

Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association

WINTER 2008 ISSUE

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NEIGHBORHOOD FORUM WITH MJH

Thursday, Jan. 31, 2008 7:00 PM

MJH Education Center

320- 10TH ST. NE

*The third in a series of meetings with hospital officials to share information on their
plans for the hospital property*

Please mark your calendars now for this important meeting. The hospital recently commissioned an economic/marketing study to guide their plans for developing the hospital property. We expect to hear the results of this study during the forum, and it is important that the neighborhood residents turn out to discuss the findings.

Parts of Neighborhood Added to Virginia Landmarks Register

On December 5, 2007 the State Department of Historic Resources and State Review Board voted to approve the Martha Jefferson Historic District for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register. The historic district listing is now in the process of being forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places for approval.

We are thrilled to have

this recognition for the neighborhood, and extend our profound thanks and gratitude to Lydia Mattice Brandt, who researched and wrote the nomination. Thanks also to those neighbors who volunteered their time to help with deed research and data entry. At the Jan. 7, 2008 City Council meeting, Mary Joy Scala, the historic resources planner, presented a report on the

state of the city's historic resources. With development in the city proceeding at an unprecedented pace, it is urgent that these resources are documented and their significance taken into account. Ms. Scala's report concluded with a list of properties in the Fifeville neighborhood that have been demolished recently including several 19th century homes.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER AND REQUESTS:

- **January 31st, Neighborhood Forum with MJH. 7:00 pm at MJH Education Center at 320 10th Street N.E., one block south of High Street.**
- **February 4th, Monthly Meeting. 5:30 pm at President Clarence McClymonds' home at 701 Locust Avenue.**
- *Please join the MJNA. To do so, contact Lois Wallenhorst, contact information on the back.*
- *Need volunteers to create website.*
- *Need donations for historic survey work.*
- *Burnley Moran is looking for a Walk-to-School coordinator. If interested, please call the school at 245-2413.*

Neighborhood Development



These are four of five homes on the 400 Block of Lexington Avenue that are all currently zoned B-1. These homes were built in the 1920's.

In our own neighborhood, the move of Martha Jefferson Hospital raises many questions about the future of their property and how it will be developed.

Neighbors are understandably very concerned about any new development or re-use of the hospital properties that is being considered and have expressed their concerns and suggestions to the hospital and city officials.

One way of protecting the neighborhood character is by use of down-zoning. This past summer the MJNA sent letters to the City Council, Planning Commission, and the hospital, suggesting that this would be an optimal time to consider down-zoning properties in a way that conforms completely to the city's comprehensive plan that was specifically designed to protect residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of commercial development.

Nearly a year earlier, in July of 2006, a joint meeting of the City Council, Planning Commission, and the BAR began to explore this issue city-wide.

Buddy Weber, longtime resident of the Martha Jefferson neighborhood and the MJNA hospital liaison has researched this issue extensively. As he states, "Down-zoning affects property rights so the City must do so in a way that is rational and non-discriminatory. That is why a comprehensive down-zoning is best. It allows the City to respond to any court challenges by arguing that such down-zoning is in the best interests of the city as a whole.

One argument property owners make regarding a down-zoning of their property is that they purchased their property in reliance on the rights associated with the

current zoning. As a property rights advocate, I am very sympathetic to such an argument. However, in this case the argument does not carry much weight. MJH specifically offered economic incentives to the sellers to up-zone their property before they purchased it for the specific purpose of using the property for hospital business. They did not buy it for the purpose of economic speculation that they might turn a profit later. The City supported them as providers of medical care, not as economic developers. They are now leaving. Thus, their own fundamental rationale for the up-zoning has vanished. Also the "reliance" argument makes it more important that we get the property down-zoned **before** any actual sale of the property. The City would undermine their own argument if they waited until the property actually sold.

Moreover, the City acquiesced in this process because they wanted to keep the hospital downtown **AND** because, at the time, the City could simply replace the residential property by annexing property from the County. Because we can no longer annex from the county, the City has no way to replace residential neighborhoods once they have been demolished or otherwise consumed by businesses. That is the underlying basis for the comprehensive changes to the zoning ordinance a few years ago. Higher density development along certain economic corridors in exchange for neighborhood protection.

The city can legally downzone now even if MJH does not sell the property. The City simply needs a rational basis for showing that the down-zoning is in the best interests of the City. That argument becomes more powerful and more persuasive if the City includes MJH property in a more comprehensive package of down-zoning.”



This home, at 513 Locust Avenue, is currently zoned B-1 and has been included on the request for down-zoning. It was built in 1895 and served as a residence for 112 years.

Petition for Down-zoning

MJNA will soon begin the circulation of a petition requesting down-zoning. Please read the text of the petition below:

We, the qualified voters of the City of Charlottesville, do hereby petition the City Council of Charlottesville to downzone the following properties from commercial to residential: (a) All property and individual parcels of property bounded by Locust Avenue on the east, Lexington Avenue on the west, Sycamore Street on the north and Taylor Walk (formerly Taylor Street) on the south; (b) Four parcels located at 506, 510, 516 and 524 Locust Avenue; (c) One parcel located at 501 Grove Avenue; (d) Five parcels located from 411 to 425 Lexington Avenue.

Those circulating the petition will have copies of the original letter sent to the City, as well as a map of exactly what property is affected. Your support is appreciated!

We need your help circulating this petition. If you are willing to help, please call Clarence McClymonds at 977-2919.

2007—2008 Officers

Clarence McClymonds— President

Maria Chapel - Vice-President

Ellen Wagner— Past-President

Lois Wallenhorst— Treasurer,

Kate Berman— Secretary

Mary and Bruce Odell— At-Large

Marina Al-Hamdani— At-Large

Buddy Weber— MJH Liaison

Special Thanks to Joe Aust of
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The Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association was founded as a response to the growth of Martha Jefferson Hospital in the 1980's. With the announcement of the hospital's departure to a new facility at Peter Jefferson Place on Pantops, we once again need strong voices and leadership to ensure our neighborhood remains the friendly, beautiful, and comforting place that drew us all here initially. Any help you can provide during this crucial time is needed and appreciated. We are searching for new board members to serve during the 2008-2009 term. Please contact Clarence if you are willing to serve.

The next MJNA Monthly Meeting is on February 4th at 5:30 pm at the

McClymonds' home at 701 Locust Avenue.

Can you guess who are the oldest residents of the Martha Jefferson Area Neighborhood? Would you be surprised to learn that many of these residents are over 100 years of age? It's true – but these residents are the massive trees that dot the neighborhood, casting their shade in the summer, and filling the sky with beautiful fall foliage in the fall. Our neighborhood would look very different without their presence. Unfortunately, these trees don't live forever. As they fall prey to age or disease, the character of our neighborhood will change unless we begin to replant these large canopy trees now.

Spring is the perfect time for planting. Please consider planting a hardwood tree and leave a legacy to be enjoyed for the next one-hundred years in the neighborhood.

