

Agend Item # 85 Tract 40

Walters, Mark

From: nclassen [nclassen@austin.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2004 12:10 AM
To: will.winn@ci.austin.tx.us; Goodman, Jackie; Thomas, Danny; Alvarez, Raul; Dunkerley, Betty; Slusher, Daryl; brewester.mccracken@ci.austin.tx.us
Cc: Kinchion, Janice; Rusthoven, Jerry; Frazier, Sandra; Briseno, Veronica; Aguilera, Gloria; Bui, Tina; Bailey, Rich; Walters, Mark
Subject: Michel Issa Tract- MLK & Lamar

Hon. Will Winn, Mayor
 Hon. Jackie Goodman, Mayor Pro-tem
 Hon. Danny Thomas, Councilman
 Hon. Raul Alvrez, Councilman
 Hon. Betty Dunkerley, Councilwoman
 Hon. Daryl Slusher, Councilman
 Hon. Brewster McCracken, Councilman

Dear Mayor and City Council:

I am writing to you **in support** of an application before you for MU zoning by Mr. Michel Issa.

My name is Nicholas W. Classen, property owner and citizen of Austin, Texas. I own property at 1900 and 1901 David Street, which is located on the bluff overlooking the intersection of MLK, Jr., Blvd and North Lamar Blvd. My property is on the east side of, and contiguous with, a tract that fronts on MLK one tract away from the northwest corner of the intersection of MLK and Lamar, and which is owned by Mr. Michel Issa. Mr. Issa's property is south of, and contiguous with, property owned by my friends and neighbors, Dr. and Mrs. George Schade. Although I am not speaking for Dr. and Mrs. Schade, it is my understanding that they also view Mr. Issa's project favorably.

Mr. Issa has the proper clearances from the City of Austin to construct a four story office building on his tract, not to exceed 55 feet high and with GO zoning. He is now seeking MU zoning in order to have the option of using the top floor of this building for "high end" residential units. I realize and understand that if he is granted MU zoning, he would be able to use the entire building for residential units, i.e., and apartment building instead of an office building. I have walked his site several times, I have reviewed his plans, and I am quite familiar with the general area, having owned my property there for 20 years. In fact, my aunt had owned that property from 1956 until her death in 1984, and I lived with her in 1959-60 when I was a graduate student at UT. My family and I visited her there on a regular basis during the period 1960 to 1984. So I have been familiar with the area, most of which has been student housing all of that time, for 44 years. That property, which I now own, is presently leased to a lady that operates a business known as Carrington's Bluff Bed & Breakfast.

It is my opinion that Mr. Issa's property, utilized for office space and/or as residential units (there could be a maximum of nine residential units if that option were exercised), would be a compatible land use at that location with other existing adjacent land uses in the area. The reason for my opinion is that a similar project, which is located only two blocks from the MLK / Lamar intersection at 2101 N. Lamar Blvd., was developed and built five or six years ago. Prior to its construction, and after inspecting that area, I also wrote a supporting letter for that owner, Mr. Ronald Scheffe, and as recently as today I again visited his project. It is a beautiful, attractive, and well maintained apartment project, having about ten units. It is very similar to what Mr. Issa might develop if given the necessary MU zoning. I learned from one of the residents there, a young lady named Emily, that it is maintained in a quiet manner, and that she is the only undergraduate student resident there; the rest are graduate students, law students, and one "working" couple.

The West University Neighborhood Association (WUNA) opposes Mr. Issa's project. Their main concern is noisy disturbances by students who might reside there. However, I understand that there are strong personal

9/30/2004

feelings against Mr. Issa, and that the sole motivation for the opposition is not just "to save the neighborhood". I believe that this project has every chance of being operated like the one located two blocks away at 2102 N. Lamar. It has almost identical buffering (distance, slope, and foliage) to the 2101 N. Lamar project, and there is absolutely no possibility that any noise from Issa's project could ever be as bad and horrendous as what my B&B lessee experiences RIGHT NOW from the students housed next door (10 feet way) at 1902 David Street. In addition, Mr. Issa's project would present an attractive feature at the west entrance to that neighborhood from Lamar Blvd. It would be infinitely better than the eyesore or an overgrown vacant lot that exists there right now.

As a result of Mr. Issa's meeting with Mr. Mark Walters last week, for the purpose of resolving opposition to the project and reaching a compromise (at which I was in attendance with several other property owners from that neighborhood), nothing was accomplished and there was no resolution. The opponents did not appear to be willing to compromise or even discuss the matter further with Mr. Issa.

CONCLUSION: This matter is to come before you tomorrow (Thursday, September 30) for a decision. On Mr. Issa's behalf, I am requesting that you table, or postpone, a discussion and decision on this matter; and either instruct the parties to put their personal feelings aside and meet, or give them a chance to meet, to attempt to reach a compromise.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas W. Classen
6407 Cerro Cove
Austin, TX 78731
346-3123 (home), 567-1282 (cell)

9/30/2004