

**AGENDA REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
June 4, 2020**

SUMMARY

A request by Derek Dometrorch (member) on behalf of Central Columbia Properties, LLC (owner) to rezone approximately 0.06 acres from R-MF (multiple- family dwelling district) to R-2 (two-family dwelling district) to facilitate construction of a single family home. The vacant lot is addressed 811 N. Sixth Street and is zoned R-MF and FP-O (flood plain- overlay) (**Case #90-2020**).

DISCUSSION

The applicant is seeking to downzone approximately 0.06 acres of property southwest of the intersection of Wilkes Boulevard and N. Sixth Street from R-MF to R-2. Currently, the lot is vacant as a result of a building fire and does not meet the definition of a “legal lot” per the UDC. The requested rezoning would confer “legal lot” status upon the parcel without the necessity of a platting action that would reduce the parcel’s already constrained area as well as permit a larger building envelope to be created for future redevelopment. Given the lot’s limited area it would only accommodate a single dwelling unit to be reconstructed upon property if it were rezoned.

The requested rezoning from R-MF to R-2 will increase the width of the building envelope by a total of 8 feet given the R-2 zone permits 6 foot side-yard setbacks whereas the R-MF zone requires 10 foot side-yard setbacks. Under existing R-MF zoning, the building envelope is 30’ x 17.5’ resulting in 525 square feet of development area. Under the proposed R-2 zoning, the building envelope would increase to 35’ x 25.5’ resulting in 892.5 square feet of development area.

The potential R-2 building envelope is consistent with the three similarly sized lots to the immediate south on N. Sixth Street and the three lots to the northwest along Wilkes Boulevard. The floor area of the surrounding homes average approximately 960 square feet each. The resulting home, if built under the new setbacks, would fit in with these surrounding homes. All lots along N. Sixth Street from Wilkes Boulevard to Hickman Avenue lie within the flood plain overlay (FP-O) district and are also zoned R-MF with the exception of two lots zoned R-1. The proposed rezoning to R-2 would not remove the subject lot from the FP-O district.

The limiting redevelopment factors for this site are its current size and that it is not considered a “legal lot” by the UDC. The lot area could be increased if additional contiguous lots were consolidated into it for the purposes of redevelopment, but as it stands there is no indication that additional lots are available to facilitate such a change. Furthermore, if such lots were available for consolidation there would be the additional necessity of a replat to confer “legal lot” status as the UDC does not permit building over property lines. In light of these impediments and following consultation with City staff, the applicant has chosen to downzone the property to R-2.

Downzoning actions have the potential for both positive and negative impacts on residential neighborhoods and the built environment. On the one hand, such actions permit the preservation of affordable single-family homes in neighborhoods and offer protections against multi-family redevelopment where existing stormwater or sewer infrastructure may be at capacity. On the other hand, by reducing the potential for additional units where investment has been made in infrastructure it is possible that reduced infill development densities may be too low to support transit services within walkable areas.

In this instance, the potential for redevelopment via lot consolidation may not be desired by this neighborhood, which has typically promoted preservation and rehabilitation of the existing, generally affordable single-family housing stock. The City, through its housing programs, has worked with the neighborhood on projects to preserve homes and build small footprint, affordable homes similar to what is anticipated to be built on this lot following the rezoning. Additionally, the rezoning action will allow the lot to meet the definition of a legal lot per the UDC creating an opportunity to obtain a future building permit. Without the rezoning, a platting action will be required to bestow legal lot status, which would require the applicant to incur additional development cost and lose valuable buildable area due to required right of way and utility easement dedications.

Facilitating development of this parcel would coincide with the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use and Growth Management policies to prioritize infill development by making a small lot developable. Without the reduced setbacks afforded by the rezoning, new home construction is virtually impossible.

The action of downzoning will not impact or trigger any new zoning requirements upon neighboring properties until either a non-conforming use is discontinued or redevelopment of those sites are proposed. Any redevelopment of this or the adjacent lots will be subject to the buffering and neighborhood protection standards of the UDC.

As noted previously, a portion of the lot does lie within the flood plain overlay district (FP-O) which will not be removed as a part of this request. The FP-O's location; however, only extends approximately 23 feet into the front yard of the lot and thus does not extend past the required 25-foot front yard setback. Future development would require a floodplain development permit and will be reviewed at the time of permitting.

Conclusion

Staff finds that rezoning the subject parcel R-2 would facilitate development that is contextually consistent with of the existing land use pattern of the surrounding neighborhood, promote infill development by bestowing legal lot status on an otherwise non-conforming lot, and is unlikely to have any significant impact on density or the availability of housing.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the R-2 Zoning Map Amendment.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (ATTACHED)

- Locator maps

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Area (acres)	0.068
Topography	Flat
Vegetation/Landscaping	Turf with a few trees lining the rear lot line
Watershed/Drainage	Flat Branch
Existing Structures	None

HISTORY

Annexation date	1906
Zoning District	R-MF
Land Use Plan designation	Neighborhood District
Previous Subdivision/Legal Lot Status	Land in limits.

UTILITIES & SERVICES

All utilities and services provided by the City of Columbia

Wilkes Boulevard	
Location	North
Major Roadway Plan	Local street
CIP Projects	SW525: 5th to Wilkes Relief Sewer – \$400,000 1-2 Years Description: Extend a relief sewer from the intersection of 5th St and Rogers to the intersection of 7th St and Wilkes. Project will be coordinated with Hickman 6th and 7th Stormwater projects as both projects will follow similar alignments.
Sidewalk	In place

North Sixth Street	
Location	East
Major Roadway Plan	Local street
CIP Projects	SS134: Hickman & 6th & 7th – \$1,335,000 3-5 Years Description: Replace undersized, failing box culvert, create an overflow section, replace failing pipes. Install water quality improvements. Phase 1.
Sidewalk	In place

PARKS & RECREATION

Neighborhood Parks	Douglass Park approx. 0.25 miles to the SW; Field Park approx. 0.31 miles to the east; Armory Sports and Recreation Center approx. 0.4 miles to the south; Downtown Optimist Park approx. 0.31 miles to the NW.
Trails Plan	N/A
Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan	N/A

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

All property owners within 200 feet and City-recognized neighborhood associations within 1,000 feet of the boundaries of the subject property were notified of this pending request on May 11, 2020. 14 postcards were distributed.

Public information meeting recap	Number of attendees: N/A (No mtg held due to COVID-19) Comments/concerns: N/A
Notified neighborhood association(s)	Ridgeway NA, North Central Columbia NA
Correspondence received	None received