

Asheville City Council August 27, 2024 - Email Comments Received

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Text

Dear Councilwomen,

I am a member of the DRC and reviewed this project. The DRC was unanimous in the rejection of the project, and I stand by that rejection.

Here are my concerns:

Concern: Overall Building Mass.

*Combination of height & uninterrupted building length. *

The code allows for a building length of 200' so that the RAD is not filled with long monolithic buildings, but buildings that instead replicate the rhythms and patterns of the industrial buildings in the area. This provides views for pedestrians as well as those traveling by vehicle. A long monolithic building as proposed would not align with the RAD and would set a *damaging precedent for future construction* in the RAD.

When this project was presented to the DRC there were errors in the presentation. We were told there needed to be a setback and that the height and stories per UDO were 4/55'. Since the vote of the DRC the following issues have been discovered.

Stepback - not required.

Height / stories - not 4/55' but actually 5/70

However, this building is requesting 7 stories and a height of 78'. This is a change from 6 stories and a height of 70.5' from the original submission. With the height of the parapet wall at 84.8', the uninterrupted face of the building would appear to be 360' long by 84.8' high to pedestrians. A 360' long building that has little transparency will not create a pleasant experience and again would set a damaging precedent for future construction in the RAD.

There is an allowance in the UDO for 7 stories if the building provides 20% affordable housing under 80% AMI. I am not sure why this clause is in the UDO if the city is going to allow a precedent of skipping that option to be started. Affordable housing is desperately needed in the City.

I feel that if this project is going to attempt to be approved through Conditional Zoning, it should not only be approved per what the development team requests to benefit the project, but that the City of Asheville must request enough from this development to make it worth setting this disruptive precedent for future construction in the RAD.

I hope that you will consider what this development request means to the RAD. It will be harder to say no to similar projects in the future.

Sincerely,
Robin R. Raines, Vice President

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8/27/2024 11:52:00 AM

Dear Councilmembers,

I regret that I'm unable to attend tonight, but I wanted to express my support for the Riverside Drive conditional zoning.

I live just across the river and pass through this area frequently. I am eager to see RAD become a neighborhood for all kinds of working Ashevilleans, and we know the best way to do this is to increase the multifamily housing stock there.

I am sympathetic to those who favor sticking to the zoning overlay, and I understand their point of view regarding the importance of mixed use development for fostering a walkable neighborhood. But city staff noted recently that 14,000 square feet of commercial is set to come online nearby. The bottom line is that, we have a shortage of housing in and near our core neighborhoods, and not a shortage of commercial space or amenities.

It seems to me that the CZ process is well built for this moment—for calling an audible to simply say that at this time, adding more than 200 homes to this area is in fact a better “community benefit.”

Finally, I just want to add that I am pleased and grateful for all of the effort council has made recently to level up the housing on our transit-supportive corridors. At the same time, I hope that we will attend to the “missing middle” reforms as soon as possible. However aggressively we approach the former, it is no excuse for delaying the latter; our neighborhoods should not remain segregated and exclusive enclaves just because new apartment buildings might appear on their margins.

We need a “yes and” approach.

Thanks again for all that you do,
Andy Paul
366 State St
Sent from mobile