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TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Kimani Jeffrey, City Planner

RE: The request of North End Christian Community Development Corporation to amend Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Zoning, by amending Article XVII, *Zoning District Maps*, Section 50-17-11, *District Map 10* of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance to show an SD1 (Special Development District, Small-Scale Mixed Use) where the R2 (Two-Family Residential District), and B4 (General Business District) zoning classifications are currently shown on the area generally bounded by the alley first east of Oakland Avenue, Westminster Avenue, the alley first east of Goodwin Street, and Owen Street.

The proposed map amendment is being requested to allow for a ‘green community campus’ to include educational spaces, live/work art studios, small-scale retail and a bed and breakfast inn. The City Planning Commission is co-petitioning for the map amendment of specific vacant parcels within the boundary, commonly known as 9127 Goodwin, 9133 Goodwin, 9144 Goodwin, 9151 Goodwin and 922 Westminster.

DATE: December 4, 2023

Before the City Planning Commission is the request of North End Christian CDC to show an SD1 zoning classification where the R2 and B4 zoning classifications currently exist on land generally bounded by the alley first east of Oakland Avenue, Westminster Avenue, the alley first east of Goodwin Street, and Owen Street (see map on page 7). This matter was originally before the CPC for an introductory presentation on October 19, 2023.

BACKGROUND

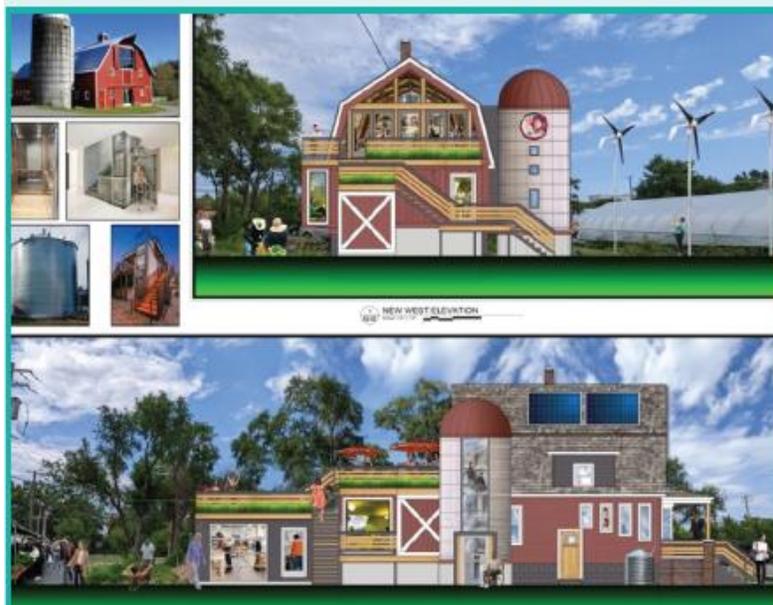
The North End Christian CDC (NECCDC) owns and operates Oakland Avenue Urban Farm (OAUF). The campus is a total of seven (7) acres in the Historic North End neighborhood. NECCDC has been working in the community for over a decade and is an anchor in their community. The organization grows food, provides mentorship and educational programs, has outdoor art spaces and also creates jobs for surrounding residents. NECCDC has also stated that they have GAP certification and are the hub of an established Food Value Chain. The organization provides nutritional, economic and cultural opportunities while building capacity for community food growers, processors, sellers and consumers.



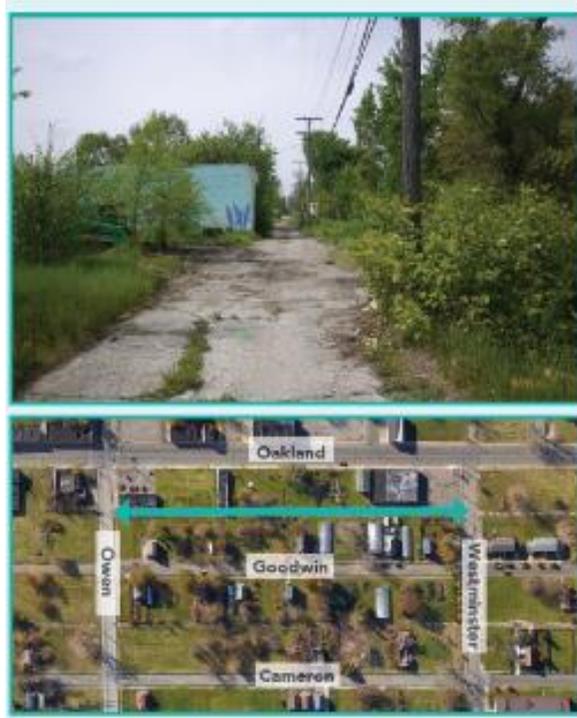
Oakland Avenue Urban Farm

In addition to the urban farming activities of the OAUAF, the organization “grows more than 33 varieties of vegetables and fruit using organic practices and produces value-added products, including herbal teas, eggs, spices, and AfroJam—jams made from locally sourced fruits. In addition to selling produce via weekly markets, the Farm offers a “Harvest on Demand” option, allowing customers to drop by the Farm’s Community House to request produce five days a week, Monday through Friday from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. Through these efforts, thousands of Detroit area families and residents have access to fresh local grown fruits and vegetables.”

NECCDC is also working on other projects such as the **North End Community Resource Center** (see below), funded by Knight Foundation and in partnership with Design Core Detroit and University of Michigan Taubman Public Design Corps; an interdisciplinary collaborative project that positions socially engaged design at the core of comprehensive community planning and development.



An **Agri Art Alley** (see below) is planned to reactivate an unused alley on the campus and will tie the various components of the campus in order to spur neighborhood revitalization and also mitigate neighborhood flooding through stormwater management features.



Site for proposed Agri Alley

PROPOSAL

The proposed rezoning is for a project that NECCDC is calling the Detroit Cultivator on a portion of the OAU site which totals approximately three (3) acres of land. The majority of the parcels in the subject site are zoned R2, in which the district is designed to protect and enhance those areas developed or likely to develop with single- or two-family dwellings. There is a parcel on the corner of Westminster that is zoned B4 which is the general business district that allows for most business uses.

NECCDC intends to create a “green community campus” that includes converting existing vacant 1- and 2-family homes into community/educational spaces, live/work art studios, small-scale retail, and a bed and breakfast inn. Open space will be used for future expansion of the existing urban gardens, outdoor gathering space, and passive natural landscapes. No new construction is planned at this time.

CPC staff is petitioning for vacant parcels that OAU does not control in the footprint of the rezoning in order to maintain zoning consistency.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

The zoning classification and land uses surrounding the subject area are as follows

- North:** B4 and R2; vacant, urban gardens, and vacant homes
- East:** R2; vacant land, urban gardens and vacant homes
- South:** R2; vacant land and residential homes
- West:** B4; commercial buildings, liquor store, vacant structures, and open space.

Master Plan Consistency

The subject rezoning site is located within the Middle Woodward area of Neighborhood Cluster 4 of the Detroit Master Plan of Policies (MP). The Future Land Use map for this area shows the Low-Medium Density Residential (RLM) designation. The Planning and Development Department (P&DD) provided a letter confirming the proposal’s general conformance with the City’s Master Plan.

Proposed Zoning

The SD1 Special Development District is designed to encourage a complementary mixture of small-scale pedestrian and transit-oriented uses that are compatible in a neighborhood setting. It is intended to ensure a neighborhood character and place a proper balance of activities within walking distance of one another while serving the day-to-day needs of residents.

The proposed zoning district would allow the proposed uses that OAU is planning for their Detroit cultivator project. The new zoning district is being requested to allow for community and art spaces, a bed and breakfast, and small retail spaces. These uses would be permissible in the SD1 small-scale mixed-use district as it permits more commercial and mixed-use activity, while they would not be permitted in the existing R2 district.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The petitioner has been working with nearby residents and has submitted a list of property owners who have shared letters of support (see presentation attachment).

- Lorraine Shaw
- Bags to Butterflies
- Allice Norris
- Rosalind Norris
- George Martin
- Loretta Randle
- Michael Williams
- Sean Murphy
- St. John Evangelist Temple
- Fellow Citizen LLC
- Greater Ephesian Baptist Church
- Greater New Mt. Moriah Baptist Church

There are also property owners with improved parcels (land with a structure) who have been contacted but have not stated support or opposition. Those property owners include:

- Big Daddy Liquor Store
- Resident at 9180 Goodwin

ANALYSIS

Zoning Ordinance Approval Criteria

According to Sec. 50-3-70, Approval criteria, recommendations and decisions on an amendment of a zoning map in Article XVII shall be based on consideration of all of the following criteria:

- (1) Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or meets the challenge of some changing condition, trend or fact;*

NECCDC has made the argument that when they began over a decade ago, that their project was in response to blight in the community. This project was an effort to beautify the neighborhood, bring parcels back to productive use, provide jobs to community members,

and provide fresh food to neighbors. After many years of work, their work has steadily transformed this neighborhood and become a staple in the community.

Therefore, it can be argued that the proposed rezoning meets the changing condition or trend of the land. The subject site is currently being used for farming and other supporting activities. The proposed rezoning would allow the group to cultivate other activities that will support OAUF. With the many guests from around the world that visit the farm, the bed and breakfast will give visitors an affordable place to lodge. The permitted retail, will allow OAUF to make and sell products that are produced at the farm. A small art gallery would be permitted as well. All of these things are happening currently in some temporary or small fashion. The OAUF would be able to become legal with the proposed zoning.

- (2) *Whether the proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public;*

The proposed amendment is taking previously blighted structures and sites and putting them back to productive use. An example of this is the OAUF Community Resource Center that the Knight Foundation, Design Core and U of M Taubman Public Design Corps are supporting. This effort is bringing an existing structure back to productive use that will support the general welfare of the community, turning underutilized structures into an asset that residents can benefit from. This is one example of many from OAUF.

- (3) *Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the Master Plan and the stated purposes of this chapter;*

PDD has submitted a letter stating that the proposal is generally consistent with the Master Plan of Policies.

- (4) *Whether the City and other service providers will be able to provide adequate public facilities and services to the subject property, while maintaining adequate levels of service to existing development;*

A Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department Pre-Plan meeting was held for elements of this proposal such as the community center. These meetings include all departments and entities that deal with public utilities and infrastructure, such as DTE Energy and the Department of Public Works. Based on feedback from departments, there seems to be no issue with providing adequate public facilities for the proposal since there is no major new construction proposed. The project generally seeks to rehab existing structures and conduct relatively light activities on the site.

- (5) *Whether the proposed rezoning will have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment, including air, water, soil, wildlife, and vegetation and with respect to anticipated changes in noise and regarding stormwater management;*

The proposal is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on the natural environment. The proposed components such as the permeable farms and the Agri Alley will be beneficial to stormwater mitigation. The overall purpose of the project is expected to generally add to the betterment of the environment.

(6) *Whether the proposed amendment will have significant adverse impacts on other property that is in the vicinity of the subject tract;*

There are no significant adverse impacts expected to the adjacent properties based on the studies put forth. The NECCDC team has engaged the community and there has so far been no negative feedback to the proposal. Since many elements of the project are currently existing, it is not anticipated that the full scope will have major significant impacts on other properties once brought to fruition. Most of the area is already under the ownership or control of OAUF or affiliates.

(7) *The suitability of the subject property for the existing zoning classification and proposed zoning classification;*

The existing zoning classification does not allow for some of the activities that the OAUF would like to pursue. The proposed SD1 zoning district will allow those activities. The SD1 district is suitable for the subject site. The district has been applied similarly in the Midtown/Cass Corridor area as SD1 was applied to many east/west residential streets and has spurred positive activity. This is an extension of that type of application into another neighborhood for the purpose of spurring activity that can add to synergy in the area.

(8) *Whether the proposed rezoning will create an illegal "spot zone."*

The proposed rezoning will not create an illegal spot zone.

CONCLUSION

This proposal seeks to change the current zoning in order to allow activities that support the current OAUF gardening and farming activities. The proposed new uses are not a major transition from activities that are currently taking place at the farm. The farm currently attracts a good amount of activity as many volunteers and organizations have partnered with OAUF to help cultivate the farm. Many visitors come from around the country to see what is taking place at the site. The proposed rezoning will help OAUF to continue naturally evolving as a positive catalyst for the community.

Attachment: Slide Deck
Support Letters

cc: Antoine Bryant, Director, PDD
Greg Moots, PDD
David Bell, Director, BSEED
Conrad Mallett, Corporation Counsel
Bruce Goldman, Law
Daniel Arking, Law

