

President's Message Ted Trakas

This sure has turned out to be the season for ghosts, goblins and developers.

In early September, we became aware of a proposal to rezone the old Calloway nursery property, on the IH-10 access road south of Wurzbach, from C-2 and O-2 to C-3. C-3 is scary stuff from a neighborhood perspective since it opens the door to bars, dry cleaning plants, and so forth. But the proposition got scarier still. District 8 Councilwoman Cibrian placed the case on a fast track to go before the Zoning Commission and City Council the same week, the week of September 14th. (I guess I've lived a sheltered life. Prior to this case, I didn't even know she could do such a thing.)

So what was driving the rush to judgment? The story we were told at our first and only meeting between VJNI, neighbors and the commercial interest on September 15th was that the Porsche dealership on Fredericksburg road was in the process of terminating its lease, and wanted to relocate the dealership. Mr. Briggs, the Porsche dealer in town, had an option to buy the Calloway property, but his option was to expire the week of September 14th and he needed C-3 for new/old car sales and maintenance. D8 was all sold on the deal; she said (paraphrasing) that Porsche is "a high-end operation" and "much better than what could have gone into the property".

In order to mitigate the risks of C-3, we tried to negotiate good deed restrictions as a condition for our support of the zoning change. We got some 'no brainer' restrictions, but not all the ones we should have. Why? As I mentioned previously, D8 was obviously "sold on the deal", which equates to bad poker. Basically, our ability to negotiate was undercut. CW Cibrian moved for acceptance of the change at City Council on Thursday, September 18th and it passed, over my request for rejection or continuance.

Many times I have been able to report praise worthy actions by CW Cibrian, but I cannot for this case. Hopefully, Calloway was just a matter of bad timing that will not be repeated in the future.

Now from the realm of the scary, let us travel onto the realm of the strange.

Red McCombs petitioned the city to close Mockingbird (a public street) in order to expand his car dealership. Step back and repeat this to yourself slowly. *He wants to close a public street in order to expand his business!* Incredible. Stranger still, McCombs floated the same proposition over 10 years ago, and it was solidly shot down by neighborhood resistance. So why does he

think he'd have any better success now? Wish I could say, but I don't have a clue. Oh, and did I mention? Closing Mockingbird connects his dealership with High Point Shopping Center, which he also owns. (This has all the appearance of a land grab that would even embarrass a Sooner.)

Now let us return to Déjà vu.

As of this writing (October 13, 2008), we have just learned that zoning case Z2008276 has been filed for 4302 Hyatt Place Drive, which is near Sea Island, to convert it from "C-2" Commercial District to "C-3" General Commercial District to "allow for a Hotel". And it's schedule to be heard on October 21st!

Thankfully, District 8 has requested a 30-day delay for negotiations.

Finally, we were intending to insert another petition into this issue of *Vance Jackson Views* regarding the Clear Channel Digital Billboard Pilot Program, but we have no information as to when this might come up for reconsideration. With city elections coming due in May 2009, chances are a vote will be delayed for the foreseeable future.

We may issue a special edition of the newsletter if anything unexpected breaks.

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