

Sent: Monday, March 23, 2009 12:54 PM
To: Denny Ewert (Brown); Lori Parker
Subject: Agenda Item 8 comments

Here are comments on Agenda Item #8, 1725 New Hampshire, please include in comments without including my email address. Thanks.

To: Members of Planning Commission
From: Patricia Sinclair
Re: 1725 New Hampshire St. Proposed Rezoning, Item #8
Date: March 23, 2008

I am opposed to the rezoning of 1725 New Hampshire due to the negative impact it would have on the Barker neighborhood and based upon the long term existing safety and maintenance problems of Dillon's existing parking lot which would extend further into New Hampshire Street. The applicant's responses do not seem to address the questions raised by the planning dept.

New Hampshire St. is a residential street, and the Barker neighborhood to the east, northeast, and southeast of Dillons, is also residential, almost completely single family. A few stores on Mass. have their backs to New Hampshire, all facing single family residences. Cottins Hardware does have a lot, with very little traffic, and well-maintained, and not open late. Dillons has a small lot behind the liquor store which is seldom used, but which has been the scene of graffiti, much trash, poor maintenance, and a dumpster. The neighbor across the street complained and got a wooden fence built around it, but this is often open.

Babcock Place, the housing authority's apartment complex for the elderly and the disabled, is the property which is referred to as being north of the proposed rezoning and is north of the existing parking lot. Their parking lot off of New Hampshire is not a busy place. They need protection from noise and bad traffic. Residents can currently walk to Dillons by crossing only one vehicle path, and then safely walk home away from traffic. This plan might subject them to safety problems.

I join others in wanting Dillons to remain in this location, but believe that they should not encroach further into the residential neighborhood and should be forced to make a safer parking site plan. By increasing traffic in both directions, they will generate traffic from outside the neighborhood onto small residential streets. The streets running east of New Hampshire south of 17th Street are narrow and without sidewalks. New Hampshire traffic already has difficulty merging onto 19th due to traffic volume and the steady stream of traffic since the roundabout was installed one block west.

The parking lot at Dillons has been unsafe for many years, and I have personally spoken with each new Dillons manager about it to no avail. I have also tried to contact corporate headquarters, but they just refer back to the local store.

No city department has been able to assist in addressing the safety issues in the parking lot. So once it's designed and built, we lose all input.

Specific concerns have to do with dangerous driving within the lot, due to its layout and lack of safety devices. Outdoor lighting is often frequently burned out. The lot is generally dirty, littered with broken bottles and liquor containers, and many potholes.

The worst safety problems have to do with speed, drivers going the wrong way down one-way lanes (either deliberately or accidentally), and drivers cutting through parking spaces to go from one lane to another. These are constant problems, visible virtually every time you visit the store. Additionally, the narrow exit to New

Hampshire St. is one-way exiting, but cars drive the wrong way into it often, and it is dangerous going through due to cars backing up on both sides.

The area directly west of the Dillons store has a parking lane one-way north. Directly west of this is a lane one-way south. The lanes are marked only by yellow paint saying one way and an arrow and this wears away. Parking is angled, so cars leaving these spots are looking in one direction only. Cars also constantly cut through from one lane to the other, rather than going to the end of the lane and coming around. Dillons has refused to put concrete stop blocks in front of each space as I requested to at least eliminate this problem.

The proposed site plan is unacceptable and the public will not have input into changes in the future through the commission. It does not address existing safety problems and it introduces a new complex series of entrances and exists which are certain to cause problems. It also adds traffic to New Hampshire Street, a residential street.

If one exit is closed on Mass. St., this will make it even more dangerous due to car volume at an exit as cars entering from Mass. and going into a one-way lane need to watch out for cars approaching them in the wrong direction.

I suggest that the areas needing screening are the areas abutting New Hampshire Street and Babcock Place. There should also be a safe walking area for residents of Babcock to return home to their back door. Trees along Mass. St. are likely to obscure visibility for turners.

I suggest that Dillons not be allowed to have any entrances or exits on New Hampshire St. and, if necessary for fire code, that they have a shared entrance with Family Video for the fire dept. use.

I am also concerned that the apartment building is occupied, and probably provides an affordable home in a nice neighborhood, especially for someone without a vehicle. There appears to be parking in the back. Is this a time to put people out of their homes?

I am also concerned about future uses of this land if Dillons decides to leave and if it is rezoned. For some reason, they have been allowed to have parking in the north part of the lot even though it was not zoned for commercial use. This recently was rezoned, although there were no signs easily visible to me, and I go to the store at least three or four times a week. I did bring up this odd rezoning to the planning dept. when there were changes made to the zoning code several years ago, but they did not explain or act upon my questions.