

MAYOR
MERLE S. GORDEN

***A Review of Proposed Developments for the Northwest Corner
Of Chagrin Boulevard and Richmond Road***

This parcel of land at Signature Square is a prime piece of real estate in Beachwood – which continues to be an attractive location for businesses and residents.

Mayor Merle Gorden and Beachwood City Council want what is best for Beachwood. No final decision has been made relative to the ultimate use of this property. The Mayor and Members of City Council – who continue to review and study this specific issue - have historically encouraged sound business developments that yield benefits for our residents. Here are the two options presently before the City, both of which could help provide economic value and help assure the future vitality of Beachwood:

- 1) Office Building proposal: The land is already zoned for this project, which would consist of an 115,000 square foot, four-story office building that would include two restaurants. It also has a 2-story parking deck and parking for 554 cars. This project has already been granted preliminary approval from the Beachwood Planning Commission and does not require a zoning change.
- 2) Hotel proposal: This project calls for the construction of a four-story Aloft Hotel and two separate, adjacent restaurants. The entire three building project would consist of slightly less than 90,000 square feet. It has surface parking only, accommodating 336 cars. This proposal would require a zoning change.

According to the Ordinances and Code of the City, next steps in reviewing the proposal are:

- The Beachwood Planning Commission is meeting Thursday, Oct. 27 to consider the zoning change request for the hotel proposal. This meeting is open to the public, but it is not a public hearing. Public comments are not solicited at this meeting.
- The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to Beachwood City Council with respect to the zoning only.
- On November 7, City Council will meet and hold a public hearing on this issue.
- City Council will consider public comment as well as the Planning Commission recommendation before deciding the zone change request that would accommodate the construction of the hotel.
- Additionally, the City is conducting a traffic study as part of the review of the proposed zoning change. The traffic study results will also be considered prior to the vote on the zoning change.
- If the zoning change is approved, that will allow the owner to proceed with the hotel proposal. The plan for the site, including specific site plans, landscaping, lighting, parking placement and similar items must be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in a separate application. Typically, there is a submission of a plan for preliminary approval and later a submission for final approval after incorporating any comments of the Commission.
- If the zoning change is not approved, the owner has indicated his intention to move forward with the office proposal promptly. As it has already received approval of a preliminary plan, the owner can submit a final plan for approval by the Commission.

Comparison of Hotel, Office Building Proposals

	Office Building	Hotel
Use	Office building with two restaurants, totaling 115,000 square feet.	Aloft Hotel with two detached restaurants, totaling slightly less than 90,000 square feet.
Height	Four-story	Four-story
Parking	554 parking spaces with two-story parking deck	366 parking spaces with no parking deck
Traffic	Traffic study is currently under way.	Traffic study is currently under way.
Physical Barrier Adjacent to Residential Area	Six foot high fence and landscaped buffer along Halburton and Bryden roads property line.	Ten foot high buffer consisting of a four foot mound and a six foot masonry wall along Halburton and Bryden roads property line. Landscaping along the buffer.
Neighborhood Exit	24-hour exit from Signature Square to Richmond Road via Bryden Road	Limited, gated exit from Signature Square to Richmond Road via Bryden Road (open only from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mon-Thurs and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, closed Sunday)
Resulting infrastructure cost to city	Negligible	Negligible

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who would develop these projects?

Beachwood-based Goldberg Companies would be the developer, regardless of whether it is the office building or the hotel.

Q. Why is the City considering the development of this parcel of land?

The City is reviewing the property owners' plans to ensure they are in the best interests of the entire community. Development stands to benefit the future of Beachwood by creating tax revenues and a stronger tax base to support the schools and maintain or enhance the level of City services. We also believe development of a new state of the art office building or boutique hotel could make Beachwood more competitive and enhance its image. Beachwood has limited land available for development and this is an opportunity to strengthen the community. In either scenario, the city wants to ensure that the development will meet with the community's high standards and blend well with its surrounding neighborhoods.

Q. Will either of these projects hurt residential property valuations?

The city has no factual basis to believe that either of these projects would negatively affect home values in Beachwood. The city would insist that – regardless of which project were to proceed – all building standards be followed and that the construction be done with respect to any nearby residences (see "Rear Buffer" reference in chart). There has never been a commercial or office development constructed in the City of Beachwood that has resulted in property values being lowered. That includes a number of developments that directly abut or are across the street from residential areas.

Q. There are already too many hotels in Beachwood – why would we need another one?

Beachwood, like the rest of the nation, has recently experienced a powerful recession that certainly took its toll upon the hospitality industry. We need to look forward, however, and believe that demand for hotel rooms in Beachwood – particularly with the future opening of Eaton World Headquarters – will increase demand for quality hotel rooms. In addition, the City cannot use zoning as a means of controlling competition.

Q. There are already too many office buildings in Beachwood – why would we need another one?

It's true that Beachwood has its share of vacant or partially vacant office buildings. New office buildings, however, sometimes attract tenants who simply want to work in a new structure.

Q. Why does Beachwood need more restaurants? Won't this hurt business at our existing restaurants?

Both projects – the office building and the hotel – each include plans for two new quality restaurants. There are an estimated 100,000 people – including workers and shoppers – who pass through Beachwood daily. We need to continue to offer quality lodging/dining choices. “Clustered” restaurant offerings – such as those available in Tremont, for example – often result in restaurants feeding off of each other and experiencing improved business because their location becomes known regionally as a prime spot for dining. We believe adding two restaurants would complement Beachwood’s existing reputation for fine dining.

Q. Won't these projects increase traffic?

The City has engaged an independent engineer to conduct a traffic study.

George Smerigan, an engineer and the City’s 15-year planning director said: “Each project would add traffic in a different way. The office building would contribute traffic during traditional ‘rush hour’ periods – as people go to and leave from work. The hotel traffic would typically come at non rush-hour times and on weekends. Also, the hotel would attract traffic primarily from points east – that is, from guests existing I-271 or arriving from business meetings at Eaton, University Hospitals or other commercial/business locations. The office building would attract workers from all over the area, including points west, which fuels speculation that those travelers may be more likely to explore side street access (“short cuts”) to the office building.”

Q. Will the hotel attract crime?

We do not anticipate that a high-end boutique Aloft hotel or office building will result in any increase in crime in the adjacent neighborhoods. For example, the residential neighborhoods surrounding our high-end shopping district are safe.