

Citizens Group Protests Benedictine Rezoning Proposal

(KAIR) -- A proposal to rezone a north Atchison property in an effort to begin future expansion at Benedictine College has led to opposition from a group of neighboring citizens.

The proposal would change an eight acre parcel north of Larry Wilcox Stadium from General Agriculture to Planned Development, as well as making a parcels on north 3rd and north 4th Street, five properties in the 11 hundred to 13 hundred blocks of North 2nd Street, two properties on North 3rd Street and 215 M Street from Residential to Planned Development for the project.

The change in rezoning was prompted by the donation of land by the James Asher family several weeks ago to the college, which then Benedictine announced its intent demolish its current baseball and softball complexes and move them to the Asher agricultural property.

This prompted citizens neighboring the property, as well as others in the area of the proposed re-zoning to express and announce their intentions to speak in opposition during a scheduled public hearing at Wednesday's regular Planning Commission meeting at 4:30 at City Hall.

The group is being led by Cathy Coronado, who lives in the area near the proposed rezoning.

Coronado expressed five points of opposition, largely focused on new noise that would be created in the area.

(Play Audio)

Billie Green also lives in the area of question and says the potential growth of parking and foot traffic concerns him.

(Audio Continues)

Coronado and Green say they expected the noise from the current football games and other events when they moved there, but believe this will be too close to their properties.

They also contend that there could be better use of money and a different location to put new complexes and facilities, also citing new traffic congestion from commuting students.

Benedictine President Steve Minnis says the re-zoning is a vital first step in the future vision of the school for projects 10 to 15 years down the line.

(Audio Continues)

Minnis says it will also make strides to make ideas even further down the line a possibility.

(Audio Continues)

Minnis says until late last week, he wasn't aware of a citizens group being organized, but said he did speak with Coronado previously and addressed her concerns.

After learning some of the points of concern from the citizens group, he addressed those further.

(Audio Continues)

Members of the citizens group indicated that not all potentially affected didn't get mailed a notice for a public hearing.

Coronado and Green first learned the news of the intentions via the college newspaper, the BC Circuit.

Community Development Director Stefanie Leif says the city has parameters as to when, and who, to send public notices to.

(Audio Continues)

Leif says the city staff recommendation to the Planning Commission is to recommend approval to the City Commission the re-zoning requirements, as the proposal meets all the legal specifications required.

She encourages any person interested in expressing support or opposition to the re-zoning to attend Wednesday's public hearing.

Many Signals Communications