
Rezoning proposal for new college apartments denied

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The president of the Delaware County Historical Society, a man who honors preservation over changes, is leading an effort to suppress an apartment chain from building just off campus.

Jim Lee, former president of the Anthony Northside Neighborhood Association, said the neighborhood group has denied every rezoning proposal since 1967.

The neighborhood boundaries stretch from Wheeling to Tillotson avenues and McGalliard Road to Bethel Avenue.

The most recent proposal was to build a 216-unit, 584-bed apartment complex bordering McGalliard Road and Oakwood Avenue near Lane Crest subdivision. The proposal came from a company called The Grove, which is geared toward college living, with complexes in 15 states, including Fort Wayne. The proposed complex would be called The Grove in Muncie.

The Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission held a meeting Sept. 1 to discuss the building proposal. City Council will take its recommendation and make a final decision about The Grove's proposal on Oct. 3.

The total cost of the project is estimated at about \$13 million, according a representative from apartment company.

Campus Crest Communities, an out-of-state development company based out of Charlotte, N.C., would lead the project. The complex proposal included a swimming pool, volleyball and basketball courts, an exercise area, a clubhouse, outside grilling areas and fire pits.

At the Plan Commission meeting, the room was overflowing with opponents, and 12 people spoke against having the new complex so close to a residential neighborhood.

Even though three members voted for the new development, six still voted against.

The neighborhood association denied the land being rezoned for four reasons: increase in traffic, previous and current flooding and draining problems, potential increase in crime, and the possibility that older residents might choose to leave.

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Lee, the former president of the neighborhood association, said residents in the area are concerned about the impact on the community.

"I love students but I don't want to live next to them," he said.

Bradburn Realty LP wanted to rezone the property, which had been designated for single-family homes only, also called an R3 zone. The company petitioned for a rezoning to include multi-family use, apartments and condos, also called an R5 zone, said Mart Moody, executive director of the local planning commission.

In order to have the property rezoned, Bradburn must go through a public hearing with the local planning commission.

"Typically [City Council will] follow the recommendation," Moody said. "It has happened where council has done opposite, but it's not the norm."

In 2006, Bradburn tried to rezone the chunk of land, stretching on a 12-acre plot, by stating that the 46-year-old restriction isn't reasonable in view of the development of McGalliard, according to a document he and DeFur Voran LLP sent out to the residents of Lane Crest.

In the document, Bradburn also offered \$2,000 cash to each resident who gave his or her consent to vacate the original plot.

"He was trying to buy off people," Lee said. "He made the offer right before Christmas, while we were in a recession. Times are hard and people need the money."

Bradburn did not get the 80 signatures he needed in 2006 to rezone the land.