It will have many benefits including to bring new development into the neighborhood and preserve the predominantly single-family housing in the core of the neighborhood while allowing for a variety of housing types to establish in the neighborhood. It will also increase home ownership opportunities. Having the right zoning is one step in the process toward bringing the McKinley vision to fruition. He added that he is also a teacher at Muncie Central and believes that bringing quality development across from Muncie Central High School would benefit to school and the community. Afterschool jobs and intern opportunities are among the potential benefits to students.

Mr. Wiseley invited any owners of property in the neighborhood and who are not applicants to speak.

Clint Gibbs, 705 N. Elm St., Muncie appeared. Mr. Gibbs asked what the difference is between the R-4 Residence Zone and the R-5 Residence Zone.

Ms. Moody responded that the R-4 Residence Zone is considered a single-family residence zone, meaning one dwelling unit per parcel. The R-5 Residence Zone is considered a multi-family residence zone where you can have one dwelling, or two or three or more if you have enough area to meet the parking requirements and buffering and development standards.

Mr. Gibbs stated that a lot of the houses have been made into multiple apartments already.

Lacey Gibbs 705 N. Elm St., Muncie appeared. She stated the neighborhood has problems such as not enough parking and a smell that suggests sewage. She added that there isn't a sidewalk in front of their house.

Mr. Gibbs added that a main problem that concerns him is with multi-family development, will the sewage and other infrastructure be able to handle that.

Ms. Gibbs asked if streets and alleyways would be fixed.

Mr. Gibbs stated that he and his brother-in-law who also lives in the neighborhood don't want to see a lot more people in the neighborhood. He added that it is a peaceful neighborhood and expressed concern that development might bring problems.

Ms. Gibbs said they were not opposed to single-family homes owned by people that would maintain them

Stacy Stinson 907 E. Main St., Muncie appeared representing Paxon Wong who owns the property at the corner of Mulberry and Columbus. He stated that Mr. Wong is concerned about annexing properties for development and specifically whether the property he owns will be absorbed and developed as a rental property. Mr. Stinson added that Mr. Wong doesn't want to lose his property in a development zone. Mr. Wong has a single-family residence there and would like to keep and maintain it as such. The proposed commercial development sounds like it would affect Mr. Wong's property at Mulberry and Columbus.

Mr. Wiseley stated that Mr. Wong's property is included in the request for rezoning to the CB Central Business Zone. What is proposed here today is rezoning. If in the future they want to buy and develop the property they would have to approach the owner to do so.

Ms. Moody stated that a common concern is whether property taxes will increase. She stated taxes are assessed based on use not zoning. A single-family home would remain taxed as residential not commercial.

Edith Siderra, 204 E. Columbus St, Muncie appeared. She stated she has rented the house Mr. Wong owns at Mulberry and Columbus. She stated she has lived there for 5 years and also takes care of the adjoining vacant lot. She stated she is opposed to a business in that area and would like to see it remain single family homes.

Bill Inman, 654 N. Elm St., Muncie appeared. He stated they also own 652 N. Elm St. which he uses as an artist studio. He stated he has lived at this location 17 years. He stated his opinion that it is remarkable that there hasn't been more interest in buying in the area as it is one of the best spots in Muncie with nearby access to the river, the greenway and McCullough Park. He stated that he hears concerns about the area being dangerous and would welcome family-friendly development. He stated that a by-product of development can be improved infrastructure. He stated that houses that are in blighted condition and vacant can scare people away. He stated that he is leery of apartment developments and would prefer the housing stay single family dwellings. He stated he is for improvements that will make the neighborhood safer.

Amanda Johnson, Polarity & Collins Management Properties, appeared. Ms. Johnson asked if the type of multi-family development (i.e. low income) being planned was known.

Ms. Moody replied that that was a question they'd try to get an answer to once input had been heard this evening.

The floor was then opened up to those wishing to speak in favor of the re-zoning.

Rachel Robertson, 608 N Elm St, got up to speak on behalf of herself and her husband, Joe. Mrs. Robertson stated they are in support of development in their neighborhood and encouraged those in attendance to get involved with the neighborhood association. She ended her comments by reiterating her support for this development.

Jeff Howe, Muncie Redevelopment Commission. Mr. Howell stated that the Y has sold their current building and that there is a 2 year window for that sale to become final. Mr. Howell stated that during the day there might be 25 people at the Y but as he understands the downtown Y and the Northside Y will combine. Mr. Howell stated that having the Y by the high school will provide a safe options for the kids after school.

Phil Tevis, representing Dogtown Properties stated that the rezoning is critical to them continuing to repurpose a church building they acquired in the area. The rezoning will allow them to move an office and a tenant into the church building.

Bill Lett, 4600 W Jackson St, stated that he has numerous properties in the area and that he supports the development of the property. He has plans to create some Air B and B's in the area. Mr. Lett went on to discuss some other development plans they have for the area and noted that the rezoning would allow him to move forward with his plans.

Bruce Rector, 627 N Elm St., stated he is in support of the rezoning and feels that it is crucial to the redevelopment of the area.

The floor was then opened up to those in opposition of the rezoning or who had further questions.

Roger Gregory, 725 N Jefferson St., stated that he was wanting to know what they were planning put in the church on Columbus.

It was explained to Mr. Gregory that Mr. Tevis & Mr. Lett had stated earlier that at this time the plans are to move some offices into the former church.

Alissa Jones, 704 N Mulberry St., stated that the neighborhood needs to be improved but she is concerned about low income apartments being built in the neighborhood and making safety issues worse.

Zane Bishop, 1301 N Jefferson St., stated that this project has been a long time coming. Mr. Bishop went on to state that he is not opposed to the rezoning and that it could bring a lot of good things to the neighborhood. Mr. Bishop stated that a key question to know is how much money has already been put in by developers and how to the long term tax values pay off over time. He is concerned that this feels like an urban renewal project and worries about the landscape changing overnight.

Ms. Moody stated that the Plan Commission office has received a few calls in the office, and many had been from tenants who were worried that they will be forced to move, and that the Plan Commission staff had encouraged those tenants to have conversations with their landlords. She also

stated there had been concerns voiced that the city was going to take their properties, but that there were no immediate plans to take properties and this was a process that would happen over time. She also stated that there were some question regarding the connection between the YMCA and the rezoning as well as potential parking issues.

Mayor Ridenour spoke again to try to answer a few questions that had been brought up. Mayor Ridenour stated that as long as he is Mayor, he will not allow for eminent domain. He stated that the city was putting in 2.2 million dollars to do as many enhancement projects in the neighborhood as possible and that they were looking to develop properties at market rate value, in other words not an affordable housing development. He also stated that he will require developers to have plans for parking to be on site.

Mr. Motsenbocker asked if there would be sewer upgrades in the neighborhood.

Mayor Ridenour replied yes.

Phil Tevis explained that there have already been improvements pertaining to stormwater separation and storage.

Mr. Motsenbocker made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to City Council. Ms. Sipe seconded the motion.

Mr. Hall spoke up to state that this is the 1st test of the new Comprehensive Plan and he doesn't feel that this project aligns with the initiatives set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hall further stated that diversity needs to be protected and more emphasis given to rehabbing structures as opposed to tearing them down.

Voting in favor: Mr. Dishman, Mr. Henry, Mr. Landess, Mr. Motsenbocker, Ms. Sipe, Mr. Wisley.
Voting against: Mr. Hall. Motion carried, a favorable recommendation will be sent to City Council for introduction at their December 5th meeting.

REPORT FROM DIRECTOR:

Ms. Moody stated that Roger Overby and Steve Selvey have asked for an amendment to the City Ordinance regulating the materials to be used in fences placed in the front yards. This will be addressed in a Special Meeting in December.

ADJOURNMENT:

Allen Wiseley, President

Marta Moody, Secretary