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Lexington-Fayette Urban County Planning Commission
Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government
101 East Vine Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Zone Change Request for 171 Saunier Street

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

We represent Calhoun Hipp Clifton and The Clifton, LLC (“The Clifton” or “Applicant”) and on its behalf have filed a zone change request for the property located at 171 Saunier Street (the “Property”). The Property consists of 0.119 net (0.135 gross) acres zoned High Density Apartment (R-4) and is currently vacant. The Applicant’s request is to rezone the Property to Downtown Frame Business (B-2A) zone to allow for an events space.

The Property is still home to the existing structure that was erected between 1890-1896 as a horse & carriage stable. This use continued until fairly recently when the stables were vacated. Despite the history of the existing structure, the Property is not located in a Historical (H-1) overlay. The Applicant recently placed the Property under contract with the hope that it can renovate the impressive structure to its former glory and host events in full compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. As the original Victorian façade with the ornate masonry structure and wood frame interior still exists, we submit that the proposed project is a perfect example of the type of adaptive reuse of historical structures that our community highly encourages. The proposed development plan does not contemplate any type of expansion of the existing structure and we are only proposing necessary renovation work to the exterior of the structure.

This request is in agreement with the Comprehensive Plan for the multitude of reasons outline below. Primarily, the Property has been vacant and underutilized for many years leading to the deterioration of a historic structure. Providing the opportunity for a full renovation of an existing structure into a viable commercial space will help ensure the preservation of this historic property for years to come. The development will not put any strain on the surrounding infrastructure as the Property is located inside the downtown core and there is no proposed increase in the size of the existing structure. There also is an abundance of existing parking options for shared-use parking. The Applicant has already discussed the ability to use the adjacent parking lot of the Broadway Christian Church as there rarely is any overlap in the two uses.

In summary, this downtown core renovation project upholds the need to preserve Lexington’s historical structures while offering attractive uses for our community and the tourism industry. As such, it is quite clear that the proposed zone change is in compliance with

the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The proposed project meets the following Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan:

Theme A - Growing Successful Neighborhoods

Goal 2: Support infill and redevelopment throughout the Urban Service Area as a strategic component of growth.

Objectives:

- a. Identify areas of opportunity for infill, redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use development.
- b. Respect the context and design features of areas surrounding development projects and develop design standards and guidelines to ensure compatibility with existing urban form.
- c. Incorporate adequate greenspace and open space into all development projects, which serve the needs of the intended population.

Goal 3: Provide well-designed neighborhoods and communities.

Objectives:

- a. Enable existing and new neighborhoods to flourish through improved regulation, expanded opportunities for neighborhood character preservation, and public commitment to expand options for mixed-use and mixed-type housing throughout Lexington-Fayette County
- b. Strive for positive and safe social interactions in neighborhoods, including, but not limited to, neighborhoods that are connected for pedestrians and various modes of transportation.

Theme B - Protecting the Environment

Goal 3: Apply environmentally sustainable practices to protect, conserve and restore landscapes and natural resources.

Objectives:

- c. Incorporate green infrastructure principles in new plans and policies, including, but not limited to, land use and transportation.

Theme C – Creating Jobs & Prosperity

Goal 1: Support & showcase local assets to further the creation of a variety of jobs.

Objectives:

- d. Encourage development that promotes and enhances tourism.

Goal 2: Attract the world's finest jobs, encourage an entrepreneurial spirit, and enhance our ability to recruit and retain a talented, creative workforce by establishing opportunities that embrace diversity with inclusion in our community.

Objectives:

- d. Provide entertainment and other quality of life opportunities that attract young, and culturally diverse professionals, and a work force of all ages and talents to Lexington.

Theme D - Improving a Desirable Community

Goal 3: Protect and enhance the natural and cultural landscapes that give Lexington-Fayette County its unique identity and image.

Objectives:

- a. Protect historic resources and archaeological sites.
- b. Incentivize the renovation, restoration, development and maintenance of historic residential and commercial structures.
- c. Develop incentives to retain, restore, preserve and continue use of historic site and structures, rural settlements and urban and rural neighborhoods.

Placebuilder

The Property is located in Lexington's downtown core and the commercial use is non-residential in nature. As such, the natural Place Type is Downtown and the Development Type is High Density Non-Residential/Mixed-Use. We submit that this classification is appropriate because the general area already has substantial commercial uses and the proposed use maintains the historical commercial use of the Property. B-2A is one of the suggested zoning categories for this Place Type.

Also submitted with the Zone Map Amendment Request is the color-coded reflection of how the proposed project addresses the design criteria for the selected Development Type. Items highlighted in green are represented graphically on the submitted final development plan; items in yellow are addressed in this letter, and items highlighted in orange are not applicable to this proposal.

Standards That Are Applicable to Our Proposal

A-DS5-3: The existing building is oriented towards the street and situated right at the sidewalk line for easy pedestrian access.

A-DS5-4: The existing building is pedestrian oriented as the front door is directly off the sidewalk with an activated ground level with easy pedestrian access.

A-DN2-2: The existing building is not proposed to be expanded in footprint or in height. There are no concerns of contrasts in scale, massing, or design.

B-SU11-1: To the extent practicable, and as further contemplated upon submission of the final development plan and building permit applications, green infrastructure will be considered for inclusion.

C-DI1-1: The requested zone is one of the most flexible zones allowed by LFUCG.

C-DI5-1: This project is in an Opportunity Zone and is maintaining and reusing the existing structure.

C-LI6-1: This commercial project is in the downtown core. The surrounding downtown commercial uses are easily walkable from and to the Property.

C-LI7-1: This commercial project has safe access and is easily walkable from and to the surrounding downtown commercial uses.

C-PS10-2: The development is utilizing shared parking.

C-PS10-3: The development is not over-parked.

D-PL7-1: The adjacent churches, St Peter and Paul Church & Broadway Christian Church, as well as many neighbors have been consulted prior to filing.

D-PL9-1: The existing structure on the Property is proposed to be retained and reused.

E-GR4-1: The existing structure on the Property is proposed to be retained and reused.

E-GR5-1: The existing structure on the Property is proposed to be retained and reused.

E-GR9-4: The vacant and underutilized structure on the Property is proposed to be retained and reused.

E-GR10-2: The Property is easily walkable from and to the downtown core area.

A-DS1-2: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. There are multiple sidewalks and transit connections within easy walking distance.

A-DS4-1: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. There are multiple sidewalks and other multi-modal connections within easy walking distance.

A-DS5-1: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. There are multiple sidewalks and other multi-modal connections within easy walking distance.

A-DS5-2: The existing structure at the sidewalk line is being preserved to maintain a vertical edge.

C-PS10-1: The development is utilizing shared parking.

D-CO1-1: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core and maintaining the existing building footprint. There are multiple sidewalks and other multi-modal connections within easy walking distance.

D-CO2-1: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. There are multiple sidewalks and other multi-modal connections within easy and safe walking distance.

D-CO2-2: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. There are multiple sidewalks and other multi-modal connections within easy walking distance.

Standards Not Applicable

A-DS4-2: This project does not propose any new construction at this time.

A-DS7-3: This project does not propose any parking structures.

A-DS10-1: This project does not propose any residential units.

A-DS12-1: This project does not propose any residential units and is in the downtown core.

A-DN1-1: This project does not propose any residential units and is in the downtown core.

A-DN2-1: This project does not propose any residential units and is in the downtown core.

A-DN3-2: This project does not propose any residential units and is in the downtown core.

A-EQ7-1: No school is proposed for this site.

B-SU5-1: There are no vehicle-oriented businesses proposed.

C-PS9-2: The Property is not current office space.

D-PL10-1: The existing building is currently located at the sidewalk line and the site is only 0.119 acres. There is no area for a public art easement.

D-SP3-1: The existing right-of-way and facilities are adequate to support our development.

E-GR10-1: This project does not propose any residential units due to the small size of the property and the need to preserve the existing structure.

E-GR10-3: This project does not propose shared common space due to the small size of the property and the need to preserve the existing structure.

A-DS1-1: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. As there are multiple transit connections within easy walking distance, there is no need to provide additional infrastructure.

A-EQ3-2: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. As there are multiple transit connections within easy walking distance, there is no need to provide additional infrastructure.

A-EQ7-2: This is not a healthcare or social service facility.

B-SU4-1: Greenspace is located within walking distance of this development.

D-CO4-2: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. There are adequate existing streets and infrastructure to support the proposed development.

D-CO5-1: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. There are adequate existing streets and infrastructure to support the proposed development.

D-SP1-3: No school is proposed for this site.

D-SP6-1: There are no social services or community facilities proposed for this site.

E-ST3-1: This development is located on a side street in the downtown core. There are adequate locations for ride sharing parking.

A-DS4-3: This development does not contain existing landscape or key natural features.

A-EQ7-3: This project does not propose shared common space due to the small size of the property and the need to preserve the existing structure.

B-PR2-1: There are no environmentally sensitive areas on this site.

B-PR2-2: There are no floodplain areas on this site.

B-PR2-3: There are no floodplain areas on this site.

B-PR7-1: There are no greenways, tree stands, or stream corridors on or near this site.

B-PR7-2: There are no existing trees on this site. The existing building is currently located at the sidewalk line and the site is only 0.119 acres. There is no room to add any grouping of trees. Landscaping in the rear patio is proposed.

B-PR7-3: The existing building is currently located at the sidewalk line and the site is only 0.119 acres. There is no room to improve the tree canopy. Landscaping in the rear patio is proposed.

B-RE1-1: The existing building is currently located at the sidewalk line. There is no room for street trees.

B-RE2-1: There is not a greenway network in this area.

D-SP2-1: No school is proposed for this site.

D-SP2-2: No school is proposed for this site.

E-GR3-1: There is not a greenway network in this area.

E-GR3-2: Due to the small size of the site, there are no proposed new focal points or geographic features unique to the site.

In addition to compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, the request is justified because the existing zoning is inappropriate and improper and the proposed zoning is appropriate. The current zoning is R-4 and any type of multi-family use is simply not feasible while retaining the existing historic structure. As demonstrated by the submitted pictures of the existing conditions, the structure is mostly just the historic bones of the exterior structure. The interior is still best suited for horse stables than it is for residential. In fact, we can find no record of any residential use of the Property in its 130 year history. As the structure is only 2300 square feet, the number of possible loft apartments is quite limited. In all likelihood, you could only house 4 or 5 units without completely altering the exterior of the structure by expanding the height and adding an addition in the rear. The financial impact of converting the existing site into loft apartments simply cannot be recouped by the limited amount of units that can be created. As such, a decision must be made, keep the underlying zone or keep the existing historical structure allowing commercial uses to continue on the Property. We believe that the Lexington community clearly sides with historic preservation in this type instance. Thus, we submit the requested B-2A zoning is appropriate. The Property is adjacent on two sides to existing downtown business zones, including B-2A. As the Property has always been used for commercial purposes and is not suited for residential use in the least, it is time that the zoning of the Property match the use that has always occurred on the site. Further, all but one of the adjacent parcels are commercial in nature, with either long time commercial garages (albeit non-conforming commercial uses in the R-4 zone like the Property), parking lots, churches, or multi-family residential use bordering the property. As such, rezoning the Property to match its commercial use will not have any type of adverse impact on the surrounding area.

We will be at the August 22nd public hearing in order to make a complete presentation of this application and request your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

Stoll Keenon Ogden PLLC



Nick Nicholson

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